Supervisor’s Role and Responsibilities

The Supervisor plays an important role in the training, remediation, probation, and the termination process of the Grad Assistant. It is understood that the Supervisor must make a concerted effort to work with the Graduate Assistant to resolve any difficulties that may arise. In order to have a process that is both supportive and identifies the strengths and deficiencies of a Grad Assistant, the responsibilities of the Supervisor have been identified:

- Supervisor supports the Graduate Assistant by emphasizing the importance of his/her academic course work and scheduling 20 hrs per week.
- Supervisor meets regularly with Graduate Assistant (preferably on a weekly basis) in order to be familiar with the Graduate Assistant’s work performance.
- Supervisor provides consistent feedback to the Graduate Assistant concerning areas of improvement and areas that continue to be problematic.
- Supervisor documents the type and extent of feedback given.
- Supervisor documents in writing all issues and concerns related to the Graduate Assistant’s performance in a timely manner.
- Supervisor communicates all concerns about Graduate Assistant and his or her skill deficiencies to the Graduate Assistant and the Department Head/Dean of Students.
- Supervisor informs all personnel that have supervisory responsibility with Graduate Assistant the nature and extent of the work concerns.
- Supervisor attends the meetings scheduled by the CSAL Professional Development Committee regarding supervision.

The supervisor is also responsible for assisting the Graduate Assistant in developing the Professional Competencies Development Plan for the academic year. The Professional Competencies Development Plan is viewed as a tool to assist Graduate Assistant in developing the competencies needed to be a successful Student Affairs professional. The Professional Competencies Development Plan is a SELF EVALUATIVE assessment tool. Because of the importance of the Professional Competencies Development Plan, the responsibilities of the supervisor have been outlined:

- The Supervisor assists the Graduate Assistant in developing a Professional Competencies Development Plan for the academic year taking into account the job description of the position and then the competencies identified in the Professional Competencies Development Plan.
- The Supervisor checks with the Graduate Assistant that a copy of the Professional Competencies Development Plan has been sent to the CSAL Professional Development Committee.
- At the end of each semester the supervisor will review the completed SELF EVALUATION with the Graduate Assistant and offer feedback.
CSAL Graduate Assistant Supervisors
Role and Responsibilities

Supervisors play a key role in the experience of graduate assistants in the CSAL program. Supervising a CSAL grad can be a rewarding experience but also requires a commitment of time, resources and energy. The Division of Student Services and the CSAL Professional Development Committee are committed to making the graduate assistantship the best possible experience for both the student and the supervisor.

Support is offered to supervisors in many ways, including training for supervisors and training for graduate assistants. These activities are sponsored and financially supported by the Division of Student Services. In return, there is a set of expectations that supervisors must meet in order for their CSAL grad assistants to participate in professional development opportunities.

Professional Development Opportunities for Students
- Orientation at the beginning of each contract year
- Monthly professional development training sessions
- Division Meetings

Activities Provided by the Division of Student Services
- Training for graduate assistants
- Training for supervisors
- Recruitment of candidates
- End of the Year Luncheon

Responsibilities of Supervisors
- Provide direct supervision to the graduate assistant
- Provide the resources the grad assistant needs for an adequate work environment
- Recognize that grad assistants are students first and that scheduled classes take priority over work
- Require grad assistant to attend monthly professional development sessions (as part of scheduled work hours)
- Actively participate in the development of the Professional Competencies Development Plan
- Attend at least one training session for supervisors each year
- Meet one-on-one with the grad assistant at least every other week
- Complete a performance evaluation at the end of each semester
GA/Supervisor First Meeting Discussion Questions

