

RESEARCH SUPERVISION RECOGNITION PROGRAMME

Guide for Reviewers

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Being a Reviewer

Commitment as a Reviewer

There are 3 review periods during an academic year.

We will ask you to be a reviewer for 2 of the 3 review periods. We will check your availability to be a reviewer in the fortnight before the application window closes.

We will send you no more than 10 applications to review during each review period.

Role of a Reviewer

The five basic functions of reviewers for the UKCGE Research Supervision Recognition Programme are to:

- Determining whether the application is complete.
- Assessing the adequacy of the evidence.
- Commenting on the application.
- Making a final decision.
- Giving feedback to applications.

Timings of the Review

There are three review periods across the academic year: beginning in March, June and October. You will have up to 6 weeks to complete the reviews of the applications.

Example timings:

	Activity
Week 1	Receive review pack
Week 2	Review applications
Week 3	
Week 4	Agree outcome with co-reviewer and compile feedback
Week 5	
Week 6	Return completed review matrices to UKCGE

The exact dates of the forthcoming review windows can be found on the Research Supervision Recognition Programme website.

Review Panels

Every application is reviewed by a panel consisting of two reviewers. The UKCGE will assign you to a review panel and connect you, via email, with your co-reviewer.

Where possible the 'lead' reviewer's disciplinary background will match or be cognate to the applicant's; the second reviewer will not necessarily have similar subject expertise.

Once you have finished your individual assessment, including the feedback section of the matrix, you and your co-reviewer will need to exchange assessments, including your proposed feedback to the applicant, which will normally be drafted by the 'lead' reviewer in each case.

You may wish to contact your co-reviewer early in the process, to determine the dates by which you will both realistically be able to complete the reviews and when you will be able to schedule a discussion about your respective reviews.

You are likely to have different backgrounds and possibly differing expectations of supervision. **However, success of the programme depends on reviewers respecting one another's views and perspectives.** The process is about negotiating a final, shared judgement that is fair to the applicant, therefore you both need to agree on the outcome.

Receiving Review Packs

The UKCGE will email you, using your institution email address, the review packs once they have been prepared.

This is normally one week after the application window's closing date.

Storing and Sharing the Review Packs

The UKCGE has legal responsibility to protect and ensure safe handling of the data in applications. Please be mindful of how you handle the personal data and potentially sensitive information contained in the Application Forms.

- Please only store the Application Forms on your local machine.
- Please do not store them on your institution's servers.
- Please permanently delete this email once you have downloaded the zip file.
- Please be mindful of computer security once you have the applications stored on your computer (for example, lock your computer if you are away from it).
- Please do not share the Application Forms or Review Matrices with anyone other than your fellow review panellist or the main contact at the UKCGE.
- Please do not delete the files from your local computer until the review process has been completed and you receive an email from the UKCGE requesting you delete all files.

The Review Process

We recommend before attempting to complete the Review Matrix, you read through the applicant's submission.

During this first read-through focus on factors such as the applicant's philosophy of supervision and the experience and depth of knowledge evidenced; it's important to develop an 'understanding' for how the applicant approaches doctoral supervision.

Please also take account of their disciplinary perspective, which as we know will affect some of the practical elements of the supervisory process, and whether their institution has large numbers of sponsored (for example, research council or charity funded) or self-funding candidates as this will also have had an impact on their experience.

The Completeness of the Application

The first task is to determine whether applicants have addressed all the criteria of good supervisory practice. The Good Supervisory Practice Framework identifies 10 criteria of good practice.

In order to be recognised, applicants must – where able – address all the criteria, and this would be the first matter for a reviewer to consider.

If the applicant is unable to provide evidence for a criterion — for example, an institution policy prevents them from sitting on candidate selection panels — they must state this on their application with supporting evidence of their claim.

Where there is no evidence presented, this should be indicated in the final column of the Review Matrix with a view to eventual referral.

The Adequacy of Evidence

The second decision to be made, for each of the criteria for which evidence is presented, is whether it is satisfactory.

Examples of Evidence

In the **Examples of Evidence** document which you can download from our website, we provide examples of the types of evidence we expect applicants to provide.

These are illustrative only; those submitting applications are likely to provide many different forms of evidence, depending on their experience.

We advise that at this more detailed stage, during which you will be completing the Review Matrix (see the Making Judgements section below) based on the applicant's submission, you make notes that will enable you to give constructive and actionable feedback to the applicant once you have completed the review.

To be satisfactory, evidence must be:

Personal

The evidence must be personal to the applicant – it is their own practice that is being recognised, not their roles in the school or department or institution.

So, for example, a statement to the effect that the applicant has successfully acted for their school as a selector of research students for many years is not enough to evidence criterion 1; there would need to be a personal case study of how this function has been undertaken and what the individual had done to make it successful.

Recent

The evidence must relate to recent experience, usually defined as being within the previous five years.

Older experience may be referenced, for example if applicants refer to their own experiences as a research student to explain the origins of their practice, but the substance must not be of the dim and distance past but relate to more recent experiences.

Reflective

The evidence must be presented in a way that is reflective rather than purely descriptive.

