Defining supervisions

Student 1
So a typical supervision would be a bit like your interview but less scary. [Laughs] So, erm, you'll basically have, you know, it's either one-on-one, two-on-one, three-on-one, can be sometimes four-on-one. Mine tend to be three students and one academic. And you will discuss the essay you've submitted. So you might go over the main themes, some criticisms and sort of suggestions from your professor. And then [it] just tends to be open conversation about the topic… erm, some is more structured than others, it depends on your supervisor. And it's generally quite, it's quite a nice environment once you get past the, you know, initial nerves of being in that sort of environment. It's very open and welcome. I think you do learn a lot from it because the Cambridge system of learning and then being taught sort of turns the traditionally system of learning on its head. But it does work quite well, I think.

Student 2
A supervision is a small group teaching that you have… er, a small group teaching session that you have with, erm, an academic in your field. So this could be a PhD student or a, erm, or a lecturer or someone who is associated at your faculty and, erm, basically you're set some work to do before the supervision and usually this entails some level of preparation beforehand so whether this would be reading or an essay or completing [an] exercise and, erm … and so you bring that to the supervision and you begin to discuss with your supervisor and with your course-mates about what you've done for that week.