Strengthening Postgraduate Supervision

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

2019

WELCOME

to the **Strengthening Postgraduate Supervision** Course

2019

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Course Introduction

This course is aimed at building supervisory capacity across the South African higher education system. The course content, methodologies and modes of delivery consider the diverse conditions in which supervisors work as well as the differences in the postgraduate process across disciplines and programmes.

Course Outcomes

The course has four major themes:

- social justice in postgraduate education,
- the importance of scholarship,
- supervisory practices, and
- supervision processes.

As supervisors, we all face challenges - our students are diverse in their personalities, abilities and backgrounds and many of us face the conflicting pressures of teaching, publishing and supervising. In this module, we have the opportunity to talk about how we can strengthen our supervision practices, and recognise the complexities of the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

The first theme focuses on the need for social justice by interrogating power relations; the second theme is concerned with the supervisor's own academic identity and the research community to which they belong; the third theme looks at various approaches and models of supervision, including coaching and mentoring; and the final theme considers the supervision of each stage of the research project, including attending to institutional requirements.

In this course, supervisors:

- **Talk about how we can** go about creating inclusive and participatory learning environments that enable students to acquire and further develop their knowledge, methodological skills and writing practices during the research process.
- **Share ideas** about providing postgraduate candidates with a critical introduction to a 'culture of research' and to a research community.
- Consider how we can **possess and use a breadth in paradigms and methodologies** related to a particular discipline.
- Discuss giving **constructive feedback** on students' products and processes.
- Consider how students **acquire and develop information fluency**.
- Call on a **range of approaches to supervision** including mentoring and coaching.
- **Reflect individually and with others** on our own supervisory practice.
- **Discuss students' expectations** about the postgraduate process and the roles of both student and supervisor.
- Discuss the **logistics of managing supervision** within institutional requirements.

Course structure

This course has three phases that are as follows:

- **PHASE 1:** This is a facilitated three-day face-to-face session in which the four course themes are introduced and considered.
- **PHASE 2:** This is a six-week online session that begins after Phase 1. During this time, you will have an opportunity to read texts, complete activities, and engage with other supervisors. There is a reliance on independent study, and participants are expected to engage regularly and complete online tasks. These can be included in the assessment (*refer to the Course assessment below*).
- **PHASE 3:** This is a facilitated three-day session in which certain aspects of the course themes are further considered and guidance around the course assessment is provided.

Course assessment

The course assessment takes the form of a critical reflection essay in which you show engagement with your role as a postgraduate supervisor. The critical essay of about 2500 to 5000 words or 6 to 12 pages (*excluding references and appendices*), includes reflection on the following:

- The context in which you supervise,
- Your sense of yourself as a supervisor,
- The practices and processes involved in your own supervision, and
- Ways in which this course has impacted on your supervision.

Some of you might be undertaking this course without much supervision experience to reflect upon. In this case, you can draw on your experiences of being supervised and think into the future about what kind of supervisor you want to be.

You will have an opportunity to discuss the assessment in more detail during Phase 1 and again in some detail in Phase 3.

To support the claims that you make in this reflective essay, you need to provide evidence which can be integrated into the essay or attached as appendices. If you have appendices, each appendix you include must be referred to in the essay. The evidence can take any form: completed tasks from this course, examples of your feedback on a students' work, student evaluations, video clips of your interaction with your students, critical reflections on course readings, extracts from personal journals, and so on. Feel free to be as creative as you like.

The various tasks you do throughout this course are designed to support your learning and offer opportunities to work through each of the outcomes. They provide the kinds of evidence that you can use to build your assignment.

As you go along, you are welcome to use the online forum to discuss any problems or concerns you might have.

EXIT LEVEL OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
By the end of this course supervisors will:	**Evidence is provided of:**
1) Be aware of power relations in supervision and the necessity of creating inclusive and participatory learning environments.	a) The development of strategies for creating inclusive and participatory learning environments. b) The consideration of issues of social justice in postgraduate education.
2) Be able to provide a learning environment that emphasises the importance of scholarship.	a) Engagement with a scholarly community. b) Strategies to be employed to induct students into a scholarly community. c) The consideration of the supervisor's own academic identity and its role in supervision competence.
3) Be able to use supervisory practices that enhance student development.	a) Discussions and negotiations around the roles, responsibilities and expectations of the supervisor and the student. b) The exploration of the use of feedback to develop students and their research. c) Guidance given to students in the choice and application of appropriate methodologies. d) The consideration of ways in which student writing is supported and developed. e) The exploration of ways of guiding students in accessing, selecting and using relevant information f) The consideration of a range of approaches to supervision, including mentoring and coaching.
4) Be able to manage supervisory processes.	a) The consideration of expectations about the supervision process and the roles of both student and supervisor. b) The management of time, deadlines, resources, records and budgets.
In addition to meeting the assessment criteria above, the following should be taken into account:	
Use of appropriate language and style	Integration of formal academic and personal reflective writing
Use of appropriate referencing system	Consistent and appropriate use of referencing
Coherence of structure	Coherent reflective essay with the use of clear links between the essay and any appendices

Grade descriptors for the summative assessment

Distinction 75 - 100%

- Sophisticated and consistent evidence of comprehensive engagement with theory and literature in the field of postgraduate education plus ability to apply these to specific contexts.
- Consistent and thorough integration of theory with description of past, current or intended practice.
- Widespread evidence of use of course and other readings, plus discipline-specific readings sourced by the candidate themselves.
- Well-supported suggestions for critique of theory/principles/concepts to account for context factors.
- Practice comprehensively contextualised at individual, disciplinary and course levels, and at departmental, institutional, national and international levels.
- Evidence of critical reflexivity. For example: questioning of own assumptions about supervision practice, with specific reference to feedback and other ideas presented in the literature.
- Excellent use of appropriate genre for writing. For example: blend of academic and personal reflective styles, coherent structure, signposting, readability, and presentation.
- Strong potential to make a significant contribution to the field of postgraduate education and/or the discipline. Strong potential to be publishable in appropriate journal/s.

Highly competent   70 - 74%

- Comprehensive engagement with theory and literature in the field of postgraduate education in relation to supervision practice.
- Consistent evidence of comprehensive understanding of the principles of supervision practice.
- Good links between theory/practice in significant areas.
- Some critique of aspects of theory and/or principles of alternative approaches. Some suggestions for how principles could be adapted.
- Good contextualisation, description and justification of practice.
- Course and other readings fully integrated as part of cogent argument. Where possible, evidence of reading literature and research on postgraduate education in their discipline.
- Evidence of critical reflexivity at all stages of the process. For example: questioning of own assumptions about supervision, with specific reference to assessment, and other ideas presented in the literature. Very good use of appropriate genre for writing. For example: blend of academic and personal reflective styles, coherent structure, signposting, readability and presentation.
- Potential to contribute to the field of postgraduate studies and the discipline.

