Webinar:
Choosing the right PhD supervisor, and how to get the most of them
(Current PhD Perspective)

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How I picked my supervisor:
Standard ways

• Luck/Coincidence
• Opportunity seized
• The project was interesting
• Good university
• The right location
How I picked my supervisor: Extra-picky ways

- Advising style
- Degree of input and independence
- Support for training courses or conferences
- Group/department culture
- Personality
- Ask your connections if they know them
What to expect and what they expect

• Postgraduate student handbook or university guidelines available but vague
• Every supervisor is different - don’t be afraid to ask!
  – Working hours (lab vs field/modelling) and working away from the office
  – Frequency of meetings
  – How to track them down
When/how to approach your supervisor with a problem

- Regularly scheduled meeting?
- Send an email
  - Forces you to write the problem clearly
  - Keeps them in the loop even if they can’t help right now
- Set deadlines for yourself to solve it
- Be specific about the guidance you need
- Suggest a solution or plan for their feedback
Other useful support mechanisms and resources

• Other students and postdocs in your group
  – Remember everyone is busy – don’t make people feel obligated to solve your problems
  – These are/will be/should be your friends and colleagues, and they are probably happy to have a cup of tea and a chat and share their experiences!

• Department-level resources: general student mentors, head of graduate school, head of school

• University-level resources through student union, counselling services, international student centre
Top Tip

Communicate! Don’t be afraid to ask questions, be honest, and send reminders when necessary