

The Uses of the UKCGE Good Supervisory Practice Framework

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The Good Supervisory Practice Framework

- In 2019, invited by the UKCGE Executive Committee to develop a framework for good supervisory practice;
- First step was to define ‘good practice’ which, following, Brown and Atkins (1988: 115) was conceptualised as ‘the set of underpinning attributes that make ... [supervision] effective.’;



The Good Supervisory Framework (cont.)

- **Numerous definitions of ‘effective’ in the literature – for example Grant and Graham 1994, James and Baldwin 1999, Eley and Jennings 2009, Wisker 2012, Kearns and Finn 2017, Taylor et al 2018;**
- **Initially combined these into a model with 22 attributes based on the tripartite division of practice into activities, knowledge and understanding, and principles used for HEA Fellowship.**



The Good Supervisory Framework (cont.)

- **Trialled in 13 institutions in England, Scotland and Wales;**
- **Subject to a national consultation involving over 100 responses from 60 institutions;**
- **Basic message of both was that the draft framework fully captured ‘good supervision’, but it was unnecessarily complex and needed to be simplified and streamlined;**
- **Framework re-defined in terms of 10 domains based upon the ‘supervisory activities’ and into which ‘core knowledge’ and ‘professional values’ were folded.**



REVISED GOOD SUPERVISORY PRACTICE CRITERIA

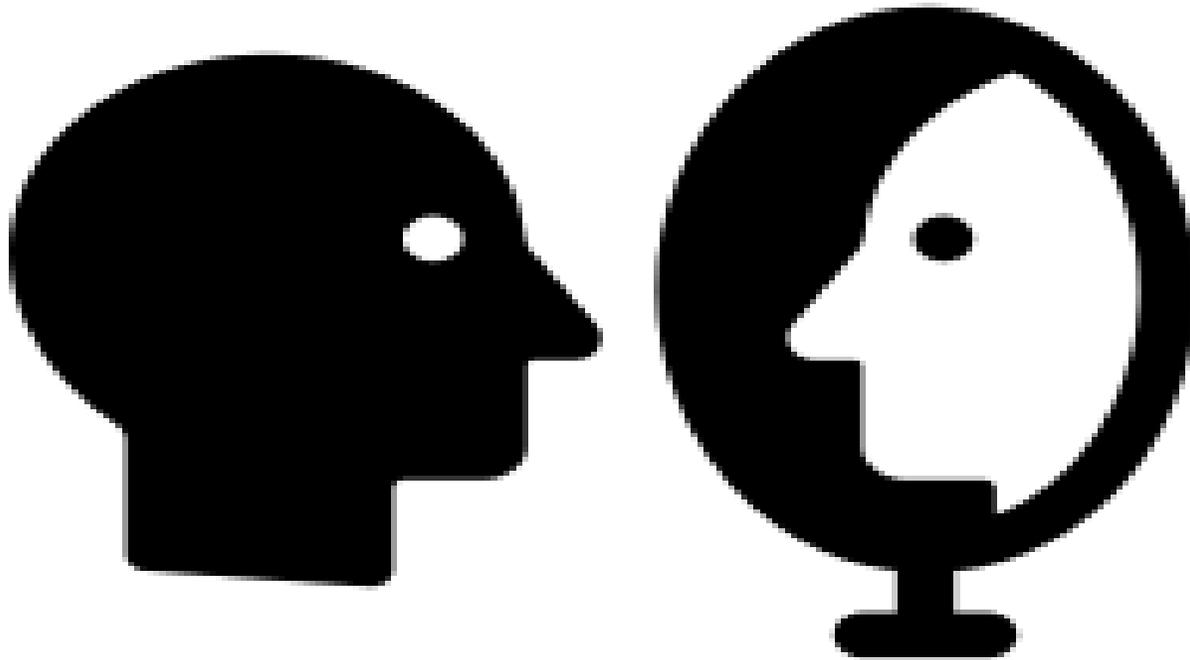
1. Recruitment and selection
2. Supervisory relationships with students
3. Supervisory relationships with co- supervisors
4. Supporting the research project
5. Encouraging writing and giving feedback
6. Keeping the research on track and monitoring progress
7. Personal and professional support for the candidate
8. Completion and examination
9. Dissemination
10. Reflective practice



The Uses of the Framework



1) Individual self-reflection



1) Individual self-reflection (cont.)

“It was very helpful to have the signposting to areas of pedagogy that relate to my practice. This enabled me to do some further reading on the topic and see how my own methods fit with current thinking.”

“I cannot express enough how much I myself have learnt about PhD supervision - all in all, the entire process has been highly beneficial for me.”



2) Supporting the development of communities of practice



2) Supporting the development of communities of practice (cont.)