Competent 60 - 69%

- Engagement with theory and literature in the field of postgraduate education in relation to current or intended practice.
- Evidence of critical reflexivity.
- Evidence of good understanding of some of the theory and literature in the field of postgraduate education.
- Critique of aspects of theory and/or principles of alternative approaches.
- Competent engagement with theory but not necessarily fully integrated with practice.
- Main course resources used but not necessarily significantly integrated into cogent argument.
- Contextualisation, description and justification evident.
- Good use of appropriate genre for writing. For example: blend of academic and personal reflective styles, coherent structure, signposting, readability and presentation.

Pass 50 - 59%

- Adequately applies ideas in the postgraduate education literature to practice.
- Understanding of some of the theory and principles, and evidence of attempts at application to context.
- Little critical appraisal of postgraduate education literature or theory.
- Engagement with theory but theory is treated largely separately from practice.
- Few resources used and/or not significantly integrated into cogent argument.
- Some critique of own practice but no extended reflection or reasons for success or failure of a particular practice.
- Provides brief contextualisation, description, and justification for practice.
- Genre adequate with some difficulties. For example: parts of the document presented separately rather than as a coherent whole/few clear links between different parts.

Assignment

Your assignment is due on:

It should be submitted online.

You will receive developmental feedback on your assignment within four weeks of submitting your work. You will be given an opportunity to use this feedback to develop your work further and to resubmit this within two weeks of receiving the feedback.

If possible, your assessment should be submitted as one document. For example, if your assignment comprises a critical reflection essay in MS Word, and various appendices in MS Word, please merge these into one document. If your work is in various formats, you may submit these as separate documents.

The document filename should be as follows:

SURNAME UNIVERSITY DATE SPS

e.g.: Mkhize RU Aug 2018 SPS

If you need to submit appendices as separate documents, the document filename should be as follows:

SURNAME UNIVERSITY DATE SPS APPENDIX 1/2/3

The front page of every document submitted must include the following information:

SURNAME FIRST NAME

DEPARTMENT and FACULTY

UNIVERSITY (and campus if relevant)

SUPERVISION ASSIGNMENT (or SUPERVISION APPENDIX 1/2/3 *if you are submitting your work in separate documents.*)

EMAIL ADDRESS

Course Development

This course has been developed through the generous funding of the Dutch Government as administered by Nuffic and DHET. Nuffic is the Netherlands organisation for international cooperation in higher education. This particular Nuffic project (ZAR132) was a partnership between eight academic institutions that jointly developed the course:

- **In South Africa:** Rhodes University; University of For Hare; University of Cape Town; Stellenbosch University and University of Venda.

- **In the Netherlands:** Vrije Universiteit (VU), Amsterdam; Institute for Social Studies in The Hague; African Studies Centre in Leiden.

Additional development of this course was made possible through Capacity Development Grant funds from the Department of Higher Education and Training.

Accreditation

To receive accreditation for this course, you will need to successfully complete the assignment in which you engage with some of the course themes and how you respond to these in the light of your own supervision practice. A process of dynamic interaction is envisaged in which supervisors interact with facilitators around their critical reflections and get feedback on this. On successful completion of the course, participants receive a short course certificate. The short course is quality assured and accredited by Rhodes University.

This course comprises three days of face-to-face workshops, six weeks of online work and then three days of face-to-face workshops. This course is the equivalent of 30 NQF credits, i.e. it comprises 300 notional hours of work. However, the amount of time individuals allocate to this work will depend on several variables such as existing levels of supervision experience.

The course is positioned at NQF level 8 and will be assessed at the level of a Postgraduate Diploma qualification. Some universities accept this course as a module within the Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education.
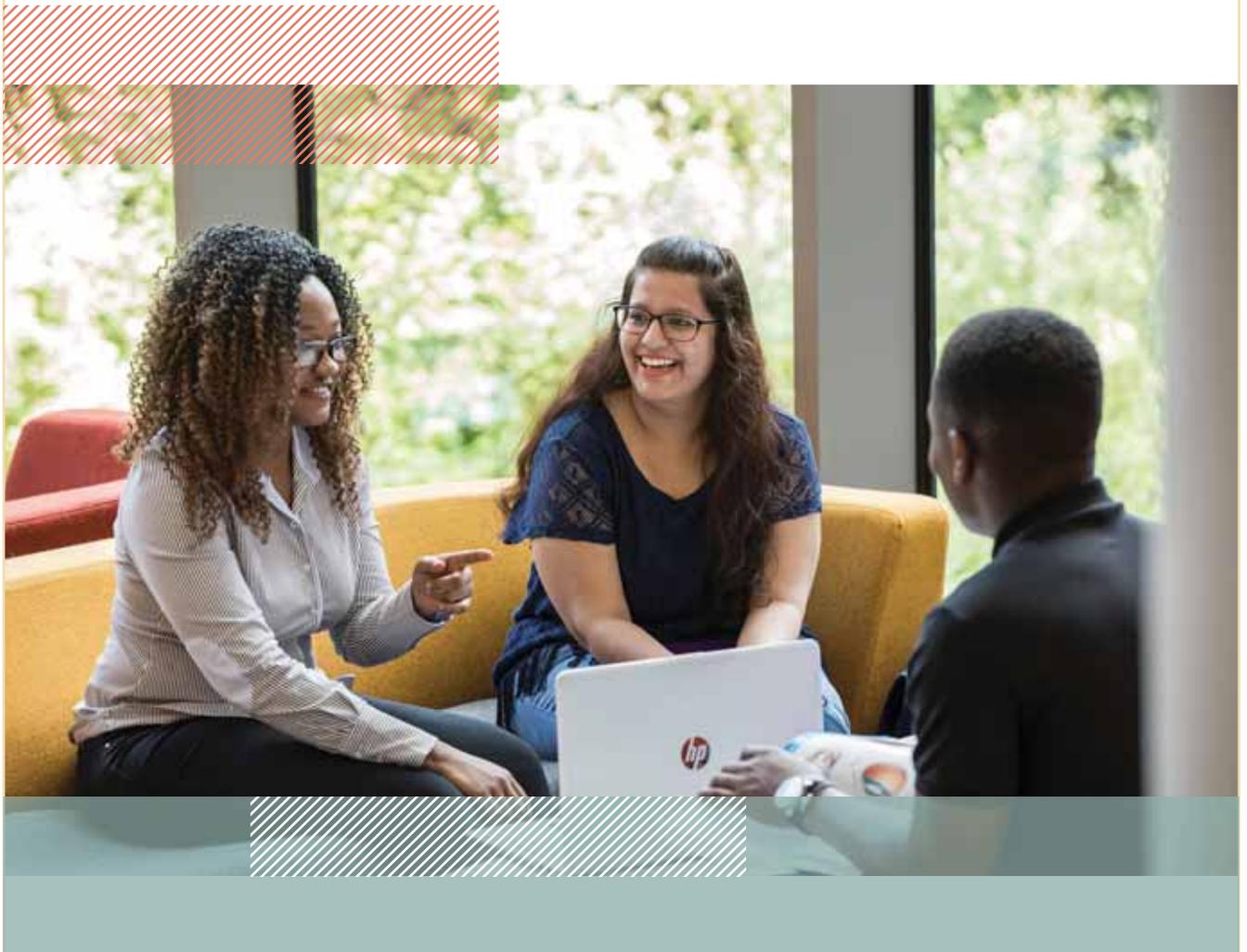
Creative Commons