So, for example, a statement that 'I have always enjoyed positive relationships with candidates' would not be enough to evidence criterion 2; there would need to be evidence of why they thought that such relationships were vital, how they had gone about establishing them, how they had monitored their continuing efficacy and, where appropriate, how they had changed their strategies for supervision and with what results.

Example-based

For each of the criteria, applicants need to provide evidence in the form of two concrete examples derived from their practice.

So, a general exposition of the three main methods (self-review, peer review and student review) would not on its own be acceptable to evidence 10, reflective practice; there would need to be actual instances of how the supervisor had employed one or a combination of these methods to enhance their practice.

Scholarly

There is a substantial scholarly literature on supervisory practice (see, for example, Taylor, S. (2020) [The Research Supervisors' Bibliography](#)).

There is an expectation that supervisors will have an awareness of that literature and that it will have had an impact in changing or reinforcing their practice.

So, an entire application which made no reference to the scholarly literature would not be acceptable, and it would be expected that evidence would be provided in relation to at least some of the attributes although there is no expectation at the other extreme that supervisors would be able to cite it in defence of every aspect of their practice.

Systematic

Finally, there is an expectation that applicants will take a systematic approach to developing their expertise in supervision.

So, for example, an entire account which provided no evidence of development would again be unlikely to meet criterion 10; for the latter, it would be expected that supervisors would provide evidence of taking appropriate opportunities to systematically develop their expertise in relationship to at least some of the attributes.

Methods could range from informal conversations with other supervisors through to being mentored or mentoring and attending workshops or completing accredited programmes.

These six tests can then be applied to judge the evidence. This may be that the evidence presented is clearly satisfactory, in which case it should be indicated in the first column ("Evidenced") of the Review Matrix, or it may be borderline, in which case you should indicate in the second column ("Borderline"), or unsatisfactory, in which case the third column is appropriate ("Unsatisfactory").

Reviewing Applicant's Personal References

Each applicant provides two personal references when they submit their application. The references, one from a colleague and one from a former supervisee, validate the contents of an application and, where necessary, provide more details about the applicant's supervisory practice.

Both references are provided as part of the Review Pack. If you think that the applicant has not provided sufficient evidence against any of the criteria, please review the references for supplementary evidence of practice.

There is no expectation that you should review the applicants' personal references unless you feel that their application is lacking specific evidences.

Commenting on the Application

Where applications are straightforward with the relevant attributes all addressed with satisfactory evidence, the box may be used to highlight any instances of good practice upon which you would like to commend the applicant or perhaps think is worth sharing more widely.

Where not all the relevant attributes have been addressed or the evidence is borderline or unsatisfactory, you should make your own notes for future reference in giving feedback.

Following your post-review discussion with your fellow reviewer, please compile your joint feedback into the Review Panel Joint Feedback box. This should be done on one Review Matrix Only.

Making a Final Decision

Normally, only if satisfactory evidence of good supervisory practice across the 10 criteria, the final decision will be to recommend “Criteria Met”. But there are two possible exceptions to this rule:

- 1) It may be that one of the criteria is not supported in the applicant’s institution. So, for example, some institutions continue with single supervisors and there is no opportunity for supervisors to work with others and meet the criteria for the third domain. Where this is the case, an exception should be made.
- 2) It may be that there are one or two borderline judgements amid what otherwise is a sound application. In such a circumstance, it may be appropriate to take a holistic view of the application and accept it.

In all other cases, the decision will be to refer applications for further work and re-submission.

Giving Feedback

It is, of course, a courtesy to applicants, whether successful or otherwise, to give feedback.

Maintaining the principles of good assessment practice, it is important that you convey what you think are the strengths evidenced by and provide them with constructive feedback they can use to improve their practice.

Please reference to sections of the applicant's submission when providing feedback, to contextualise your comments.

When giving feedback it is important to follow the same rules that apply to giving feedback to research students, namely that it should:

- Be personal and addressed to the individual applicant as 'you with the panel as 'we'.
- Start with a positive statement, for example, 'You are clearly a dedicated and enthusiastic supervisor'.
- Highlight any areas of good practice.
- Raise any issues, for example, 'In relation to S9, we would like you to tell us about how you support candidates to disseminate their research' or 'We understand from your application that you are aware of the need to support students to write early and often in relation to S5 but would like to learn more about how you personally go about encouraging them to do this'.
- In the case of referrals, summarise what applicants should do in a re-submission.
- End on a positive note, for example, with congratulations for those accepted or encouraging those referred to re-submit.

Outcomes

Applicants will only be advised of the outcome of their application once both reviewers confirm they are satisfied with the joint judgement.

In the event that you and your co-reviewer are unable to agree on the outcome of an application, the application is referred to a third, experienced reviewer for arbitration and advise the first two reviewers of the result before contacting the applicant.

Once you and your co-reviewer have agreed on the outcome of an application, compile your feedback into a single Review Matrix then return it to the UKCGE.

The UKCGE are responsible for contacting the applicant and informing them of the outcome of their application.

Supervisors who do not achieve recognition as a result of their first submission will be permitted to re-apply after 12 months, and in their revised application to provide evidence of how they have responded to the initial feedback on their application to develop their practice. They may choose either to retain their original referee or to provide a different one for the second application.

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