RESEARCH SUPERVISION RECOGNITION PROGRAMME

Guide to Reflection

PROFESSOR STAN **TAYLOR**

Structured **Reflection**.

Supervisors play a critical role in influencing doctoral candidates' chances of completing on time, in determining the quality of their final outputs and, most crucially of all, in shaping their experiences as research students. The importance of good research supervision is, therefore, hard to overstate.

The *Research Supervision Recognition Programme* is underpinned by the principle that research supervision is a form of teaching, and as such, supervisors will benefit from reflecting on their practice.

This reflection, compared to a benchmark of good practice, is often a gateway to professional development as it reveals insights and new perspectives on the challenges inherent in your supervision work.

Of course, many of you are naturally reflective, so the programme's free-to-access resources, most notably the *Good Supervisory Practice Framework*, add structure to and guide you through this reflective process.

100% of respondents to our post-pilot evaluation found structured self-reflection beneficial in itself.

Applying for Recognition

Once you have completed your reflection, you can choose to apply for your practice to be recognised by the UKCGE. Refer to the documents in the **Applying for Recognition** folder for more information about how to apply.

Contents

How to Use this Document

This document guides you through the process of reflecting on your supervisory practice and provides examples of how you might evidence the criteria of good practice in your application to become a UKCGE Recognised Research Supervisor.

Completing Your Reflection

Using the **Reflective Account Form**— provided along with this guide in the Reflection & Application Pack —complete an evidence-based reflection on your practice covering the **10 criteria of good-supervisory practice**.

In your reflective account, under each of the 10 main headings, **give one or two examples** of your practice, **citing the supporting literature** where relevant.

Note

There is **no expectation** that you will address all the typical examples given below. Similarly, there is no expectation that you will cover all the literature, only that which is relevant to the examples that you choose.

Please refer to the **Sample Reflective Account** for an example of how to complete the application form.

Aim for your reflection to be **no more than 5,000 words**.

What is Appropriate Evidence of Practice?

Address all Criteria

You must – where able – address all the criteria of the *Good Supervisory Practice Framework.*

If you are unable to provide evidence for a criterion — for example, because an institution policy prevents them from sitting on candidate selection panels — you must state this on your application with supporting evidence of your claim — for example, a link to an institutional policy.

Personal

The evidence must be personal to you. It is your practice that you are reflecting upon, not your role in your school or department or institution.

For example, a statement to the effect that you have successfully acted for their school as a selector of research students for many years is not enough to evidence the 'Recruitment and selection' criterion. Instead, you should write a short personal case study of how this function has been undertaken and what you have done to make it successful.

Recent

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

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

Reflective

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

For example, a statement that 'I have always enjoyed positive relationships with candidates' would not be enough to evidence the 'Supervisory relationships with candidates' criterion. You should provide evidence of why you think such relationships are vital, how you have gone about establishing them, how you have monitored their continuing efficacy and, where appropriate, how you have changed strategies for supervision and with what results.

Example-based

For each of the criteria, you must provide evidence in the form of, at least, 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 the 'Reflecting upon and enhancing practice' criterion. You must provide actual instances of how you have employed one or a combination of these methods to enhance your practice.

Scholarly

Your evidence should be supported by the scholarly literature on supervisory practice.

If you apply for recognition of your supervisory practice, there is an expectation that you will have an awareness of that literature and that it will have had an impact in changing or reinforcing your practice.

An application which makes no reference to the scholarly literature is not acceptable. It is expected that evidence will be provided in relation to at least some of the examples you provide. However, you are not expected to cite literature in defence of every aspect of your practice.

Systematic

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

For example, an entire account which provides no evidence of development would be unlikely to meet the 'Reflecting upon and enhancing practice' criterion. It is expected that you will provide evidence of taking appropriate opportunities to systematically develop your expertise in relationship to at least some of the criteria in the *Good Supervisory Practice Framework*.

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

Structure of this Document

Each criterion of good supervisory practice has its own section - beginning with an overview of the criterion.

Typical Examples of activities that good practice might include are highlighted in the pale blue boxes.

The **Literature and Evidence** sections include suggestions of how, in your application, you might provide evidence, and a precis of the supporting literature underpinning the criterion.

Full references to the supporting literature can be found at the back of this document.