All materials in this programme, both text-based and electronic, are licensed under the *Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike* license. This means that all materials developed for this course are free to be used by others. This excludes any items over which the course developers do not hold copyright, such as links to materials elsewhere. This is undertaken in a culture of sharing, whereby you are free to use and adapt these materials for workshops within your own or other institutions.

This means that you are free to:

– **Share** - to copy, distribute and transmit the work, and

– **Remix** - to adapt the work for your own context.

Under the following conditions:

– **Attribution** - You must attribute the work to this project (but not in any way that suggests that the course designers or funders endorse you or your use of the work), and

– **Share Alike** - If you alter, transform, or build upon this work, you may distribute the resulting work only under the same or similar license to this one.

PHASE ONE

Strengthening Postgraduate Supervision

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

PHASE ONE

Face-to-face

DAY ONE

DAY TWO

DAY THREE

DAY ONE SESSION 1:

Course outline and workshop etiquette

This is a facilitator led session in which you will be briefly introduced to the course structure and aims.

All the materials related to this course are available online, including the presentations used in the face-to-face phases 1 and 3. Phase 2 is entirely participant led - the more you put in, the more you will get out of it. It is a good idea to keep a folder for all the tasks you do during each of the three phases of this course, as you may want to include some of these as evidence in your assignment.

A full list of recommended readings is also available online under the resources tab. Some of these readings are available for free download off the Internet and others are hyperlinked to the PDF version of the article. Because of the copyright associated with downloading journal articles, only a few key texts have been hyperlinked in this way.

There are also forums online. You are encouraged to use these as much as possible to engage in discussion and share resources. The online space is flexible and more will be added onto this as we go along. Feel free to pass along comments and suggestions about this online environment so that the course developers can respond to your needs.

You will now be shown a PowerPoint presentation that indicates the national picture regarding PG education. Most of the national information in this presentation comes from the documents listed below which can be found on the online site.

Suggested Reading:

ASSAf, (2010). *The PhD report - An overview of the offering of the doctorate across SA with discussion on how to improve output*. Pretoria: ASSAf.

Cloete, N., Mouton, J. & Sheppard, C. (2016). *Doctoral education in South Africa* (Available for download from African Minds). Johannesburg: African Minds.

Council of Higher Education (CHE), (2009). *Postgraduate studies in South Africa: A statistical analysis*. Available at: *http://www.che.ac.za/media_and_publications/research/postgraduate-studies-south-africa-statistical-profile*. Persequor Park: CHE

Council of Higher Education (CHE), (2018). *VitalStats: Public higher education, 2016*. Available at: *http://www.che.ac.za/media_and_publications/monitoring-and-evaluation/vitalstats-public-higher-education-2016*. Persequor Park: CHE.

DAY ONE SESSION 2:

Social exclusion

Postgraduate education is about the contribution to powerful knowledge. But whose knowledge is legitimated and who gets to be recognised as a legitimate knower?

Spend a few minutes in conversation with the person next to you sharing your own experiences (of supervising and being supervised) and considerate ways in which the following variables or dynamics might play into the supervision process. Alternatively develop a role play where some of these variables are at play.

– Gender   – Status   – Nationality

– 'Race'   – Knowledge   – Religion/Culture

– Socioeconomic class   – Topic/Field   – Age

– Communication style   – Personality   – Language

These bullets suggest that these variables work discretely but we know that social reality works in intersectional ways. Furthermore, many of these issues play out through social structures that are not within our personal control. How does social exclusion work? Consider the diagram below and suggest some of the possible contributing factors:

Who are the relevant social agents? *How might their values, policies and practices affect social inclusion and exclusion at PG Level?*

How might social exclusion happen at PG level?
What events or experiences might occur?

WHO   **HOW**

WHEN   **WHAT**

At what stage might social exclusion take place?

What are the effects of social exclusion at PG level on the student, the supervisor, the department and university and on the country?

To improve the quality and quantity of South African postgraduate scholarship, it is vital that we deal with problems of unequal power relations, social exclusion and discrimination that hinder the creative process of knowledge production and can play a role in preventing candidates from successfully completing their studies.

This theme includes consideration of the following issues:

– **Social exclusion and discrimination**; recognising the impact of such exclusion and discrimination upon the knowledge production and creative potential of students.

– **Supervisory challenges** associated with diversities relating to gender, class, ethnicity/culture, 'race', geography and language.

– The **demanding effects of discriminatory relations** in supervisory encounters and the management of unequal power relations.

– Dealing with problems associated with **power relations** in supervisory contexts.

– Reflection on **your role** as a supervisor.

The issue of social inclusion and transformation in postgraduate education is a crucial one for South Africa. Low retention and throughput suggest that there might be several factors, possibly beyond the purely academic that impact on the chances of students achieving their postgraduate degree.

The 2008 Report of the Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions, commonly known as the Soudien Report, indicates that racism, sexism and xenophobia are rife in our institutions and continue to pervade the attitudes and practices of university structures, the student body and of academics.

The idea of a humanising pedagogy is drawn from the works of Freire, Nussbaum and Sen. It is one in which the sociocultural and political context of supervisor and student is recognised, and mutual vulnerability is acknowledged. What might a humanised pedagogy look like? Is it appropriate and desirable to have such pedagogy? What is the role of trust in the supervision relationship? Is it important? What facilitates or fails to facilitate trust? How might one ensure respect in the supervision relationship?

The facilitator will discuss this topic with you, using a PowerPoint presentation.

Several references have been recommended for this theme and are listed in the full online reference list.

