

Summary of Faculty Guidelines for Supervision in Mathematics

The essentials

A supervision consists of a supervisor (you) and usually two students, who have worked on and handed in their solutions to example sheets set by the lecturer. They are usually held in two-weekly patterns, and the supervisor writes down explanations, solutions, illustrations etc. *on paper*, leaving the students free to think and follow.

As a supervisor, you are expected to

- know how to solve the example sheet questions (this usually should involve you solving them yourself);
- mark the students' work before the supervision;
- write clear notes during the supervision which the students can take away;
- give constructive feedback to the students on their work and in the supervision;
- write supervision reports at the end of term;
- be polite and professional at all times, being non-judgmental about the students' problems with and viewpoints of the material.

These points, which are the bare essentials, are explained and enlarge up in the full guide Supervision in Mathematics, available at www.maths.cam.ac.uk/facultyoffice/supervisorsguide. **You are strongly recommended to read the full guide (and are expected to do so before you supervise).**

Practicalities

Furthermore, you should

- ask lecturers and/or other supervisors for help and support when needed;
- read in the full guide about sensible timings within term of the supervisions;
- arrange a suitable space for supervision and a suitable place for handing in work;
- inform the students in a timely manner of deadlines and the above places;
- inform the DoS of any problems, such as students missing supervisions, not handing in work, visibly struggling etc. (this is not “telling on the student”, but helps DoS in their sensible monitoring of potential problems);
- not claim for more than has been agreed without prior consultation.

Aims

To be a successful supervisor, you must

- create or maintain the interest and enthusiasm of your students for the subject — in particular,
 - for weak students (and some strong ones), try to build up their confidence,
 - for all students, especially strong ones, stimulate them;
- find out whether your students have understood the course material and thought about its wider implications, and help them to do so;
- give your students the opportunity to ask about aspects of the course that they find difficult, puzzling or fascinating (and encourage quieter students to do this);
- ensure that your students are doing an appropriate amount of work and that their efforts are suitably directed;
- monitor your students' progress and report back to the DoS, immediately in the case of an emerging problem;
- encourage your students to develop a measure of personal responsibility for their education.