Supporting Literature Online

For links to online version of the supporting literature, visit:

http://supervision.ukcge.ac.uk/good-supervisory-practice-framework/gspf-complete-references/

Criteria of **Good Supervisory Practice**

The **sector-approved definition** of good supervisory practice

There are numerous definitions of 'supervisory practice' in the literature —see, for example, James and Baldwin 2009, Eley and Murray 2009, Grant et al 2014, Kearns and Finn 2017, Taylor et al 2018— but they contain all or most of the following domains:

10 Criteria of Good Supervisory Practice

1. Recruitment and selection.

2. Supervisory relationships with candidates.

3. Supervisory relationships with co-supervisors.

4. Supporting candidates' research projects.

5. Encouraging candidates to write and giving appropriate feedback.

6. Keeping the research on track and monitoring progress.

7. Supporting candidates' personal, professional and career development.

8. Supporting candidates through completion and final examination.

9. Supporting candidates to disseminate their research.

10. Reflecting upon and enhancing practice.

91% of respondents to our Community Consultation thought **the criteria reflect supervisory practice well or very well**.

1   Recruitment and Selection

Supervisors can be involved in recruitment activities in several ways, including publicising the areas within which they can offer supervision and reaching out to under-represented groups.

Supervisors should be involved in the selection of candidates from supporting intending applicants to develop their applications through to making final decisions and giving feedback.

Typical Examples

- Publicising the areas of research within which they personally can offer supervision.

- Participating in campaigns to recruit candidates from groups that are under-represented in doctoral education.

- Assessing whether applicants are likely to make the transition to independent researchers.

- Assessing whether applicants' proposed research projects are realisable and whether they have (or can acquire) the knowledge and skills to complete them.

- Interviewing applicants.

- Making a final decision and giving feedback.

Literature and evidence

Many supervisors also have their own web sites to inform prospective applicants about the areas in which they can offer supervision. Such sites need to also inform prospective applicants how to go about constructing an application, how to get in touch, how to apply to the institution, and what would be involved if they were successful and became a candidate. A good example is the web site of Dr Adam Baker of the School of Computer

Science, University of St Andrews (see http://www.adambarker.org/phd-faq/). **If you have a personal web site, the design of it could provide appropriate evidence.**

While there has been considerable progress in opening up undergraduate education to historically under-represented groups, this seems to have been much less marked in doctoral education (see for example McCulloch and Thomas 2012, Wakeling and Kyriacou 2015). Some institutions and professional bodies have special initiatives intended to recruit candidates from these groups. **You may then be able to provide examples of outreach activities.**

Once applications are in, judgements must be reached about the candidate and the research proposal. As Bernstein et al (2014) have argued, the crucial decision is whether they are capable of undertaking independent research. **You might evidence this by outlining the ways in which you find out about research capability**, e.g. asking applicants for a research report or dissertation.

For the research proposal, a judgement must be made about whether it is suitable as a doctoral project, and whether it is doable and viable within the timeframe allowed. **An example might be if you with applicants on developing their research proposals prior to making a formal application**.

As well as an academic relationship, supervision is of course a personal relationship as well, and for that reason as Pells (2018) has suggested, good practice is to interview applicants, either face to face or, if that is not possible using technology. **Evidence may then be of your personal policy in interviewing applicants.**

Once a decision has been taken in the light of the application, the interview, and usually references as well, this must be communicated to the applicant. Where the outcome is favourable this is easy. But, where applicants have spent a lot of time and effort in putting together an application, it can come as a crushing blow to be rejected. **Your evidence, then, could be of the provision of an example of appropriate feedback to unsuccessful applicants.**

2   Supervisory Relationships with Candidates

Over the past three decades or so, the candidate population has become much more diverse in its composition, and supervisors need to be aware of this in forming effective relationships with candidates.

In order to do this, there is a need right from the start for supervisors and doctoral candidates to have clear expectations of each other and the first task is to discuss these and, where appropriate, negotiate how they are going to be met.

Also, candidates and supervisors need to be able to work effectively with each other. Because each grouping of individuals is, by definition, unique, then each relationship will be different depending upon the style(s) of the supervisor(s) and the characteristics of the candidate, which need to be aligned at the start to be successful.

That said, the relationship can and indeed should change over the course of time. As candidates move through their doctoral studies, their needs should change, and with that the nature of support that they require from their supervisors.

However, in a few cases, there may be serious issues leading to the potential or actual breakdown of the relationship, for which supervisors need to be prepared and aware of the sources of support both for candidates and themselves.

Typical Examples

- Acknowledging the increased diversity of the domestic candidate population and recognizing its implications for supervision.

- Acknowledging the increased diversity of the international candidate population and recognizing its implications for supervision.

- Discussing and agreeing expectations with candidates at the start of their studies.

- Being aware of supervisory styles and their relationship to student needs and being able to align them at the start of doctoral studies.

- Being aware of how student needs change over the course of doctoral studies and being able to maintain calibration of supervisory styles.

- Being aware of institutional policies and procedures in the event of the breakdown of a supervisory relationship and of sources of support for both parties.