DAY ONE SESSION 3:

Models and styles of supervision

The purpose of this session is to explore the various models of supervision while at the same time giving you an opportunity to reflect on your own understanding of the role of the supervisor and that of the other role players in the supervisory process.

After viewing a PowerPoint presentation about different models of supervision, you will have the opportunity to engage in discussion. There are a variety of models that can be used for supervision. One-on-one supervision is typical in the Humanities and project-based supervision is fairly common in the Natural Sciences, and there is great variation across the disciplines. In this discussion explore the functions of the supervisor or supervisors within the different supervisory models. What, in your view, would the roles and responsibilities of the supervisor be within each of the models below?

– Individual, one-on-one supervision,

– Co-supervision,

– Panel supervision, where each person in the panel has a particular role,

– Project supervision, where a team of postgraduate scholars and possibly a team of supervisors work together on a related set of research problems,

– Cohort supervision, where groups who enter the programme in a particular year work through the research stages together, and

– Other models?

How might the model of supervision impact on the following stages of the research process?

– Development of research design,

– Securing funding,

– Feedback on writing,

– Providing subject matter expertise,

– Quality assurance and compliance,

– Monitoring progress,

– Reporting on progress, and

– Selecting examiners.

There are various videos on the enhancing Postgraduate Environments website that discuss different supervision models. For example, search for the one on project teams.

Self-reflective questionnaire

In this activity you are given the opportunity to reflect on your own style of supervision, and related to that, the kind of style that you might favour.

Respond to the following statements as honestly as possible:

1. **I spend most of my supervisory time**
   a. Providing my student with encouragement and supportive advice.
   b. Directing my student through the various tasks that need to be accomplished.
   c. Inducting my student into the discourse and epistemology of the discipline.
   d. Developing a supportive relationship with my student.
   e. Challenging my student to interrogate their subject matter.

2. **My most important skill as a supervisor is to ...**
   a. Manage conflict and encourage my student to have the right attitude to engage in postgraduate study.
   b. Diagnose my student's shortcomings.
   c. Teach my students how to analyse information and develop an academic argument.
   d. Provide guidance in project management in conducting the research.
   e. Facilitate my student's research and reflect on their work.

3. **As a result of my knowledge and skills, my student will be equipped to ...**
   a. Organise their research effectively.
   b. Always question and search for answers.
   c. Have the right attitude to teamwork and research.
   d. Develop their potential in their discipline.
   e. Become a fully-fledged member of their disciplinary community.
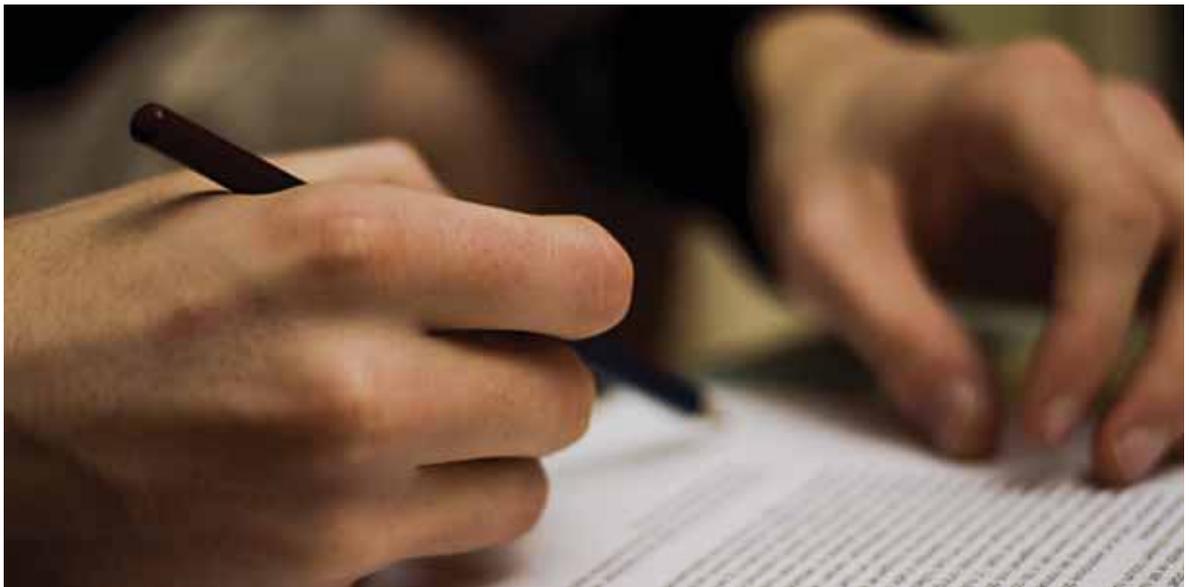
Consider the table below in which Lee describes different dimensions of supervision. She suggests that our style should not be fixed but needs to adapt to the student's needs and where they are in the research process.

Which view seems to be most in line with your own practice? Can you think of a supervision scenario in which one of Lee's approaches might be best?

Dimensions of Supervision

	Functional	Enculturation	Critical Thinking	Emancipation	Relationship Development
Supervisor's activity	Rational progression through tasks	Gatekeeping master to apprentice	Evaluation challenge	Mentoring, supporting constructivism	Supervising by experience, developing a relationship
Supervisor's knowledge and skills	Directing project management	Diagnosis of deficiencies coaching	Argument analysis	Facilitation, reflection	Managing conflict, emotional intelligence
Possible student reaction	Organised obedience	Role modelling, apprenticeship	Constant inquiry, fight or flight	Personal growth, reframing	A good team member, emotional intelligence

Source: Lee, A.M. (2007). Developing effective supervisors: concepts of research supervision. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, (21), 4, 680-693.

There are several factors which contribute to the way in which you supervise. Some of these are randomly listed below. On your own, think about how they contribute to the style of supervision you adopt. Then rank them according to your order of influence with 1 having the most influence. Thereafter, in a group, compare answers and reach a consensus about the final ranking.

Rank order from 1 to 10 with 1 having the most significance:

a) Your discipline's norms/disciplinary knowledge structure

b) Your experience as a supervisor

c) Your experience as a subject matter expert

d) Your personality

e) Your student's personality

f) Your own experience of being supervised

g) Your student's level of confidence as a researcher

h) The stage your student is at in their research

i) Your view of learning and knowledge

j) Your view of how research should be done

DAY ONE SESSION 4:

Introduction to the assessment

Today you have been introduced to the course and worked through a few tasks. This is a good point at which to pause and briefly consider the assessment you need to successfully complete if you wish to be accredited for this course.

