

## Help student to obtain funds

### What

One of the main activities of the supervisor is to help PhD students to find economic resources useful for their professional development during the period of the doctorate. Through the support of their supervisor, PhD students can obtain funds to carry out their research activities and to spend time abroad.

### From contexts and experiences in the FESTA-project

The study circles revealed that supervisors who have a power, such as being heads of unit, have a greater ease of access to economic resources for their students' researches than other researchers:

"In my unit the students complete their program with the realization of the chip that they designed during their PhD program. This activity is also very costly in terms of co-financing by FBK [...]. This creates diversity from us because if you are the head of unit and you have access to those funds, your PhD student has smoothed the way. Your colleague, who does not have access to the resource, will have the doctoral student that just makes simulations "(male supervisor).

The interviews showed that PhD students need greater support regarding the possibilities available to them for the future careers:

"My advisor did not give me clear directions on what to do after my PhD. The school has never organized something about this, such as seminars or meetings. I received informally suggestions from colleagues who work in my own unit, like postdoc and junior researcher. They gave me some advices also on how to write a research proposal for obtaining funds and how I can go for a postdoc application" (female PhD student).

### Recommendations for good practice

Support for research funding and for travel:

- The supervisor is a first point of contact for a PhD student. Is important that the student talks to others who have successfully won grant funding and makes use of their insight and expertise. Many universities have a Research Office, or equivalent, which is responsible for administering grants
- To help PhD students obtain funds, the supervisor should introduce them to his/her network and sponsor the work of PhD students with key persons in the scientific community. The supervisor, to help student to get funds, should:
  - o Give information about how to write a research grant application and where to apply for money, as well as information about what is important when applying for a post-doc position and what to think about when planning a post-doc period
  - o Insert PhD student into the network of the scientific community

- Allocate a part of own resources to travel of their students (if they have not available budget). In this way the student can present his/her work in front of an expert audience who could provide advice and tips.

To establish themselves & prepare their future:

- The supervisors must help and inform their students about the possibilities of future career during the doctoral program and not just at the end. Advising about careers and postdoctoral positions was clearly important, such as letters of recommendation and helping with the networking.
- Is important that the supervisor:
  - Gives information about how to pursue a career in academia and outside
  - Integrates students into her/his professional networks
  - Gives information about funding opportunities

The supervisor ought to help students to make the transition out of a doctoral program into the professional world.

#### **From literature and other sources**

“Assisting in finding funding to attend conference attendance at events of course requires funding for travel, subsistence and perhaps accommodations, as well as the cost of producing papers. Often part of any grant provided to a department or school to support the candidate will include an element of financial support for such activities, or alternatively there may be an internal fund for this purpose. Supervisors need to be aware of funding sources and able to assist candidates to tap them in appropriate cases” (Taylor, Beasley, 2005: 121).

Taylor, S., & Beasley, N. (2005). A handbook for doctoral supervisors. Abingdon: Routledge.

The help given by the supervisor to the student to obtain funds during the doctoral program has an impact on the student's future career.

Regarding that, a part of the literature shows that women are those who receive less support and information on future career development. Research carried out by De Welde and Laursen (2008) shows that a disproportionate number of women included in their research sample are not receiving career advice (close to 40% of the sample). Furthermore, all of the women who were considering leaving STEM reported they were receiving inadequate career advice. While lack of career advice does not spell career failure, the connection between inadequate advice and dissatisfaction with career advising, points to a potential loss of confidence and diminished awareness of options, which may impact women more acutely.

De Welde, K., and Laursen, S. L. (2008). The 'Ideal Type' advisor: how advisors help STEM graduate students find their 'Scientific Feet'. *Open Ed J*, 1, 49-61.