Literature and Evidence

Historically, the population of doctoral candidates has been disproportionately male, young, from high-status social-economic backgrounds, members of majority ethnic and/or racial groups, without a disability, and heterosexual (see for example Gardner 2009a, 2009b, Garner and Holley 2011, Petersen 2014). Now, it is much more diverse in terms of gender, age, class, race or ethnicity, disability, and sexuality (see for example Ostrove et al 2011, Offerman 2011, Gardner 2013, Wakeling and Hampden-Thomson 2013, Collins 2015, Okahana et al 2016). Candidates from non-traditional backgrounds but may face challenges in undertaking doctoral studies. e.g. lack of confidence, isolation and discrimination. **As evidence, you may be able to give examples of how you have gone about forming effective relationships and supporting them to overcome challenges.**

While there is a long tradition of doctoral candidates studying in countries other than their own, over the past two decades or so there has been a huge increase in the numbers

studying abroad (see UNESCO 2015). Such candidates may face the same challenges as non-traditional home candidates plus others including culture shock (see Manathunga 2014), different expectations of academic roles (Winchester-Seeto et al 2014), different styles of learning (Goode 2007), research experience and skills (McClure 2007), and conventions for verbal and written communication (Doyle et al 2017). **For evidence, you may be able to give examples of how you have gone about establishing relationships with international students and supporting them in their studies.**

Candidates will usually start their doctoral careers with some assumptions about what will be required of them and what support their supervisor will be required to offer but there is no guarantee that these will be complete or accurate (see for example Dann 2008, Kelly 2009, McAlpine 2013, Jindal-Snape and Ingram 2013, Holbrook et al 2014, Sambrook 2017). The upshot is that there can be mismatches between the expectations of candidates and supervisors which can adversely affect their relationship, and supervisors may need to ensure that these are calibrated. **You might evidence this through spending some time right at the start with the candidate going through the institution's Code of Practice or Handbook or checklist, pointing out the formal requirements and discussing how they will be met.**

As numerous studies (see, for example, Pearson and Brew 2002, Davis 2004, Gatfield 2005, Grant 2005, Murphy et al 2007, Wright et al 2007, Deuchar 2008, Halse and Bansel 2012, Boehe 2014, Vehvilinen and Lofstrom 2014) have pointed out, supervisors may have preferred styles of supervision that embody different assumptions about the needs of candidates. As Malfoy and Webb (2000) have suggested, as long as there is a congruence between the supervisory style, the associated assumptions about the needs of candidates, and their actual needs, there should be no difficulties, problems can occur where there is discongruence. **You might evidence calibrating styles and needs through the initiation of discussions with candidates, using prompts such as the well-known Brown-Atkins (1988) rating scale.**

The relationship between the supervisor and the candidate is not a static one but should change over the course of the candidacy. Usually, at the start the candidate is heavily dependent upon the supervisor and then, as he or she grows and develops towards becoming a researcher in their own right, they should become less dependent and more autonomous (see McAlpine 2013, Benmore 2014, Bui 2014). **Your evidence might be**

checking that styles and needs remain aligned either informally by raising the issue in supervisions or formally by using instruments such as Gurr's (2001) monitoring tool.

In the vast majority of cases, relationships with candidates proceed smoothly and they become friends for life, in a handful there may be serious problems; at the end of the day, supervisors and candidates are human beings who, for one reason or another, may fail to get on leading to serious problems in the relationship (see for example Gunnarsson et al 2013). **Here you could provide evidence that you know the relevant institutional procedures and sources of support both for candidates and for yourself.**

3   Supervisory Relationships with Co-supervisors

Historically, the model has been for candidates to have a single supervisor. But over the last three decades or so there has been a move to co- or team supervision to enhance the experience of doctoral candidates by reducing their reliance upon a single individual and giving them access to a broader range of expertise and support.

However, co-supervision can have a downside. The involvement of more supervisors in the process can create a potential for disagreement and divergence within the team and leave the candidate playing 'piggy in the middle' to the detriment of their experience.

Typical Examples

- Clarifying roles with co-supervisors and candidates at the start of the candidacy.

- Clarifying expectations of the project with co-supervisors and the candidate.

- Regularly reviewing relations between supervisors and with candidates during the course of the candidacy.