The essay is not meant to be a praise song about what you are doing right, nor does it need to be a confessional of everything you have been doing wrong as a supervisor. Rather it should be a careful and detailed discussion about your own supervision practices and where you are succeeding and where you believe you need to develop further. It should demonstrate engagement with pertinent literature, and to this end, several readings are recommended in this Participant Guide and online. Appendices should only be included as substantiation for your discussion in the essay and each appendix must be referenced in the essay.

Look through the details on pages 3-7 and then, on your own, spend ten minutes jotting down in the section below what issues and evidence you might include in your assignment.

Exit Level Outcomes

By the end of this course supervisors will:

1) Be aware of power relations in supervision and the necessity of creating inclusive and participatory learning environments.

Assessment Criteria

Evidence is provided of:

a) The development of strategies for creating inclusive and participatory learning environments.

b) The consideration of issues of social justice in postgraduate education.

Ideas of issues I might address in my reflective essay

Ideas of evidence I might include as appendices to support what I say in my essay

Exit Level Outcomes

By the end of this course supervisors will:

2) Be able to provide a learning environment that emphasises the importance of scholarship.

Assessment Criteria

Evidence is provided of:

a) Engagement with the scholarly community.

b) Strategies employed to induct students into a scholarly community.

c) The consideration of the supervisor's own academic identity and its role in supervision competence.

Ideas of issues I might address in my reflective essay

Ideas of evidence I might include as appendices to support what I say in my essay

Exit Level Outcomes

By the end of this course supervisors will:

3) Be able to use supervisory practices that enhance student development.

Assessment Criteria

Evidence is provided of:

a) Discussions and negotiations around the roles, responsibilities and expectations of the supervisor and the student.

b) The exploration of the use of feedback to develop students and their research.

c) Guidance given to students in the choice and application of appropriate methodologies.

d) The consideration of ways in which student writing are supported and developed.

e) The exploration of the ways of guiding students in accessing selecting and using relevant information.

f) The consideration of a range of approaches to supervision, including mentoring and coaching.

Ideas of issues I might address in my reflective essay

Ideas of evidence I might include as appendices to support what I say in my essay

Exit Level Outcomes

By the end of this course supervisors will:

4) Be able to manage supervisory processes.

Assessment Criteria

Evidence is provided of:

a) The consideration of expectations about the supervision process and the roles of both student and supervisor.

b) The management of time, deadlines, resources, records and budgets.

Ideas of issues I might address in my reflective essay

Ideas of evidence I might include as appendices to support what I say in my essay

In addition to meeting the assessment criteria above, the following should be taken into account:

– **Use of appropriate language and style** - integration of formal academic and personal reflective writing

– **Use of appropriate referencing system** - consistent and appropriate use of referencing

– **Coherence of structure** - reflective essay must be coherent with clear links between essay and any appendices

DAY TWO SESSION 1:

Identify work in the postgraduate journey

Today's activities focus on scholarship. They raise the idea of academic identity, the particular discipline in which the supervisor is working and the ways in which different forms of study are constructed in national documents. The theme has to do with how knowledge is produced in your own particular discipline. In particular, it addresses the question of the different possible ways in which knowledge is produced and raises questions about our flexibility as supervisors to guide students in a broad range of approaches. It begins by grappling with the issue of the student's identity and the extent to which the postgraduate journey might impact on their sense of self.

There is a strong correlation between being an active researcher and being a strong supervisor so developing your own research identity is central to your development as a supervisor.

As a whole group work through each case study below and consider the following questions:

1. What are the key issues at play in the case study?
2. How is the student's sense of self challenged?
3. How is the supervisor positioned?
4. What would you need to take into account in understanding the issues involved?
5. How would you engage with the student as a supervisor?
6. Have you encountered similar issues as a student or a supervisor?

A: "I'm competent"

Mandy is in a pre-registration phase, and is ostensibly working on her proposal. However, she is procrastinating and is stalled right at the beginning of her PhD journey. You have been asking her for something in writing for months. You have tried setting deadlines by asking her: "Let me have the first draft of your context by Friday next week"; and have cajoled by saying: "Please Mandy, send me anything you are working on so I can see how you are doing"; and you have even threatened her by saying: "The Faculty Research Committee meets next month and if your proposal is not on the agenda, you can't register and get started with your study". She never answers her cell phone or acknowledges texts from you. The few times you have managed to reach her on a landline to set up face-to-face meetings, she has texted you just before the meeting to cancel giving some or other crisis as an excuse.

When you met her the first couple of times to discuss her candidacy in the PhD programme you were impressed with the general knowledge she has in her field, and her energy. Her undergraduate record shows her as a hardworking and high achieving student, yet when you complimented her on her excellent record and interesting Master's topic, she discounted the remark, saying that she was 'average' compared to other students in her classes.

When you asked her why she wanted to undertake a doctoral study, the one clear comment that she gave was that she wanted to prove to her father that she was clever enough. When you asked her why she wanted to work with you as a supervisor, she said that she had heard from other students that you had a good relationship with your postgraduates and treated them as colleagues rather than, as she put it, 'ignoramuses' or 'dogs' bodies'. You have got the impression from her comments that she is an avid feminist, frustrated by what she sees as women in South Africa buying into their own oppression.

B: "I'm a practical somebody"

Thandeka has pigeonholed herself as "not really being academic material", yet she has registered because she qualified and feels a Masters would give her entry into the world of policy research and creation that is critical to her field moving forward in South Africa. She is ambitious for social change and classifies herself as a practical problem-solver who wants to make things better.

Coming from a long line of community servants - pastors, teachers and social workers - she is highly sensitised to the needs of the disenfranchised in her community. Indeed, she spends a lot of time running soup kitchens for the church, and visiting the sick, to the extent that she often over-runs deadlines. She says that the Master's Degree is going to be the hardest thing she has ever done.

You have noticed that in sessions with other PhD students she seems uncharacteristically quiet. However, in social interactions with staff in the department, she is bubbly and a natural leader especially when creating communal events and activities.

Her pragmatic take on the world is that she is someone who: "is not bright but can get things done" yet she has doubts about her postgraduate journey which she sees as about being clever. As a result, she is reluctant to engage with the philosophical aspects of her research, and jokes nervously about "big academic words like paradigms, ontology, epistemology, and axiology". This discomfort seems to be hampering her in shaping her literature review.

C: "I control what I produce"

As a supervisor, you believe that the process of postgraduate learning is valuable for self-knowledge and the development of desirable approaches to creating knowledge. Yet, while believing that the process is valuable, you are also hyper-aware of the funding implications associated with the lack of student progress. You are currently challenged with this internal conflict, by Mpho a successful pragmatist.

