

Institute of Astronomy**Guide for Supervisors NST Part II Astrophysics**

It is a requirement that all supervisors have been 'trained' before they will be paid for supervisions. If you are new to Cambridge supervising and have not yet attended a training course please book yourself a place via <http://www.training.cam.ac.uk>. If for any reason you are unable to attend such a training course please contact the Part II Astrophysics course coordinator.

In addition there is an on-line resource for new supervisors, see:

<https://www.vle.cam.ac.uk/course/index.php?categoryid=11971>

and for further information: <https://www.training.cam.ac.uk/cppd/Course/cppd-acprac16>

In particular please note the following:

1. Each student is entitled to 3 or 4 supervisions depending on the number of lectures given per course:

16 Lecture course:	3 supervisions, plus <i>a revision</i> supervision in the Easter Term.
24 Lecture course	4 supervisions, plus <i>a revision</i> supervision in the Easter Term.

[All lecture courses are 24 lectures long]
2. Arrange the supervisions at roughly two weekly intervals through term. It is often convenient to arrange the final supervision at the start of the following term. Having arranged a time, make sure you turn up for it.
3. Use your own judgement as to what problems to set. You may use just the example sheets handed out by the lecturer. But, unless the example sheets already contain them, it is good practice to set a few old Tripos questions instead of some of the questions on the sheet in order to give students a feel for what is expected of them in the exam. Make sure that you work through the questions in advance. In cases where you are not clear about the solutions, discuss with the lecturer.
4. Ask for material to be handed in advance. And make sure that you have taken the time to mark their work before the supervision. You should not expect your supervisees to hand in their work more than 3 days before the supervision is scheduled. Encourage the students to hand in the attempts at the questions they cannot do. One purpose of a supervision is to find out what they are having problems with.
5. Make sure that the students are able to leave the supervision with written material about the problems. If you use a white/chalk board, then give them a chance to take notes. It is quicker, and more interactive, if you are able to work through problems on paper in front of them, and give them the paper to take away.
6. Before the end of term supervisors should fill out a report for each student, using the [CamCORS](http://www.camcors.cam.ac.uk/) website (<http://www.camcors.cam.ac.uk/>). You should aim to get the reports *in just before the end* of term, so that they can be discussed with students in *end of term* interviews with Directors of Studies. Payment is made automatically once the relevant Director of Studies approves your report. Colleges are only allowed to approve payments on particular dates (for reasons of taxation), so if you are late in submitting your reports, you won't receive payment until the end of the following term.
7. Claim for all supervisions in the relevant term, therefore, Michaelmas Term supervisions in Michaelmas Term and Lent Term supervisions in Lent Term.
8. If there are problems of any sort, please get in touch with me as soon as they arise.
In particular please notify the Teaching Secretary and the Course Coordinator if a student is habitually missing supervisions without a good reason that has been cleared with you in advance. In this case we would contact the student's College on your behalf. Note that Colleges have the right to withhold payment for supervisions for which the student has not turned up and where the supervisor has not raised the alarm.



INSTITUTE OF ASTRONOMY

NST PART II ASTROPHYSICS

Advice to supervisors on revision supervision

In Easter Term, Part II students are offered an optional revision supervision in each of their subjects. These supervisions are popular because they are based on exam practice. Students are however often unsure how to use these supervisions effectively. For example, in a term when they have no lectures and thus have the opportunity to do many past papers, they may feel reluctant to burden their supervisors with lots of exam question attempts to mark (especially given the, by now, large collection of past papers available).

As usual it is up to supervisors and students to agree the format of these supervisions. However, one good model is to encourage the students to do as many past Tripos papers as they can and then to only bring to the supervisor's attention those questions where they have had difficulty. In this case they should be told to inform the supervisor by email well ahead of the supervision which of the questions they want the supervisor to cover. This approach is preferable to the one that is sometimes used of only offering help on a limited number of questions. Tripos questions can be quite demanding and students can be demoralised if they feel in the exam term that nobody is willing to help them. Supervisors should thus respond flexibly to student need, but need of course to ensure they have sufficient advanced warning to meet these needs. Occasionally a particular student may turn out to be excessively demanding of a supervisor's time and in these cases it is of course acceptable for the supervisor to say that they don't have time to offer any more help – this response needs to be used sparingly however.

It's probably a good idea for Lent term supervisors to lay out the ground rules (and expectations on both sides) for the supervision when you meet your students for the 4th supervision early next term and for Michaelmas supervisors to do this by email. An important issue to discuss is the most useful timing for the supervision. This is also a good time for supervisors to recommend particular questions – not necessarily the most recent but ones that are particularly instructive.

If any issues arise that you'd like to discuss, don't hesitate to let me know.

Cathie Clarke

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