Literature and Evidence

Usually, supervisory teams include a designated main supervisor and one or more secondary supervisors. As Guerin and Green (2015) have argued, it is important that there is clarity within the team about the respective roles the supervisors will play and that this is understood by the student. **Your evidence here might include consulting institutional and/or research council guidelines of primary and secondary supervisory roles and discussing them with co-supervisors and candidates.** This is particularly important where supervisors come from external organizations and may have a limited understanding of the degree as in the case of many professional doctorates (see, for example, Neumann 2005, Fillery-Travis et al 2017), practice-led doctorates (see, for example, Allpress et al 2012, Duxbury 2012) and industrial or commercial doctorates (Malfory 2011, Cuthbert and Molla 2014)

As well as clarity of roles, as Parker-Jenkins (2018) has pointed out, there is a need for co-supervisors to clarify their expectations of the research project itself, who supervises what (e.g. one the theoretical foundation, the other the empirical), and arrangements for feedback to the candidate. **Your evidence here might, for example, include informal discussion or formal review**, for example using Grossman and Crowther's (2015) comprehensive list as a basis for negotiating who does what, when, where and how. Again, this is particularly important in the context of collaborative doctoral programmes.

As well as starting off on the right footing, as Taylor et al (2018) have argued, there is a need for regular reviews of the relationships of co-supervisors with each other and with the student. Such reviews, perhaps once or twice per year, might be undertaken with the candidate present and be used to identify problems stemming from co-supervision at a relatively early stage and before they delay, fatally or otherwise, the progress of the research. **Your evidence might again include informal review or using Kiley's (2015a) questionnaire as a tool to check how things are going.**

4   Supporting Candidates' Research Projects

New doctoral candidates may have little or no experience of research, and hence little or no idea of what they are letting themselves in for. Supervisors may then need to induct them into research, including the nature of research itself, the key concepts, what it involves, and of good practice in undertaking it.

Unless the research project itself is pre-determined, supervisors will have a role in advising candidates about their choice of topic and then assisting them to produce a research proposal and to gain ethical approval. Irrespective of the discipline, supervisors will need to make sure that candidates have, or can acquire, the subject-specific knowledge and skills necessary for them to undertake their research topics. These may include the relevant experimental and technological skills to undertake their research projects, in the latter case including information searching, retrieval, storage, and sharing,

If, in these ways, candidates can be started down the slipway, sooner or later they are almost bound to encounter academic problems of one kind or another. It is important that if, and when, this happens, supervisors are aware and lend support.

Typical Examples

- Discussing conceptions and misconceptions of research itself with candidates.

- Looking at key 'threshold' concepts in research.

- Considering issues of academic integrity, intellectual property rights, and co-publication.

- Advising on a choice of topic.

- Advising on theory, methodology and methods.

- Advising on a research proposal and plan.

- Advising on gaining ethical approval.

- Advising on skills development in relation to the project.

- Advising on issues arising in the course of the research.

Literature and Evidence

As Meyer et al (2005) have shown, doctoral candidates may have odd conceptions or even misconceptions of research at the start of their studies, and there is a clear need for dialogue with supervisors to what research is ultimately about otherwise there can be a potential for conflict and/or delays to completion (see Meyer 2007, Garcia-Perez and Ayres 2012). **Your evidence here may take the form of a policy of asking candidates to critique a recent piece of research in the subject and discussing it with them.**

There is a substantial literature (see, for example, Kiley 2009, Kiley and Wisker 2009, Trafford and Lesham 2009, Kiley 2015b) suggesting that many research candidates struggle to grasp key 'threshold' concepts of research, including those of research paradigms, research questions, theory, theoretical frameworks, methodology, methods, analysis, argument/thesis, and theorising findings. So, candidates may become 'stuck' in a state of liminality and consequently unable to progress their research. Again, you may help by, for

example, pointing to 'model' papers or books in the relevant literature and discussing key concepts with candidates.

A further necessary discussion may relate to the ethics of research in terms of integrity, intellectual property rights, and possibly authorship in relation to co-publication. **You could evidence that you are aware of institutional policies in these areas and communicate these to candidates, for example through a checklist.**

In many cases, supervisors themselves obtain the funding for and design research projects, but in others there may be an element of discretion for the candidate. In such cases, supervisors as Taylor et al (2018) have described, have a system of outlining the key criteria – whether the project is worthwhile, doable in the time available, and viable in potentially leading to the creation of new knowledge – and encouraging candidates to apply them until a suitable project is found. **You could supply a short case study of how you have gone about advising candidates about their choice of projects.**

Candidates will also need advice about how to go about undertaking their research projects, including theories and theoretical frameworks, methodologies and methods, and you could give an example of how you have advised them about these matters.

Candidates will then have to produce a research proposal and plan, which can be problematic if they have little or no experience of research. One thing that **you might cite as evidence is asking candidates to look at the deliberately erroneous research proposals and plans set out in Delamont et al (2004) and critique them**.

In order to undertake their research projects, candidates will need a range of skills, and it is important at the start to identify which ones they already have, those that they will need to acquire, and when and how they will be able to acquire them. **Here, you might cite as evidence conducting a development needs analysis early in the candidature**.