Single at 35 and already a sought-after consultant, Mpho is handsome, confident and competent. He is a master of juggling demands and multi-tasking, and is decisive in his activities. He is of the opinion that the Doctorate Degree represents status that will enhance his ability to market himself.

He has set himself a two-year deadline to finish the degree and regards the process as one of 'jumping through hoops' to continually monitor his progress against this deadline.

You find him a delight to supervise as he essentially self-manages and meets his deadlines. However, he is a part-time student and you are worried that with his demanding one-man business, networking, and his active social life, he is skimping on the ontological development that you so value about a PhD study.

You have noticed that he tends to be unquestioning of the literature that he uses to support his study and moreover is uncritical of the business status quo in South Africa. You are also concerned by how he superficially attends to your comments and how quickly he returns chapters to you.

D: "I achieve"

Shan is an academic achiever. During all of his school-going life, he responded positively to his family's encouragement to get a good education. His undergraduate record is flawless and he graduated from his Masters *summa cum laude*. When you met him, you were delighted to take on such a capable student who seemed very clear on the research he wanted to undertake and who was well-read in the field. He sailed through the proposal development and defence process with what seemed like little anxiety. Yet since then which was six months ago, he has not shared any of his writing with you.

At your regular meetings and via email he is articulate about what he is doing and what he wants to achieve. Yet you are anxious because you don't know whether he is really writing down everything that he talks about. You have also noticed that what he says seems to rest at a Master's level of synthesising the literature in the field, rather than claiming his own voice. While he overtly claims to understand that writing is one way of coming to clarity through experimenting with words, ideas and structures, you are not sure that he does understand this. He reassures you that he is reading a lot.

When you ask him about his strategy for presenting his first two chapters to you, he says that he's working on the research methodology chapter, and once that is finished he will know what to put into his introduction and his literature review. On a couple of occasions, he has revealed some anxiety that the data he plans to gather about the phenomenon he is studying, and his data analysis might not be comfortably accommodated within the thesis assumptions. You find it hard to help him with this anxiety without seeing what these assumptions might be. He wants to 'get a handle on it' before he lets you see his work and is not willing to show you work in progress. He says: "I write from beginning to end, not in patches". You expect that you'll either see a completed masterpiece or incoherence in another six months without ever having seen the drafts. This fear makes you anxious and you suspect that Shan's perfectionism is what is holding him back.

E: "My family is important"

"I'm still questioning why I'm doing my Master's Degree, and is it going to make me any better at the job I really think I'm quite good at doing?" says Annette, as you ask her about how she is doing. She has come to this meeting having stayed up all night to put together the piece that you are to discuss today.

She is busy with her data analysis and believes that the interview data that she has collected and transcribed has contributed very little to understanding the phenomenon she is studying. She believes it needs to be thrown away and that she needs to begin again, by asking different questions. You feel that her method is sound and the process she has followed is appropriate. You try to reassure her that even in the absence of the key words she thought she was going to find (when she wrote her proposal), the data might be still be revealing.

You ask her whether something in a transcript doesn't sound similar to an article you had sent her the previous week. She bursts into tears. Luckily you have a box of tissues on hand and after she calms down, you ask why your question about the article triggered this reaction. She launches into a list of reasons why she hasn't read the transcript and it boils down to her not having had enough time.

She loves her full-time job, which challenges her and makes her feel competent. Luckily her boss believes in results rather than time in the office, giving her flexibility of movement to transport her children to different activities. She is diligent about doing an hour of homework with each of them before starting to prepare the evening meal whilst simultaneously making up their lunch boxes for the following day, having shopped on the way home from work. Her main study time seems to be after dinner when the children are in bed and her husband has settled down to watch sport. Her ailing mother-in-law has also recently moved in with the family. Her husband seems content to take out the rubbish and mow the lawn, and he does not really understand why she is studying.

DAY TWO SESSION 2:

Scholarly community of practice

This session focuses on the engagement of supervisors with their academic community and the need to induct their graduates into this community. It engages supervisors in ways to nurture and sustain their membership within the academic community.

Spend fifteen minutes working on your own to complete this questionnaire in as much detail as possible. This is for self-reflection purposes only and you will not be asked to submit your responses. You need only complete these four questions individually; the group will then engage with the broader questions that follow.

1. Do you feel like you have good access to the essential journals in your field? Which are these? Do you find the time and space to keep up with key literature in your field?

2. Have there been challenges (shifts, schisms, radically new approaches) to the dominant theories, concepts, methods or approaches in your field? What happened as a result? Is your field quite stable or are there frequent shifts in schools of thought?

3. Who is your immediate academic community? List people with whom you can discuss issues related to your field. These may be colleagues at work or people with whom you engage online or at conferences.

4. How active are you in your academic community? How did you become a member of this community? How do you engage with this community? Forms of engagement might include examining for other universities, publishing your research in journals and books, presenting at conferences, reviewing for journals. Are these relevant to your practice? Are there others?

Work as a group to discuss the five questions below. Some suggestions are provided for further reading. *(Remember that a full reading list is available in the resources section online.)*

a. What is a scholar in your view? What does scholarship mean to you?

Boyer, E. L. (1990). *Scholarship reconsidered.* Stanford: Carnegie Foundation

b. What does being active in an academic community mean to you? Does being an active researcher have bearing on supervision in your view?

Becher, T. & Trowler, P. (2001). A*cademic tribes and territories society for research into higher education.* London: Open University Press.

Henkel, M. (2000). *Academic identities and policy change in higher education.* London: Jessica Kingley Publishers.

c. How can you introduce your students into this community? Is this part of the role of the supervisor?

Manathunga, C. & Goozee, J. (2007). *Challenging the dual assumption of the 'always/already' autonomous student and effective supervisor*. Teaching in Higher Education, 12(3): 309-322.

Manathunga, C. (2007). *Supervision as mentoring: The role of power and boundary crossing*. Studies in Continuing Education, 29(2): 207-222.

Wisker, G. (2012). *The good supervisor: Supervising postgraduate and undergraduate research for doctoral theses and dissertations*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.

d. What might a PG supervisor's support network provide? How can such a network be fostered?

Brew, A. & Peseta, T. (2008). *Supervision development and recognition in a reflexive space*. In D. Boud & A. Lee (Eds.), Changing Practices of Doctoral Education (pp.126-139). London & NY: Routledge.

Harrison, L. (2012). *Paperheads: Living doctoral study, developing doctoral identity*. Amsterdam: Peter Lang.

e. Have you had experience of academic jealousies? What were the effects and was it resolved? How can you contribute to a more respectful and generous support network?

