

PHD Supervision Seminar: NEXT LEVEL

RETREAT FOR EXPERIENCED PHD SUPERVISORS AT UNIVERSITY OF VIENNA

The purpose of this retreat is to support scholarly based reflection and exchange of best practices among experienced supervisors at University of Vienna to ensure a high-quality PhD education. It also offers an opportunity to explore and deepen awareness of the supervisor's role as a research leader and culture bearer within the academic community. The retreat is facilitated by Gitte Wichmann-Hansen and Mirjam Godskesen two internationally leading educational developers within the field of PhD supervision.

We are looking forward to taking supervision to the next level together with you!

DATE: May 19–20, 2026

LOCATION: [Seminarhotel Tulbingerkogel, 3001 Mauerbach bei Wien](#)

Transportation from Vienna to Mauerbach and back will be provided.

PROGRAM

19 May 2026

08.45 **Arrival, coffee & tea**

09.00 **Welcome**

Course introduction and presentation in groups

09.20 **Optimising your supervision: learning from experience**

Reflection on your supervisor role based on previous experiences:

- What characterises your current supervision?
- How has it changed over the years?
- What are your greatest challenges and how would you like to develop your supervision?

We discuss how to build up a trustful relationship, handle asymmetry and to balance support, direction and student independence based on your cases and models from the PhD supervision literature.

Coffee/tea break included

11.45 **Lunch**

12.45 **Inspiring each other: sharing best practices**

This session is based on participants' input about their own best practices. Participant presentations will be followed up by plenary discussions and scholarly input from the facilitators based on PhD supervision literature. Possible themes:

- Team-supervision
- Facilitating collaboration in the research group
- How to organize effective supervision meetings
- How to promote and support scientific writing
- Motivating PhD students and the research group
- Help the PhD student stay productive
- Giving constructive feedback
- Terminating students – when and how

14.15 **Walk-and-talk followed by coffee/tea break**

15.15 **Dealing with conflicts and solving difficult cases**

Conflicts and personality clashes may in some cases complicate PhD projects that could have been inspiring and productive. Based on your cases the facilitators select examples that represent common conflicts in PhD supervision. The examples are analysed in reflective teams by use of different techniques and roles. Finally, conflict theory is introduced, including tools to mediate conflicts both at individual and group.

17.15 **Free time**

19.00 **Dinner**

20 May 2026

08.30 **How to support PhD candidates' well-being**

International literature identifies a current "mental health crisis" among PhD candidates. We will provide a literature-based presentation on PhD stress and well-being followed by a plenary discussion.

10.00 **Break**

10.15 **Take care of yourself and you can take care of your candidates**

Striking a balance between thriving and working hard is not always easy. It is a balance that supervisors need to find in their own professional lives as well as in their way of supporting candidates. We will discuss how it is possible to act as a role model for striking a sustainable work-life balance and how to address well-being both on an individual and on a group level. The format is based on both casework and sharing best practices

11.45 **Lunch**

12.45 **How to create an ideal research environment?**

As a supervisor and maybe research group leader you have great influence on the work culture. The work culture includes practices and norms for how to meet, provide feedback, collaborate, and share research. These issues are important to focus on because they correlate with candidates' well-being, productivity, progress and satisfaction. We address, among other things:

- How do you support peer-interaction among PhD candidates?
- In what way do you think of the research community as a resource in your own supervision?
- How do you ensure that competition is not in the way of collaboration?
- How to allocate tasks and responsibility in a research group?

This session is based on input from the literature and your best practices.

Break is included.

14.30 **Your future supervision practice**

Individual reflection on your future developmental goals as a supervisor followed by group discussions, including a possibility for taking part in facilitated community building among participants after the course.

15.00 **Closing of the seminar**