

Supervision concept • Natalia Zaretskaya

Transparency and openness

Transparency is central to a healthy team environment and to a relationship between doctoral researchers and their advisor. **Therefore, I am always explicit about the hiring criteria, authorship rules, contract durations as well as funding possibilities and career perspectives after a PhD.**

Independence and support

Excellent scientists are independent thinkers and actors. In my team doctoral candidates practice becoming scientists through independence in and responsibility for their projects. **They have freedom in choosing which conference or workshop they attend, in which way they solve a particular problem and in formulating their own research questions (if it fits to the project goals, of course).** At the same time, I ensure that they feel my presence and support whenever they need a discussion or advice. **My office doors and Slack are always open to them.**

Work-life balance

Being a mother, I know first-hand the challenges of balancing research work and family obligations. In running my lab, I always consider doctoral researchers with family responsibilities (currently one). **I make sure no important events and meetings are held in the evening and kids frequently join our informal activities.** Although I know how important personal interactions are within a team, support individual working hours and partial home office for all lab members, and especially of parents.

As a thesis advisor of doctoral candidates, I see my main mission in supporting the professional growth of excellent scientists. Achieving this goal to me consists not only of knowledge transfer and training science-specific skills like problem solving, efficient time and project management. Supportive and collaborative environment are also key ingredients of scientific thriving. Here I list supervision principals that I view as central in achieving this goal.



Team spirit

Having four doctoral candidates in my team, it is important to ensure a good relationship not only between each individual and myself, but also between them. **I support our group's joint activities outside work, such as outdoor activities and joint celebrations.** We also took part in the Clover leaf race 2022 as a team.

Inspiration

Science is an exciting and a rewarding endeavor, and one of my supervision goals is conveying this message to the doctoral candidates. Doctoral thesis advisor is not only a scientific mentor, but also an authority, a leader and a role model. Being well-aware of this, **I share books, articles and podcasts I find exciting, show examples of scientific excellency, and demonstrate a healthy work-life balance by example.**

Collegiality and equality

My attitude towards a doctoral candidate is that of a colleague rather than that of a teacher. Our team has no hierarchy, and everyone is treated equally no matter whether they are doctoral candidates, postdocs or undergraduate students. **We jointly make decisions related to day-to-day lab functioning (e.g., whether to hold a lab meeting, which journal to submit a manuscript to).** Everyone is involved in the hearings and discussions when a new lab member is being hired.

Continuous self-improvement

My supervision style is a product of continuous reflection on my own experience as a doctoral candidate and junior postdoc in different countries, adopting the best practices and continuously learning. **In addition to attending formal supervision and leadership workshops, I ask doctoral researchers for feedback about the lab operations and modes of interacting with me in order to improve our joint productivity, work climate and team spirit.**