- What is your supervisory style?
- How are our styles compatible?
- What type of work environment do you prefer to work in?
- How do you like to give and receive direction?
- How do you deal with conflict? (Between your staff/ GA/ Supervisor)
- What is the best way for you to be contacted?
- When are you most available?
- What do you consider being “on time”?
- How much information do you want from me? In what format?
- What is the best way to approach you if I am dissatisfied?
- What are your future goals?
- How much of a relationship do you want to have outside of work?
- How much of your personal life do you like to share?
- Do you expect us to be friends?
- How much involvement do you have in my duties?
- What is your role? What projects do you work on?
- How often should I provide feedback about my duties?
- How do I approach when considering taking on more challenging tasks?
- How much autonomy would you allow me to have?
- Do I need to seek your approval when making decision about the staff I supervise/ purchases/ programs etc.?
Characteristics of Synergistic Supervision

**Dual Focus**- emphasizes goals both of the institution/unit and of the professional staff member.

**Joint Effort**- both supervisor and supervisee work together to establish personal and professional goals for the supervisee through a relationship built upon trust, respect, openness, and mutuality.

**Two-way Communication**- open, honest feedback flows both ways between a supervisor and a supervisee.

**Competence**- both supervisor and supervisee strive to enhance their knowledge about student affairs, learning and development, leadership/administration, professional standards, interpersonal communication skills, intercultural knowledge and skills, critical thinking, problem-solving, and attitude.

**Goal Oriented**- goals are established, reviewed, and evaluated through regular supervisor/supervisee meetings.

**Growth Orientated**- problems or mistakes are identified early by the supervisor and/or the supervisee and both work together to resolve issues.

**Systematic and On-going**- supervisor and supervisee engage in an on-going dialogue process to help supervisee be more effective in his/her professional performance, personal living, and career development.

(Adapted from Winston & Creamer, 1997) Division of Student Services Grand Valley State University Fall, 2006
Guidelines for Supervision

Model of Student Affairs Professional Development
Overview of Orientations, Issues, Categories

ORIENTATION TO STUDENTS

Meeting Expectations – How Student Affairs professionals think about and act upon meeting the expectations of students.

View of Professional Role - How Student Affairs professionals view their appropriate role in relation to working with or helping students.

Relations to Student Reaction/Feelings - How Student Affairs professionals see their actions in relation to the associated reactions and/or feelings of students.

Evaluating Self-Performance – How Student Affairs professionals evaluate their self-performance in their work with students.

ORIENTATION TO SUPERVISOR

Anatomy, Structure, and Support – What level and type of autonomy, structure, and support Student Affairs professionals want from their supervisors and why that is important.

Relationship with Supervisor – What type of relationship Student Affairs professionals want with their supervisor and how that relationship is seen.

Supporting View/Position – How Student Affairs professionals expect their supervisors to support their view or position on job-related issues and why that is important to them.

Disagreement and Conflicts – How disagreements and conflicts with their supervisors are viewed and addressed by Student Affairs professionals.

Supervisor Feedback – How Student Affairs professionals think about and utilize feedback from their supervisors.

ORIENTATION TO THEORY

Origin of Approach to Theory – How and from where Student Affairs professionals have derived their understanding of and approach to professional theory.

Application of Theory – How Student Affairs professionals think about the application of professional theory in their work context.

Reflection on Use of Theory – How Student Affairs professionals think about and reflect upon the use of professional theory.
Model of Student Affairs
Professional Development – Perspective 1

ORIENTATION TO STUDENTS

Meeting Expectations – greatly concerned with meeting perceived or articulated student expectations with little analysis of their legitimacy or value; may base or alter decision/action consistent with those expectations.

View Of Professional Role – attempts to solve student problems, provide answers, reassure students and holds self largely responsible for associated student outcomes; finds it easier to relate to and support students who are perceived to have had like experiences and often gives advice based on own personal experience.

Relation to Student Reactions/Feelings – when intervening with students (e.g., confronting student behavior) is greatly affected by and feels largely responsible for student’s reactions and feelings.

Evaluating Self Performance – self evaluation and confidence are highly influenced by student reactions and feedback which is one of the main or sole evaluative criteria; evaluation also influenced by whether student follows through with professional’s advice; highly concerned with being liked by students.

ORIENTATION TO SUPERVISOR

Autonomy, Structure, and Support – depends on supervisor for direction, advice, answers, and personal and/or emotional support; may want some autonomy but with supervisor readily available for assistance/backup.

