

Key guidelines/expectations for Effective and Inclusive Honours Supervision in the School of BABS

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The School of BABS is dedicated to creating a positive, inclusive educational environment for Honours students that embraces diversity in all forms and rejects any form of hostile workplace, discrimination, or bullying. We have a clear statement of behavioural expectations (as well as definitions of discrimination, (sexual) harassment and bullying, gendered violence, which can be found here: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/harassment>). Beyond UNSW and Faculty protocols, it is our goal in BABS to create a learning environment that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and values student identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, and ability).

Honours is, for most students, the first time they get a real exposure to research, making it a crucial time for them to decide whether they will consider this path in the future. In this context, the research supervisors of Honours students can significantly influence student well-being and future career direction. A key element in supervisor-student interactions is the inherent power imbalance between the student and supervisor. Importantly, research management strategies continue to improve, and the style used by a supervisor's own supervisor when they undertook research training may no longer be the most effective nor appropriate. The School of BABS endeavours to equip supervisors with appropriate training in specific areas where possible and feasible. At the end of their Honours, regardless of scientific outcomes, students should come out with a rich experience that is facilitated by a supervisory team that fosters learning and development in a supportive environment. Ultimately, if a student has applied themselves as best as possible, even if they do not attain the grade or results that they or their supervisor might desire, they should still have a sense of accomplishment on what they have done/achieved during their Honours.

Below are key areas and attributes around supervisor behaviour that individuals and supervisory teams are expected to adhere to.

Expectations from supervisors:

- Supervisors should **possess the right skills and experience to guide and mentor** an Honours student in their chosen project area
- Supervisors should **receive frequent training opportunities** offered by the School or the University to ensure their **practices remain optimal and appropriate**
- Supervisors are expected to **behave with professionalism, ethics and integrity**
- Supervisors should endeavour to **build trust and foster a collaborative culture**
- Supervisors should **strive to provide reasonable accommodations and support** for students
- Supervisors should be **capable of grievance and conflict resolution** and/or be aware of the resources available at the university and guide students in using them

- Supervisors have a duty of care to **ensure students are treated in an inclusive, respectful way**
- The role of the supervisor is to **support the student and help them reach their research potential**, bring out their best ideas, mentor them on how research is to be conducted, along with assessing their work and thesis
- Supervisors should be **supportive, treat students with respect**, explore what they know/do not know, and be actively involved in guiding the students' research project. They should also **allow students to contribute intellectually** to the direction of the project if suitable
- Supervisors should **deliver constructive feedback** highlighting students' research strengths and weaknesses. Such feedback should be **balanced between encouraging students on what they have done well and constructively critical** of where they can improve
- Supervisors are expected to **guide students and help them learn to manage their time** and take ownership of their projects, while avoiding micromanaging a student's project/time
- Supervisors must **declare and manage any conflicts of interest** involving the University, supervisory team, or Honours student

Honours Interview Guidelines for the Assessment Committee

As part of the BABS Honours assessment process, students will be assessed and interviewed on their thesis by a panel of three academics. Students need to be prepared for criticism and feedback on their work, as peer review is part of being a professional scientist. For the best student experience in BABS, it is essential that the interview is conducted in a respectful, fair, and transparent way so that Honours students will understand that there is a level playing field. The panel has a duty of care towards this end. It should be kept in mind that there can be a large power difference between the student and the panel. The Honours interview will probably be one of the most stressful academic experiences a student has ever had, and panel members need to be mindful of that.

Guide for Honours interview panels:

Do	Do not
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be supportive - Treat the student with respect - Ask the students about Honours life compared to undergraduate - Compliment the student on the things they have done well - Explore what they know and do not know - Avoid interrupting students - Give students time to think before they answer - Take it easy on the student if they are finding it difficult - Provide avenues for improvement for areas that are lacking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be abrupt, disinterested - Arrive unprepared; without questions - Come without having read the entire thesis - Make assumptions on students' performance based on their background or how they present themselves - Forget that the student could be highly stressed - Forget to provide constructive feedback - Criticise aspects of the project that are beyond their control - Do all the talking and dominate the discussion - Rush the student or the meeting - End the interview on a negative note

By joining the BABS Honours Program as a supervisor, you are implicitly accepting to abide by the former guidelines and to seek guidance when issues arise.



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