Candidates may also need support when the research is under way. They may expect that research is conducted in the same way as it is published, i.e. a linear progression. But research in the real world can be very messy and progress is often two steps forward and one backwards. Candidates may, for cultural reasons (see for example Shen 2009, Magyar and Robinson-Pant 2011) or variously through 'Top Gun' (see Taylor and Beasley 2005) or 'imposter' syndromes (see Kearns 2015) be unwilling to acknowledge that they are 'stuck'. **You might provide evidence of re-assuring candidates experiencing problems that they would be met with a sympathetic response and encouraging them to identify ways forward.**

5 Encouraging Candidates to Write and Giving Appropriate Feedback

Candidates need to produce written work throughout their studies to articulate what they are thinking, to reflect upon their findings, and to gain feedback. But candidates may prove reluctant to write particularly in the early stages and need encouragement and support from their supervisors to do so.

Once they have produced written work, supervisors must give feedback. It is important that feedback is high-quality and that it enables candidates to progress their research projects.

Typical Examples

- Encouraging candidates to write from the start of their studies.

- Supporting the development of academic writing.

- Giving timely, constructive, and actionable feedback.

Literature and Evidence

The traditional view was that writing could be left to the end when the final submission was produced. But the consensus now (see for example Kamler and Thomson 2006), Bitchener 2018) is that writing is or should be an integral part of the research process and that candidates need to start writing at the beginning of their studies and continue throughout. **Your evidence for this might include asking them to keep research journals/diaries and setting mini-projects involving written reports.**

That said, it is not just a matter of producing text but of producing what is a highly specialised form of writing, namely academic writing. As a number of studies (see Can and Walker 2011, Lee and Murray 2013, Lindsay 2015) have shown, doctoral candidates rarely arrive at the start of their studies with the capacity to produce such writing and, left on their own, they may struggle to acquire it. In recognition of this, many institutions now provide courses in academic writing for doctoral candidates.

But it is still you as their supervisors who are the first readers of their texts and who at least arguably should provide guidance about their writing. **Evidence of such guidance may take the form of referring candidates to good examples in the literature or showing how to re-write a paragraph or two or encouraging them to join peer writing groups** (see Aitchison 2010, Wellington 2010a, Carter and Kumar 2016, Wegener et al 2016).

Giving feedback on written work is of course one of, if not the, most vital functions of the supervisor. Such feedback needs to be timely in the sense of enabling candidates to move on with their studies (see, for example, Odema and Burgess 2015, Carter and Kumar 2016). It also needs to be constructive; as numerous studies (see for example Whitelock et al 2008, Wang and Li 2011, Can and Walker 2011, Aitchison and Mowbray 2013) have shown, candidates have a very strong emotional investment in their draft submissions, and criticism is often taken personally. Finally, as McAlpine and Amundsen (2012) have pointed out, it needs to be actionable in the sense that candidates can understand the points being made and incorporate changes. **Evidence would be of how you take these three considerations into account when you are giving feedback to candidates.**

6   Keeping the Research on Track and Monitoring Progression

The days when, because they involved the creation of new knowledge, doctoral degrees took as long as they took are long gone. Globally, research sponsors have put policies in place designed to ensure that candidates to complete their degrees in three or four years of full-time study (or pro rata for part-time). Such policies have usually entailed financial penalties for departments and/or institutions which have failed to hit targets for completion rates and/or times.

In consequence, over the past three decades or so, one of, if not the, the key roles for supervisors have become ensuring as far as possible that candidates complete on time.

> ### Typical Examples
>
> - Supporting and motivating candidates to progress in their studies.
>
> - Using supervisions to monitor progress.
>
> - Participating in formal progression events.

Literature and Evidence

As Taylor et al (2018) have suggested, candidates need to have or acquire the skills of project management, time management, and self-management if they are to stand a chance of completing within three or four years. In many cases, institutions now provide training programmes covering these skills, but you may provide evidence that you encourage your candidates to take advantage of the opportunities.

However, even if they do, this is not a guarantee of success, and supervisors need to be aware of slippages and ready to correct them, e.g. through progress reviews in supervisions. **You could evidence this by, for example, regularly reviewing the candidate's achievements against their research plan in supervisions.**

Additionally, as a number of studies (see Delamont et al 2004, Cryer 2006, Kiley 2009, Phillips and Pugh 2010) have suggested, supervisors may need to motivate candidates in the middle stages of their studies who are suffering from loss of confidence and/or

boredom. **Examples of how you go about doing this might include praising them, helping them to map out stepping-stones to completion, re-focusing the research, or as a last resort perhaps advising them to take a break.**

Another strategy for supporting progression can be the use of learning agreements with candidates. Such agreements are usually concluded at the start of the candidature and specify, among other things, the various milestones to final completion (see for example Gaffney-Rhys and Jones, 2010, Gilbar et al 2013). These are intended to be 'live' documents which afford a basis for the ongoing discussion of progress throughout the candidacy and **evidence might then include the use of learning agreements for this purpose**.