Brew, A. & Peseta, T. (2004). *Changing postgraduate supervision practice: a program to encourage learning through reflection and feedback*. Innovations in Education and Teaching International, 41(1), 5-22.

Manathunga, C., Peseta, T. & McCormack, C. (2010). *Supervisor development through creative approaches to writing*. The International Journal for Academic Development, 15(3), 33-46.

There are various national documents that deal with what a Masters and Doctorate are in terms of the NQF level, and the competencies expected of graduates.

They indicate what is expected and how an institution is expected to quality assure this level of work. These documents include the following, which can all be found in the resources section of the online classroom:

– Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework,

– SAQA level descriptors, and

– Council on Higher Education Institutional Audit Criteria 15, 16 and 17.

For this discussion, we will focus on the HEQSF document levels 9 and 10, which you can find below.

1. What distinguishes a Master's level study from a Doctorate?

2. How is a Masters by coursework different from a full-thesis Master's study?

3. What would constitute a 'significant and original academic contribution' in your field? Who determines what constitutes the 'doctoralness' of a study?

4. Why is peer-review a measure of quality and how is this implemented in the doctoral process?

5. The Doctorate can comprise discipline-based, multidisciplinary or applied research. Where does your expertise lie and how might you approach supervision in another kind of research?

6. An outcome of the Doctorate is the ability to supervise. To what extent did your own doctoral study prepare you for this role? Do you see it as part of your role as supervisor to prepare your students to be future supervisors?

Master's Degree

Type specifications

NQF Exit Level 9
Minimum total credits: 180
Minimum credits at Level 9: 120

Designators

The designators for the Master's Degree describe the broad academic knowledge area of the qualification. Examples include: Master of Arts, Master of Science, Master of Social Science, Master of Commerce, Master of Laws, Master of Education. A Masters by dissertation with a strong theoretical base may be known as a Master of Philosophy.

Qualifiers

Specific, maximum one if required
Abbreviations: MA, MA (Linguistics), MSc, MPhil, MSc (Astrophysics)

Purpose and characteristics

The primary purpose of a general Master's Degree is to educate and train researchers who can contribute to the development of knowledge at an advanced level.

There are two variants of the general Master's Degree: A research Master's Degree by dissertation, or a research Master's Degree by coursework and dissertation. Both variants must include a significant research component in the form of a discrete research project.

The requirements for the successful completion of a general Master's Degree are as follows:

– *Master's Degree by dissertation:* A single advanced research project, culminating in the production and acceptance of a dissertation or other forms of research as indicated below.

– *Master's Degree by coursework and mini-dissertation:* A coursework programme requiring a high level of theoretical engagement and intellectual independence, and in some cases demonstration of the ability to relate knowledge to a range of contexts for professional practice.

In addition, this variant of a general Master's Degree must contain a research project comprising a minimum of 60 credits at level 9, culminating in the acceptance of a mini- dissertation or other forms of research as indicated below.

Master's Degree graduates in general must be able to reflect critically on theory and its application. They must be able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, design and critically appraise research, make sound judgements using data and information at their disposal and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences, demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks with a theoretical underpinning and continue to advance their knowledge, understanding and skills.

The research component or components of a general Master's Degree should be commensurate with the characteristics of the discipline and field as well as the purpose of the programme, and in addition to a dissertation or treatise may take the form of a technical report, one or more creative performances or works, or a series of peer-reviewed articles or other research-equivalent outputs.

Minimum admission requirements

The minimum admission requirement is a relevant Bachelor Honours Degree or a relevant Postgraduate Diploma. A relevant Bachelor's Degree at level 8 may also be recognised as meeting the minimum entry requirement to a cognate Master's Degree programme.

Progression

Completion of a Master's Degree meets the minimum entry requirement for admission to a cognate Doctoral Degree, usually in the area of specialisation in the Master's Degree. A qualification may not be awarded for early exit from a Master's Degree.

Master's Degree (professional)

Type specifications

NQF Exit Level 9
Minimum total credits: 180
Minimum credits at Level 9: 120

Designators

The designators for the professional Master's Degree describe the broad field of the programme, just as for the general Masters. However, the designator may be modified to indicate the professional orientation of the programme which can be further specified by a qualifier. Examples include Master of Health Sciences, Master of Applied Science, Master of Applied Arts.

Qualifiers

Specific, maximum one

The qualifier indicates the professional orientation of the programme. Examples include Master of Applied Commerce in Taxation, Master of Education in School Leadership, Master of Medicine in Paediatric Surgery.

Abbreviations: MAppCom (Taxation), MEd (School Leadership), MMed (Paediatric Surgery).

Abbreviations: MA, MA (Linguistics), MSc, MPhil, MSc (Astrophysics)

Purpose and characteristics

The primary purposes of a professional Master's Degree are to educate and train graduates who can contribute to the development of knowledge at an advanced level such that they are prepared for advanced and specialised professional employment.

In some cases, a professional Master's Degree may be designed in consultation with a professional body or fulfil all or part of the requirements for professional registration or recognition and may include appropriate forms of work-integrated learning.

The requirements for the successful completion of the professional Master's Degree are as follows:

Successful completion of a coursework programme requiring a high level of theoretical engagement and intellectual independence as well as demonstration of the ability to relate knowledge to the resolution of complex problems in appropriate areas of professional practice. In addition, a professional Master's Degree must include an independent study component that comprises at least a quarter of the total credits, which must be at NQF level 9, consisting of either a single research or technical project or a series of smaller projects demonstrating innovation or professional expertise.

Master's graduates must be able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, design and critically appraise analytical writing, make sound judgements using data and information at their disposal and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences, demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks with a professional orientation, and continue to advance their knowledge, understanding and skills relevant to a particular profession.

Minimum admission requirements

The minimum admission requirement is a relevant Bachelor Honours Degree or a Postgraduate Diploma. A cognate Bachelor's Degree at Level 8 may also be recognised as meeting the minimum entry requirement to a cognate Master's Degree programme.

Progression

Completion of a Master's Degree meets the minimum entry requirement for admission to a cognate Doctoral Degree, usually in the area of specialisation in the Master's Degree. A qualification may not be awarded for early exit from a Master's Degree.

Doctoral Degree

Type specifications

NQF Exit Level 10
Minimum total credits: 360
Minimum credits at Level 10: 360

Designators

The designator of Philosophy is typically used for general doctoral degrees by thesis. However, other designators may be used to denote the area of study or the name of the discipline.