Relationship with Supervisor – wants supervisor who takes a personal interest in professional and professional’s learning; has difficulty relating to and feeling supported by supervisor who is perceived to have different personality style than professional’s and/or with whom a personal relationship is not established.

Supporting View/Position – wants supervisor to support professional’s position and feelings about important issues and to unconditionally back her up with others which affirms professional’s confidence in her position and her self-esteem.

Disagreements and Conflicts – reports few conflicts or disagreements with supervisor with whom issues and situations are often viewed similarly; disagreements that do exist are seldom raised and feedback is rarely given for fear of hurting the supervisor’s feelings, relationship with supervisor, and/or supervisor’s view of professional; most likely to raise disagreement with or give feedback to supervisor if professional has backing of others (e.g., feelings about voicing her opinion are greatly influenced by supervisors position and response)

Supervisor Feedback – frequent and explicit feedback is needed to gauge or validate self-performance; supervisor praise is highly motivating; appreciates supervisor who is non-judgmental and non-critical or professional’s performance.

ORIENTATION TO THEORY

Origin of Approach to Theory – approach to professional theory largely based on one or two theories and/or what was taught in graduate program.
Perspective 1 continued

Application of Theory – may not feel familiar enough with professional theory to utilize it; mostly use theory to identify general student developmental levels and their implications; use of professional theories and approaches is strongly influenced by student reaction and opinion and/or supervisor and colleague input; approach toward work and use of professional theories is strongly influenced by past personal experiences.

Reflection on Use of Theory – application of professional theory is seldom done consciously and when used is most often recognized.
Guidelines for Supervision

Model of Student Affairs
Professional Development – Perspective 2

ORIENTATION TO STUDENTS

Meeting Expectations – desire to meet student expectations is mediated by growing importance of meeting own developing expectations of what is appropriate, of value, and/or in student’s best interest.

View of Professional Role – greater focus on student learning and developmental outcomes creates rationale and motivation for finding methods to empower students and encourage their own self-reliance.

Relation to Student Reactions/Feelings – when intervening with students is generally able to hold students accountable for their own behavior and feelings yet at times still feel partly responsible for and is personally affected by students associated reactions and feelings.

Evaluating Self-Performance – observable student behavior (e.g., student coming back for more assistance or contact, change in student behavior that suggests some learning or developmental change) along with direct student reaction and feedback is important in affirming and validating own growing evaluative sense of self performance.

ORIENTATION TO SUPERVISOR

Autonomy, Structure, and Support – wants to be given increasing autonomy to use creativity and do things differently; needs competence to be trusted and doesn’t want to feel supervisor is watching over her; depends on supervisor to be available to provide guidance, organizational and political expertise, and decision options; and personal and emotional support.

Relationship with Supervisor – having a personal relationship with supervisor helps motivate professional in her work; wants to feel comfortable (be able to trust) honestly venting to and confiding in supervisor about job related and personal problems and opinions, but may not due to concerns about negatively affecting supervisor’s view of pro or concerns about how supervisor may use information (may not be trustworthy); wants supervisor who encourages and supports her to take care of herself.

Supporting View/Position – wants supervisor who will support and advocate professional’s position publicly sharing any criticisms or differences privately with professional to protect her credibility; feels supported by supervisor who is willing to back up professional’s position in difficult situations and who advocates positions that advance her professionally.

Disagreements and Conflicts – disagreements with supervisor become more identifiable and there is a greater willingness to raise these or to follow professional’s own belief particularly if professional feels she has the support of others; willing to compromise with supervisor or adjust approach to reach acceptable agreement.

Supervisor Feedback – supervisor feedback is used in affirming growing sense of self-evaluation and direction; wants on-going feedback to be aware of supervisor’s view and to avoid any surprises.

ORIENTATION TO THEORY

Origin of Approach to Theory – tough approach to professional theory learned in graduate program is still influential, particular theories or theories in general begin to be questioned based on perceived lack of fit with experience and/or particular students or inability to achieve desired outcome.