Additionally, supervisors will usually monitor progress through checking at supervisory meetings whether targets have been achieved and, if not, by providing advice and support to enable candidates to get back on track. **This may be recorded in records of such meetings, which you could provide as evidence of this activity**.

Supervisors will also be involved in formal progression events. Usually, candidates are initially registered for a lower degree or their doctoral candidature is subject to confirmation, and there is a formal review at between 9 and 15 months to determine whether they should be allowed to proceed to the doctorate/full candidature. Additionally, there will be further reviews of progress at regular intervals in future years of study. Supervisors may have roles in supporting candidates for progression events, writing reports for progression panels (see Mewburn et al 2013, 2014), and in some institutions sitting as members of such panels. **Evidence here might include a case study of you go about preparing candidates for such events and/or writing reports**.

7 Supporting Candidates' Personal, Professional and Career Development

Doctoral candidates are subject to the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune in their personal lives. Supervisors need at least to be aware of personal issues, particularly in relation to well-being and mental health, and able to direct candidates towards the relevant professional services. They also need to recognise that they may be role models for their candidates, particularly in achieving a work-life balance.

Supervisors also have a responsibility to support the professional development of doctoral candidates in terms of socialization within their disciplinary community and, where appropriate, in undertaking teaching duties in the subject.

Traditionally, such activities helped to support doctoral candidates to prepare for academic careers, and supervisors have had a direct role in informing them about faculty work and life. In recent years, however, only a minority of doctoral graduates have become academics, while the majority have found employment in other spheres. Here, supervisors may have a role in supporting candidates to prepare for non-academic careers.

Typical Examples

- supporting candidates with personal issues, including those relating to well-being and mental health.

- Being good role models in terms of work-life balance.

- Inducting candidates into disciplinary networks and activities.

- Supporting their development as teachers.

- Informing them about academic careers.

- Supporting them to prepare for non-academic careers.

Literature and Evidence

Supervisors will normally have some pastoral engagement with candidates over the course of their doctoral studies as events in their private lives impinge upon their professional ones (Hopgood et al 2011, McAlpine et al 2012, McAlpine 2013). Minimally, supervisors need to be alert to the prospect of candidates experiencing personal issues and problems, for example by regularly checking with them. When such issues, including those relating to well-being and mental health, are identified, supervisors need be sympathetic, conscious of the limits of direct involvement, and aware of the professional services to whom candidates can be referred for further support. **Evidence here, for example, could consist of a case study of how you have supported a candidate at a time of personal crisis.**

Supervisors need to be good role models for candidates is in terms of achieving an appropriate work-life balance. The latter can be an issue for candidates and there is some evidence that it is a factor in poor mental health ((see Cohen 2011, Margrove et al 2014, Levecque et al 2017), non- or delayed completion (see Barry et al 2018), and in putting candidates off an academic career (McAlpine 2017). **You may be able to evidence this by describing how you have acted as a role model, e.g. by demonstrating your own effective work-life balance to candidates.**

As Walker et al (2008) have put the matter, supervisors are 'stewards of the discipline' and responsible for inducting candidates into the disciplinary community. This may include encouraging them in joining appropriate networks (see Thein and Beach 2010), attending conferences, giving presentations, and possibly in publishing their work during candidacy (see S 9). **Evidence again might consist of a case study of how you have inducted a candidate or candidates into the community.**

Many candidates will engage in teaching during their studies, often on modules led by their supervisors. In such cases, as Muzaka (2009) and Jepsen et al (2012) have pointed out, supervisors have a responsibility to ensure that teaching assistants are adequately prepared and supported to undertake teaching duties and that they are fully informed about assessment methods, topics, and criteria. **Again, you might provide a brief case study of how you have supported a doctoral candidate in their teaching.**

Often, candidates embark upon the doctorate in the expectation of an academic career, and one obvious source of information is their supervisor. However, studies (see Austin 2002, 2011, Campbell et al 2005, Austin and McDaniels 2006) have found that their

supervisors tended to assume that doctoral candidates either arrived with an understanding of academic work or would acquire one by a process of osmosis during their studies. Good practice is then for supervisors to least be prepared to discuss what is involved in an academic career, including research, teaching and supporting learning, academic administration, public service, and entrepreneurial activity. Following Pitt and Mewburn (2016), **one way of evidencing this would be if you discuss with candidates the key selection criteria in advertisements for posts in your field.**