Institutions are bringing supervisors from different disciplinary backgrounds and with varying levels of experience and using the Framework to enable them to reflect on their approaches to supervision, the challenges they had faced, and how they overcame them, and so to share good practice;



2) Supporting the development of communities of practice (cont.)

... in a discussion of the criterion around ‘encouraging students to write and giving appropriate feedback’, one supervisor identified how she had encouraged a student suffering from writer’s block to write for a non-specialist audience resulting in an article for *The Conversation*. This had raised the student’s confidence in writing, forced them to be explicit about their argument, and provided a global stage upon which feedback could be given. The supervisor reflected that the experience had transformed the way in which both she and the student had conceived their research, and offered a potential solution to a common problem for others in the group.



2) Supporting the development of communities of practice (cont.)

Another, and unexpected, outcome of the collective discussion was in relation to 'imposter syndrome'. In the literature, this is viewed as very much a problem for students who lack confidence in their abilities and feel that they should not really be studying for a doctorate. But, in discussions based on the framework, it became apparent that some of the inexperienced supervisors suffered from similar uncertainties about undertaking their supervisory roles and experienced cathartic release when even their more experienced colleagues revealed that they too sometimes felt out of their depth.

Examples from Dr Karen Clegg of the University of York



3) Professional development (cont.)

- **UKCGE RSS (2021) found that two thirds of supervisors reported that their institutions had mandatory professional development for supervisors new to supervision or new to supervision in the institution while in 18% it was voluntary;**
- **But as research (Taylor, 2018) has shown, many programmes were brief in duration and focused strongly upon the rules and regulations governing research degrees and supervisory relationships to the neglect of diversity, student support, and student development;**



3) Professional development (cont.)

- In consequence, many supervisors had experiences similar to Feather and McDermott (2014: 169) who commented on a supervisor training course they had been required to attend that:

although [it] was insightful and engaging, we did not learn much more than we already knew. The programme dealt mainly with the mechanics (formfilling, administration, recording of attendance, and other administrative tasks) of supervising PhDs, but not the realities of supervision ...



3) Professional development (cont.)

- Sheffield Hallam (2021) has incorporated the Framework into its Research Supervisor Passport scheme

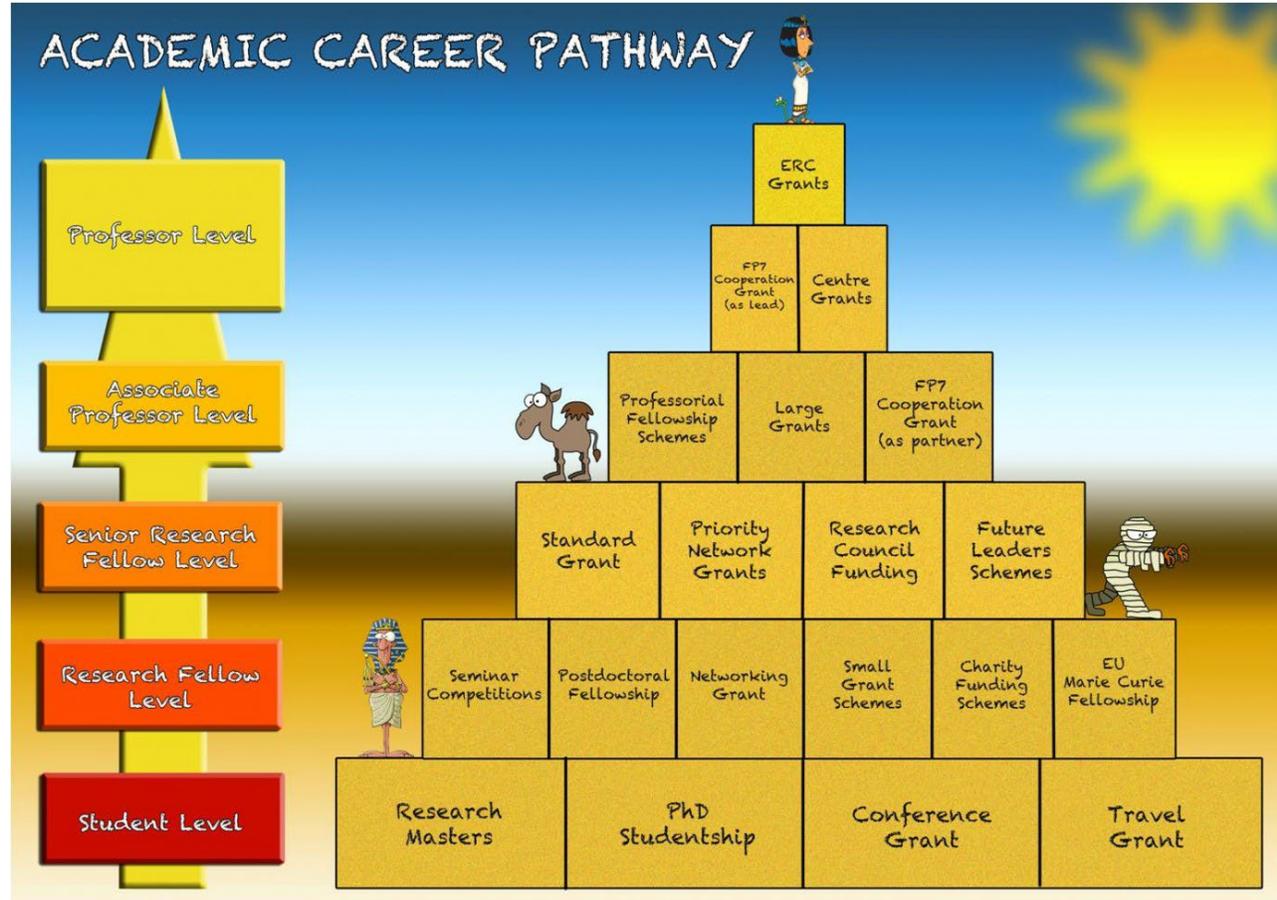
<https://blogs.shu.ac.uk/doctoralschool/event/research-supervisor-passport-scheme-briefing/>