Application of Theory – professional theories come to be used more for general guidance or framing
Perspective 2 continued

questions where basic theoretical concepts or philosophy are utilized more than specific
prescriptions; application of particular theories or theories in general may be determined or relegated in
favor of focusing on unique aspects of the student or situation, past professional experiences, and/or
meeting strongly expressed student needs.

Reflection on Use of Theory – application of professional theory becomes more deliberate in uses such as
assessing and encouraging student development, planning programs or interventions, and retrospectively
analyzing.
Model of Student Affairs
Professional Development – Perspective 3

ORIENTATION TO STUDENTS

Meeting Expectations – primarily concerned with meeting own expectations and standards of what is best or reasonable in addressing work issues and/or student expectations.

View of Professional Role – focus is on the developmental process of students and what professional believes is in the best interest of student’s growth and development; views role as hearing students, communicating understanding, holding them accountable for their actions, and helping them work through their issues toward their issues toward their own resolution.

Relation to Student Reactions/Feelings – when intervening with students see students as in control of and responsible for their own issues, feelings, and behavior.

Evaluation Self-Performance – self performance is evaluated against personal standards and goals, or intuitive sense of whether one has done the right thing or given one’s best effort; when student feedback is considered, it is evaluated and integrated in relation to own view.

ORIENTATION TO SUPERVISOR

Autonomy, Structure, and Support – want broad autonomy in defining and carrying out job responsibilities; values supervisor as a resource and consultant and decides how best to utilize supervisor in service of achieving organizational and personal goals.

Relationship with Supervisor – supervisor is seen more as a colleague and equal than as a superior.

Supporting View/Position – expects supervisor to hear, understand, and consider professional’s viewpoint in disagreement or in making important decision, but, afterwards, can accept supervisor taking a position professional may not agree with; important to professional that supervisor make decisions based on principle, conviction, or well articulated rationale.

Disagreements and Conflicts – disagreements or conflicts with supervisor are addressed directly and assertively; being honest is seen as strengthening the product and the working relationship.

Supervisor Feedback – supervisor feedback is compared with own self evaluation; may engage supervisor in discussing or processing differing views, but professional ultimately decides validity of feedback and how to make use of it.

ORIENTATION TO THEORY

Origin of Approach to Theory – has developed or is developing own personal theory about work and use of professional theories in that work; personal theory is electric, made of own integration of professional and personal experience, beliefs, values, and professional theories.

Application of Theory – professional theories are used and combined or modified flexibly to address particular situations or individuals.

Reflection on Use of Theory – us of professional theories becomes a more conscious process, if less conscious, can be reflected upon and described retroact.

(Adapted from Michael Ignelzi, Slippery Rock University)
Definition of Supervision

Supervision is an intervention that is provided by a senior member of a profession to a junior member or members of that same profession. The relationship is evaluative, extends over time, and has the simultaneous process of enhancing the professional functioning of a junior member(s), monitoring the quality of professional services offered to the clients/students s/he, or they see(s), and serving as a gatekeeper for those who are to enter the particular profession.

Four Roles of Supervision

The Expert Practitioner Role:

Provides expert practitioner supervision for program implementation and work tasks, consultation for student issues and interventions, and expertise for student development theoretical questions.

**Emphasis:** My job is to really find out what strengths and areas of growth my supervisee has, and then to help him or her develop further during the time we are working together.

**Non-emphasis:** The professionals in my office need to be competent and effective. I want to see high student satisfaction and program success. I do not want to hear about staff mistakes that lead to student dissatisfaction, shed poor light on our office in the campus community, or worse, cause liability problems.

The Evaluative Role:

Evaluates supervisee skills and professional work.

**Emphasis:** My job is to evaluate staff competencies and areas of needed improvement and to prove ongoing feedback as well as periodic formal, written evaluations.

**Non-Emphasis:** The professionals in my office should know what their strengths and weaknesses are, and are able to judge where they stand in meeting expectations.

