

# The Stress-Free PhD Questionnaire

Take some time to reflect on these questions. Your answers will tell you which area of your PhD life -- and week of the programme -- needs your attention most.

## **Intro (for the coaching calls, if applicable)**

1. Tell me a little about yourself. Where are you writing your PhD? How many years are you into the PhD programme? What's your topic? How is it going?

## **General questions**

2. What are your goals for the next six weeks? Is there anything in particular you would like to work on?
3. What are your main PhD worries?
4. If you could only change one thing what would it be?

## **Stress & Stress Management**

1. How relaxed and balanced do you feel? Do you feel you are where you need to be work-wise? Or do you feel like you're 'behind' and need to 'catch up'?
2. How are your energy levels? Do you wake up tired? Are you tired after a day of working on your thesis or do you have energy to spare?
3. How is your sleep? Are you experiencing subtle (or not so subtle) health problems that don't seem to go away? Frequent colds? Anything else?

## **Self-Care**

1. What do you do to relax and unwind?
2. Do you exercise regularly? What type of exercise?
3. Have you ever meditated? Is it something that appeals to you?

## **Work Routine**

1. What does a typical workday look like? How many hours do you work? What are your routines? Do you feel you should be 'working more'?
2. How is your focus and concentration once you get to work? Can you get into the zone? How long can you sustain this for?
3. Do you keep thinking about work after your workday has ended? Do you have difficulty shifting your attention away from work in your spare time?

## **Writing Habits**

1. Do you have a daily writing habit?
2. Are you satisfied with your writing habits? What are your main frustrations?
3. Do you feel you are getting enough work done? If no, why not? Do you procrastinate, or is it something else?

## Supervision

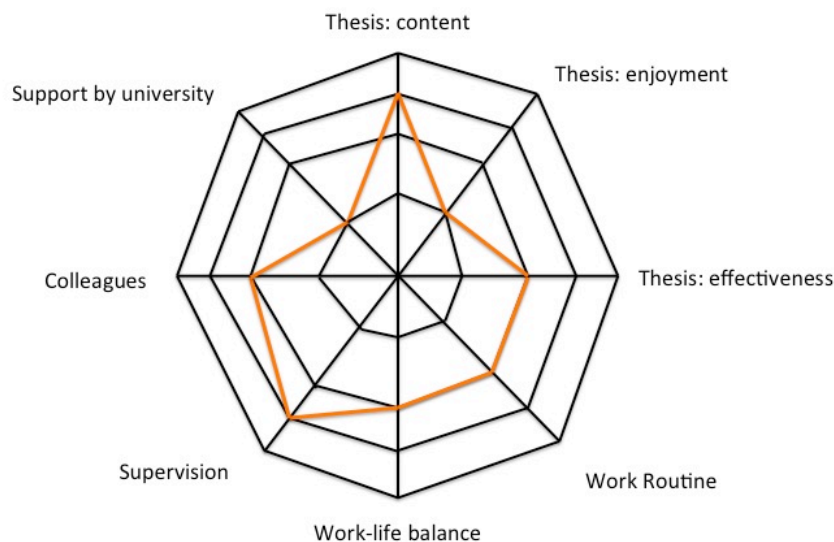
2. Is your supervising relationship providing feedback to improve the content of your research?
3. Does your supervisor provide emotional support when needed? Do you feel valued and respected by your supervisor? Do you feel you can trust him/her?

## Mood & Mind-set

1. Are you in a PhD slump, or is everything going okay right now?
2. What are your levels of PhD guilt, and if applicable what do you feel guilty about?
3. How are you coping with criticism? Is this difficult at the moment (or always)?

## The PhD – an overview

Draw/ print a spider web similar to the one below. Score each of the items from very dissatisfied (a score in the middle of the spider web) to very satisfied (a score on the outer edge of the spider web) based on the questions below.



1. Thesis: content. Do you have your research topic, theory & methodology figured out? If not, do you feel you are making progress, or are you feeling lost?
2. Thesis: enjoyment. Do you enjoy working on your thesis? Does it energise you?
3. Thesis: effectiveness. Are you advancing or are you stuck?
4. Work routine: Do you have regular working habits that work for you?
5. How would you rate your work-life balance?
6. Supervision: Overall, how would you rate your supervision experience?
7. How is your relationship with your colleagues? Is the atmosphere friendly or competitive?
8. Do you feel supported by your university?