

HOW TO FIND a thesis supervisor



» www.discoveruOttawa.ca

Identification

- » Consult the website that corresponds to your program of interest.
- » Read potential supervisor profiles to gain more insight into their respective research and theoretical approaches.
- » Find out about any research chairs and/or prizes that the potential supervisors have been awarded.

TIP: Verify that any potential supervisors are in fact eligible to supervise a thesis.

Communication

Once you have narrowed down the possibilities, write directly to any potential supervisors.

- » Formally introduce yourself.
- » Provide information about your academic background.
- » State clearly what your research interests are and how they match up with the professor's.

TIP: Avoid generic emails and ensure that you have thoroughly revised your text before sending it.

Coordination

There are many ways to meet a potential supervisor:

- » Telephone interview; Skype chat
- » Graduate Studies Fall Open House
- » Planned visit to the campus (in coordination with the faculty/department)

TIP: No matter what the format of the meeting, come prepared (i.e. bring your updated CV, some notes about the research project you want to undertake, a list of the questions you would like to ask, etc.)

Evaluation

When evaluating a potential thesis supervisor, ask yourself:

- » Is the professor interested in my thesis topic?
- » Are the professor's theoretical and philosophical assumptions compatible with my own? Suitable for the direction I want to take?
- » Can I exchange ideas freely with this person?
- » Is there room for me in the lab/research facilities?
- » From what kind of funding will I benefit (i.e. supervisor's grants or contracts)?
- » Will there be opportunities to participate in conferences, to contribute to publications?
- » How often can I expect to meet with the professor?
- » Is the professor planning any leaves (sabbatical) that will interrupt the course of my project?

TIP: Meeting the potential supervisor's current students is a critical aspect of finding the right environment for you. Current students will be your day-to-day colleagues and a major source of support and interaction. Ask about their work and projects, lab interactions, etc. Also consider the supervisor's track record (i.e. success of previous students, average time to completion.)

N.B.: A professor is not obligated to take on a student if he or she feels it's not a suitable collaboration or if there is insufficient support/funding available.

More info: www.grad.uOttawa.ca/thesis