The Supportive Role:

Provides a supportive climate for work and professional growth.

**Emphasis:** My job is to help the supervisee move to a more independent level of professional functioning. The goal is for the supervisee to move beyond an overly dependent need for supervision meetings. He or she should be able to make independent decisions, take risks, work autonomously and feel that he or she will be supported or “backed,” and that uncritical non-punitive consultation is always available.

**Non-emphasis:** The professionals in my office should be able to function independently and competently without a lot of handholding.

The Administrative Role:

Provides staff with office/agency/service management and addresses personnel concerns.

**Emphasis:** My job is to provide hands-on management of this office’s mission, operations, personnel decisions and issues, and staff.

**Non-emphasis:** This office should really be able to self-manage so that I can mainly focus on other leadership tasks.

Adapted From Materials Presented By:
Guidelines for Supervision
In the Field of Student Affairs

Before Supervision

- Insure that you are qualified to provide supervision by having had adequate training in supervisory skills (e.g., attending workshops on supervision, group, reading, etc.).
- Insure that you are willing to accept the responsibilities associated with supervision (e.g., time commitments and legal responsibility for the supervisee’s student/group outcomes).
- Assess your supervisory abilities to see if they are adequate for the training needs of the specific supervisee assigned to you.
- Insure that the appointment (match) of the supervisee to the supervisor has adequately been considered (e.g., desired theoretical orientation, experience with the supervisee’s responsibilities).
- Insure that the supervision will be meaningful (one student affairs’ professional has suggested that at least 5% of the training time should be individual face-to-face supervision). Avoid “signing off” or assuming responsibility for care without adequate authority or supervisory opportunities.
- Have the supervisee sign a statement acknowledging that he or she has read the relevant code of ethics (e.g., American College Personnel Association’s Ethical Standards). Ask the supervisee to agree to follow that code in conduct of treatment.
- Insure that the training program has guidelines (e.g., student, group, activities and supervisory hour requirements, procedures for addressing dissatisfaction) for the student affairs training program.
- Avoid any dual relationships with the supervisee (e.g., family member, sexual involvement, business partner).

Supervisory Session 1

- Explore the supervisee’s interests/expectations/experience and stage of development in supervision, especially difficulties in past supervision.
- Negotiate the terms of supervision – goals of training, meeting times, meeting length, ground rules (including your expectations), norms of the supervision, types of data presented by supervisee (transcripts, audiotape, videotape, live supervision, etc.), style of presentation and commentary, work quality and quantity expectations, and any financial arrangements between supervisee and employer.
- Explain any administrative requirements of the supervision (e.g., limits of confidentiality, legal and ethical responsibilities, and evaluation/documentation requirements).
- Explain your theoretical and practical approach to supervision and how this approach will affect the supervision and the conduct of student affairs activities. Admit to any biases (e.g., past training or experience that may shape your attitude toward student affairs activities) that may be reflected in supervision.
- If differences exist between the supervisor and supervisee (e.g., cultural, gender, ethnicity, etc.), briefly address how such differences can be explored during the course of evaluation.
- Explore the supervisee’s level of comfort with the supervisor and supervisory contract. If conflicts cannot be surmounted, then explore an administrative solution with the training director.
- Insure that the supervisee on each activity/student/group maintains appropriate documentation. An activity plan should be prepared and co-signed by the supervisor for each activity.
- Insure that appropriate documentation is maintained on the supervision process. Complete a record of supervision that documents that the supervision occurred (this process will continue following each subsequent supervisory session). Such a record should include the date of the supervisory session, the major themes of the supervisory session, the supervisee’s response to supervision, and the supervisor’s signature and title.
Guidelines for Supervision continued