But if many are called to academic posts, few are chosen, and most doctoral candidates will end up working in other occupations (see Hancock 2014, Hancock et al 2015, McAlpine and Emmioglu 2015, Kweik 2019). While, unless they have worked outside universities, supervisors may be unable to advise candidates seeking non-academic positions, they can support them to acquire the so-called generic or transferable skills deemed necessary to enable them to compete for non-academic careers. **You may evidence this through conducting training needs analyses, identifying gaps in skills, and taking advantage of opportunities to close them.**

8 Supporting Candidates Through Completion and Final Examination

Once candidates have substantially finished their research projects, they have to produce a submission, usually but not always a thesis. This is likely to be the longest and most difficult piece of work that a candidate has ever undertaken, and supervisors have a key role in supporting them to complete their submissions.

Once candidates have a complete draft, the next issue is whether they should submit it for the degree. While of course there are no guarantees, supervisors need to be able to advise candidates as to the likelihood of the thesis passing, for which they need a clear understanding of the criteria for the award.

In order to support the examination process, it is important that supervisors have a knowledge and understanding of how research degrees are examined, including criteria for the appointment of examiners, examination policies and processes, and outcomes.

In most but not all higher education systems, the examination will involve an assessment of the written submission plus an oral examination. Candidates may be unfamiliar with oral examinations and one role of supervisors can be to help prepare them for their viva.

In many countries, supervisors are debarred from examining their own protégés, and while they may sit in they play no role in the examination itself. Where examiners refer submissions, supervisors may have a role afterwards in terms of supporting candidates to revise their work.

Typical Examples

- Working with candidates to finalise their submissions.

- Advising them on whether the thesis is likely to pass on the basis of your experience as an examiner.

- Roles in appointing examiners.

- Understanding of relevant policies and procedures and outcomes.

- Supporting candidates to prepare for the viva.

- Supporting candidates after the viva.

Literature and Evidence

In the final stages, candidates may need support to produce the end product, namely a thesis or argument which is substantiated by evidence (see Taylor et al 2018), appropriately structured (see Neville 2008), written in an appropriate and error-free style (see Carter 2008). Normally this involves supervisors in giving feedback on drafts, and **you could evidence this activity by an example of such feedback**.

Also, in the UK it is normally the student who decides whether to submit the thesis, but most will ask their supervisors whether it will pass. Supervisors then need to understand the standards for the award, which may be **evidenced by reference to institutional criteria and previous experience as an examiner**.

Supervisors are normally asked to nominate appropriate examiners for the submission. In order to do this, as Pearce (2008) has pointed out, they have to be aware of the institution's criteria for the appointment of examiners (which may include requirements such as expertise in the field of study, recent publications, and supervisory and examining experience). They may also have to consider the appropriateness of particular examiners (see Joyner 2003, Kiley and Mullins 2004, Kiley 2009).

Here evidence might consist of a description of how you go about nominating examiners including, where appropriate, consulting with candidates.

Supervisors need to understand relevant institutional policies, i.e. who arranges the viva, who chairs it, what (if any) their own role is and the criteria for success and the range of recommendations that can be made (see for example Tinkler and Jackson (2004). **Evidence you could site here could include familiarity to the relevant institutional source that informs your practice** e.g. an examinations handbook, or examining itself, either as an internal or an external.

Candidates may have gained some experience of oral examination through presentations and feedback from progression panels, but the viva itself may still be seen as a huge hurdle (see Wellington 2010b, Watts 2011). Supervisors may have a role to play in explaining what to expect and, where appropriate, arranging mock vivas to accustom candidates to the format. This can be particularly important for candidates for whom English is not their first language (see Carter 2011) or who have disabilities (see Chown et al 2015) or who are from non-traditional backgrounds (Harrison et al 2011). **As evidence you could provide a case study of preparing a candidate for the viva**.

In most cases, supervisors have only one role following the viva – to help the candidate to celebrate. However, where submissions are referred for further work, supervisors may have a role to play in clarifying the examiners' expectations to the candidate and supporting the latter in revising and/or re-writing their thesis. Again, **you could provide evidence by a case study**.

9   Supporting Candidates to Disseminate Their Research

Giving that completing a doctorate involves making and original contribution to knowledge and understanding, it is vital that the outcomes are made available to the disciplinary and/or professional community for scrutiny and the advancement of research in the subject. One responsibility of supervisors is to support candidates to disseminate their research findings.

Typical Examples

- Setting expectations at the start of the candidacy;

- Modelling the process of publication;

- Encouraging candidates to publish as they go;

- Co-publishing;

- Establishing a post-doctoral publications plan.

