



# Researcher Identity Development

Strengthening Science in Society Strategies

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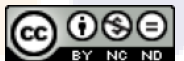
Incidents in the supervision of the doctoral thesis

**CASE 4: Student with personal problems**

The supervisor's perspective



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Joaquim is one of my PhD students. He is in his fourth year and has a grant that ends in six months. Things have gone smoothly from the beginning; Joaquim is really good and hard-working, and progressed at a good pace, but a couple of months ago he started having personal problems, the illness of a relative. At first, of course, I didn't even think about it: 'Don't worry, take the time you need; now you have to support your family'. But his relative is not yet fully recovered, there has been little progress on the thesis in the last two months and his grant will end in a few months. We tried to talk about it once but nothing changed. He was too overwhelmed and I didn't want to put more pressure on him.

I fully understand that family comes first, but it worries me that he might drop-out if his grant ends and he still sees the end of the thesis far away. I don't want to put pressure on him; he's stressed enough right now! But it would be a real shame if he didn't finish the thesis; the project is very good and so far we have had very interesting results. In addition, Joaquim is very competent and I think he will have good chances to continue in academia, if he wants. I'll have to try to talk to him again... but I don't know how to approach the conversation.



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