Ongoing Sessions

- Look for opportunities to foster knowledge and understanding of theoretical concepts underlying student affairs activities and principals. Be careful to weigh the developmental level and readiness of the supervisee in offering such comments.
- Help the supervisee understand the nature of the relationship being formed with the student/group (e.g., the student/group stage of development.)
- Help the supervisee successfully develop an ability to identify indications for intervention and/or techniques for specific student/group problems. Remember that the development of such skills is slow and gradual for most supervisees.
- Teach the supervisee to deal with student/group’s resistance and compliance issues.
- Help the supervisee in developing and understanding of the student/group’s social contexts.
- Suggest to the supervisee adjunctive support and growth opportunities.
- Suggest additional student affairs experiences/supervision or observation as necessary.
- Be aware of the possibility of parallel process in the development of skills. Integrate and explore parallel process as appropriate to the content, readiness, and maturity of the supervisee.
- Evaluate and provide meaningful feedback regarding the supervisee’s progress on an ongoing basis.
- Insure the safety of the student/group while encouraging the development and autonomy of the supervisee as appropriate.
- Focus supervisory comments on the student/group under consideration and on the supervisee’s concerns.

Failure to Show for Supervision

- Explore the meaning of the action in terms of the supervisee’s commitment to supervision. If resistance is present, attempt to explore those feelings of the supervisee.
- If continued tardiness or “failure to show” occurs, inform the supervisee that his or her evaluation will be negatively influenced if the problems continue.
- If further tardiness or “failure to show” occurs, inform the supervisee that you will be informing his or her training director if the problem continues.

Supervision Is Not Progressing

- Explore and search for solutions to the supervisee.
- If problems persist, seek consultation with a colleague regarding the supervisor-supervisee relationship.
- Encourage the supervisee to obtain counseling from another professional when the supervisee is having personal problems. Such a recommendation is especially important when the supervisee’s personal problems appear to be causing harm in his or her relationship with the students or activities.

Evaluation of Supervision

- Formally evaluate the supervisee on a 3-month, 6-month, and yearly basis.
- Create a developmental plan for both the supervisor and supervisee designed to address the deficiencies mentioned in the evaluation. The plan includes reading, additional supervision, training, or therapeutic experiences.
Termination of Supervision

- Explore the impact of supervision on the supervisee. Examine what has been accomplished and what would further benefit the supervisee.
- Explore the supervisee’s experience of supervision by asking for a description of critical incidents during supervision.
- Deal with other termination issues as suggested by the supervisee.

EVALUATION OF SUPERVISION

Name of Supervisor ____________________________________________

Name of Supervisee ____________________________________________

Semester/Year ________________________________________________

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Roles and Responsibilities of CSAL Supervisors

My supervisor watches for hidden agendas and gets them on the table.
My supervisor communicates assertively.

Comments:

EVALUATION
Agree      Disagree
1 2 3 4 5  
My supervisor actively seeks feedback from me.
1 2 3 4 5  
My supervisor knows how I prefer to receive feedback.
1 2 3 4 5  
My supervisor encourages me to engage in dialogue geared toward feedback with each other.
Comments:

TRAINING/DEVELOPMENT
Agree      Disagree
1 2 3 4 5  
My supervisor is careful to balance professional responsibilities to ensure a level of healthy challenge and support.
1 2 3 4 5  
My supervisor sets clear expectations of me.
1 2 3 4 5  
My supervisor delegates adequately.
1 2 3 4 5  
My supervisor identifies and chooses training activities to assist me in meeting expectations.
1 2 3 4 5  
My supervisor adapts to different learning styles as needed.
1 2 3 4 5  
My supervisor develops staff training for the purpose of acquiring new skills.
1 2 3 4 5  
My supervisor develops staff training for the purpose of honing acquired skills.
1 2 3 4 5  
My supervisor looks to develop skills that are deficient in me.
1 2 3 4 5  
My supervisor monitors and proactively guards against burnout in me.
1 2 3 4 5  
My supervisor is committed to staff goal setting and periodically reviews set goals.
1 2 3 4 5  
My supervisor utilizes me as peer facilitators in skills training.
Comments:

Adapted from materials presented by: Schwitzer, A.M., Shaffer, J. L., & Gonzalez, T. A. (1999) Making supervision work for the new professionals and their supervisors, Atlanta, GA: ACPA Convection