Literature and Evidence

In some countries prior publication is a condition of the award of the doctorate but in other cases it is not mandatory or undertaken voluntarily with the result that many theses and dissertations are left, to quote a supervisors cited by Walker et al (2008: 79) '…like John Brown [to] lie mouldering in their literary graves'.

Failure to publish often reflects, as Kamler (2008: 284) has put it that '…for the most part, doctoral candidates appear to be left to their own devices to sort out how to publish their research…with poor results'. Many are daunted by the mechanics of publication in terms of identifying key journals and preparing appropriate submissions (see Cuthbert and Spark 2008, Lei and Hu 2015) and are discouraged from sending in papers. But even those who negotiate these hurdles often send in papers which are unsuitable for publication (see Paré 2010).

One way of encouraging publication is for supervisors to indicate to candidates in induction meetings right at the start of their studies that they will be expected to produce papers, and this may form part of an induction checklist or learning agreement.

Another is to model the process by, for example, supervisors showing how they themselves went about publishing a key paper, including targeting an outlet, responding to requirements, and where appropriate taking on board the comments of referees prior to final publication. **Here, you could provide evidence here could take the form of a short case study**.

Candidates may also be encouraged to publish as they go. i.e. write up their research as journal articles and submit them during candidature. This has can have disadvantages (see Paré 2010) but can enable rapid dissemination and provide convincing evidence of publishability to examiners. **You may be able to provide evidence of supporting candidates to publish during their studies**.

As several studies (see Kamler 2008, Can and Walker 2011, and Jiang et al 2015) have suggested, perhaps the most effective way of assisting candidates to publish is for supervisors to write a joint paper with them for publication and take them through all of the stages from initial conception through to the appearance of the paper in print or electronic form. **You may be able to provide a case study of a joint paper**.

A final possibility, particularly if no publications have resulted during the period of doctoral study, supervisors may support their candidates to devise a publications plan setting out what they intend to publish, which outlets might be appropriate, and a timescale for submission. **Evidence might include an example of a plan you have negotiated with a candidate**.

10   Reflecting Upon and Enhancing Practice

If supervisors are to improve their practice, they need to evaluate it, reflect upon it, determine their strengths and weaknesses, build upon the former and address the latter.

As with other areas of academic practice, supervisors should undertake appropriate professional development to enhance their practice, which may include workshops and programmes as well as familiarity with the scholarly literature and its implications for practice.

Where supervisors identify good practice, then wherever possible they should disseminate it for the benefit of others.

Typical Examples

- Using an appropriate mix of methods for evaluating supervision.

- Undertaking initial and continuing professional development.

- Familiarity with the scholarly literature.

- Where appropriate, contributing to the professional development of other supervisors.

Literature and Evidence

As Taylor et al (2018) have suggested, supervisors can self-evaluate their supervision by, e.g. after each supervision spending a few minutes completing a simple pro-forma with 'what went well?', 'what went less well?' and 'what will I do differently next time?' and/or by keeping a reflective diary.

It can be problematic to use individual questionnaires for research students as the latter can be identified and may be unwilling to be critical of their supervisors. But the latter still might devote (say) one supervision a year to a general discussion of how the student feels about the quality of supervision, possibly based upon list of topics such as that developed by Lee and McKenzie (2011).

Peer observation is a familiar part of evaluation in taught programmes, and it is equally applicable in doctoral ones (see for example Goode 2010, Hill 2011).

Your evidence here might include self-evaluation pro-formas, summaries of student evaluations, peer reviews, or candidate testaments.

Nearly all institutions now have initial professional development programmes for supervisors, and many have refreshers for established supervisors (see Taylor 2018). **As evidence, you might cite examples of workshops that you have attended, what you learned, and how this has influenced your practice**. Also, there is now a substantial scholarly literature on the practice of research supervision, and **you could give examples of how studies have influenced your practice**.

Where appropriate, you might **present evidence of contributing to the development of others by, for example, mentoring colleagues or facilitating departmental events, institutional workshops or discipline, national or international workshops**.

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About the UKCGE

Established in 1994, the UK Council for Graduate Education is the national representative body for postgraduate education and research. The UKCGE champions and enhances postgraduate education and research by enabling collective leadership across UK HEIs, research agencies and funding bodies.

It has a specific remit to support research supervision: for example, in 2017 it launched the first ever national award for excellence in research supervision; and in 2021 it undertook the *UK Research Supervision Survey*, funded by UKRI and the Wellcome Trust.

The UKCGE publishes the *Good Supervisory Practice Framework*, the *Research Supervisor's Bibliography* and runs the UK's *Research Supervision Recognition Programme*.

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