- University of York (2020) has developed a 'Being an Effective Supervisor Tutorial' (BEST) online tutorial for supervisors. <https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/research/training-forums/research-excellence-training-team/research-staff/ukcge-supervision-and-best/>

- University of Manchester (2020) has created an on-line Postgraduate Researcher Supervisor Toolkit. <https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/rbe/rdrd/postgraduate-researcher-supervisor-toolkit/>



4) Applications for promotion



4) Applications for promotion (cont.)

- **The UKCGE RSS (2021) found that just over half of supervisors reported that supervision was taken account of in promotion;**
- **But, as research (Taylor, 2018) has shown, in the vast majority of cases, criteria were based entirely upon the number of students supervised and completion rates and times, i.e. there was little if any focus upon the quality of supervision;**



4) Applications for promotion (cont.)

- As one supervisor interviewed by Guccione (2018: 10) put it:

If you are doing it well, it's because you are the one who cares. People don't often go the extra mile...because an academic's time is more valued on...other activities, getting funding and getting papers is what you need to demonstrate for promotion. [With regard to supervision] all I was asked is numbers current numbers completed. Not how I did it nor the impact on the student's welfare (Male Soc Sci).



4) Applications for promotion (cont.)

- **Framework offers a structured set of categories which can be embodied in promotion criteria;**
- **Currently under consideration by at least one institution.**



5) Institutional awards for outstanding research supervision



5) Institutional awards for outstanding research supervision

- Research (Taylor and McCulloch, 2017) identified 57 institutions in the UK which offered awards for outstanding research supervision;
- The vast majority of these involved the nomination of supervisors by doctoral candidates, often on the basis of ill-defined or indeed no formal criteria;
- The Framework offers comprehensive criteria which can be adapted by institutions to define outstanding supervision.



6) Supporting external recognition



6) Supporting external recognition (cont.)

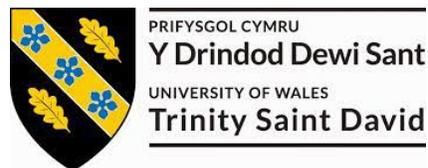
- **History of initiatives to provide external recognition, including:**
 - The TAPPS scheme promoted by BBSRC;
 - The SEDA recognition scheme;
 - Fellowship of the HEA.
- **In 2019, the UKCHE Executive Committee agreed to introduce a Supervisor Recognition Scheme, which went ‘live’ in 2020;**



6) Supporting external recognition (cont.)

- Based on applicants producing a reflective account of their supervisory practice normally addressing each of the 10 headings and giving at least two examples (maximum of 5000 words);
- For purposes of authentication, applicants need two references, one from a colleague who knows about their practice and one from a former candidate;
- Applications reviewed by Recognised Supervisors who have completed a professional development programme;
- Currently 46 institutions with Recognised Supervisors, 43 in the UK and 3 overseas;





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UKCGE recognition programme (cont.)

Hope to build on this in the near future with:

- **The introduction of the Associated Recognised Supervisor programme developed from the original by Dr Kay Guccione and Dr Elizabeth Adams of the University of Glasgow;**
- **Subject to the agreement of the UKCGE Executive Committee, a new Senior Recognised Supervisor programme for colleagues with management, leadership, support, or coordination responsibilities for supervision.**



Questions?

Thank you

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