Qualifiers

Specific, maximum one if required
Abbreviations: PhD, DPhil, DLitt

Purpose and characteristics

The Doctorate provides training for an academic career. It requires a candidate to undertake research at the most advanced academic levels culminating in the submission, assessment and acceptance of a thesis. However, candidates may also present peer-reviewed academic articles and papers, and, in certain fields, creative work such as artefacts, compositions, public performances and public exhibitions in partial fulfilment of the research requirements. Coursework may be required as preparation or value addition to the research, but does not contribute to the credit value of the qualification.

The defining characteristic of this qualification is that the candidate is required to demonstrate high level research capability and to make a significant and original academic contribution at the frontiers of a discipline or field. The work must be of a quality to satisfy peer review and merit publication.

The degree may be earned through pure discipline-based or multidisciplinary research or applied research. This degree requires a minimum of two years' full- time study, usually after completing a Master's Degree. A graduate should be able to supervise and evaluate the research of others in the area of specialisation concerned.

An additional type of doctorate, the Higher Doctorate, may be awarded on the basis of a distinguished record of research in the form of published works, creative works and/or other scholarly contributions that are judged by leading international experts to make an exceptional and independent contribution to one or more disciplines or fields of study.

Minimum admission requirements

The minimum admission requirement is an appropriate Master's Degree.

Progression

A Doctoral Degree (including the Higher Doctorate) is the highest qualification type awarded within this framework. A qualification may not be awarded for early exit from a Doctoral Degree.

Doctoral Degree (professional)

Type specifications

NQF Exit Level 10
Minimum total credits: 360
Minimum credits at Level 10: 360

Designators

This qualification type may be named a Professional Doctorate followed by a designator that indicates the area of study or name of the discipline. However, Professional doctorates may also make use of the name Doctor followed by the area study or the name of discipline. Examples include: Doctor of Education, Doctor of Commerce, Doctor of Engineering, Doctor of Law, Doctor of Nursing, Doctor of Social Work, Doctor of Pharmacy. The title PhD should not be used for a Professional Doctorate.

Qualifiers

Specific, maximum one if required
Abbreviations: DEd, DCom, DBA; DEng; LLD; DNursing; DSW; DPharm; DPsych.

Purpose and characteristics

The professional Doctorate provides education and training for a career in the professions and/or industry and is designed around the development of high-level performance and innovation in a professional context. Candidates are required to undertake a combination of coursework and advanced research leading to the submission, assessment and acceptance of a research component comprising an original thesis or another form or research that is commensurate with the nature of the discipline or field and the specific area of enquiry. The research component should comprise at least 60% of the degree.

Professional doctorates may also include appropriate forms of work-integrated learning. The defining characteristic of this qualification is that in addition to the demonstration of high-level research capability it requires the ability to integrate theory with practice through the application of theoretical knowledge to highly complex problems in a wide range of professional contexts.

Minimum admission requirements

The minimum admission requirement is an appropriate Master's Degree.

Progression

A Doctoral Degree (including the Higher Doctorate) is the highest qualification awarded within this framework. A qualification may not be awarded for early exit from a Doctoral Degree.

DAY TWO SESSION 3:

Research question or hypothesis

It is crucially important to get a clearly worded research question or hypothesis to guide and delimit the study.

Your facilitator will now take you through a PowerPoint presentation and discussion around this issue.

Canal Walk Shopping Centre   Image: Sage Ross - *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User:Ragesoss from Wikimedia Commons*

STEP ONE:

Look at the picture above. Now, try to develop a research question for five different studies. Each question should in some way be related to the picture. (Don't worry to get the wording of the research question right - just a general idea of the focus will do).

1.   Develop a research question that an Engineering student might pose.

2.   Develop a research question that a Fine Art student might pose.

3.   Develop a research question that a Medical student might pose.

4.   Develop a research question that a Sociology student might pose.

5.   Develop a research question that a postgraduate student from your own discipline might pose.

STEP TWO:

Share your research questions with your group.

Do you notice how different disciplines would focus on very different aspects of a phenomenon in their choice of a suitable research problem?

STEP THREE:

Discuss with your group what kinds of data each research question might demand and the different methods of analysis that might be required.

STEP FOUR:

What did you notice about the different fictitious studies in relation to the aims that underpin them? Which research studies are about emancipation and social change? Which are about finding solutions to practical, physical problems? Which are about understanding the social world? What other aims do the research studies have?

What is the nature of the 'truth' being sought in each of the studies? Do you notice that the 'truth' each different piece of research seeks is quite different from each other? In some of the research, the 'truth' is in the form of absolute fact and in others it may be contested and open to multiple and constructed meanings. We can then say that the ontology of the research differs.

What would the researcher's relationship be to each piece of proposed research? Would she be an objective observer or a subjective participant? In other words, what is the epistemology in the different research studies?

Supervising the research design:

As the previous activity demonstrated, research concerns differ from programme to programme as do the methodologies through which we interrogate them. Bernstein (2000) tells us that the structure of a particular kind of knowledge determines, to a greater or lesser extent, the structure of a discipline. So, while all academic knowledge construction aspires to validity and rigour and trustworthiness, the ways in which it achieves this can be markedly different across disciplines.

Hypothesis testing and scientific objectivity, for example, are crucial tenets of many of the Natural Sciences but may be seen to be problematic in some Social Sciences where undefined problems and subjective positionality are valued.

Some of you might be working in disciplines with strong research cultures, others might be working in 'regions' with weaker research cultures. Regions are made from multiple disciplines and face towards the world of work. The distinction between singular disciplines and regions also has significant implications for research design (Muller 2009).

For this reason, it is not possible within the scope of this course on supervision to engage with issues of research design to any great extent. Expertise in research design within one's discipline, and increasingly in an interdisciplinary way, is essential to good supervision. We need to keep up-to-date with shifts in our field and to engage with our scholarly community around issues of methodology. Being narrowly confined to supervising on the exact issue and using the exact approach we used in our own studies is extremely problematic. There are several publications, conferences and short courses dedicated to the issue of research design and methodology and we owe it to our students to seek these out and to constantly develop our expertise in these areas.

Bernstein B 2000. *Pedagogy, symbolic control, and identity: theory, research, critique*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield.

Muller, J. 2009. *Forms of knowledge and curriculum coherence*. Journal of Education and Work. Vol. 22(3).

Remember that a list of all readings is available in the online space of this course including download links to some of them.

DAY THREE SESSIONS 1 & 2:

Developing student writing & giving feedback

Supervisors often complain that their students cannot write or they complain that they must spend too much time correcting students' language errors. Many of these comments arise from a misunderstanding of the relationship between language and meaning-making and from supervisors being uncertain about what they can do to help to develop their students' writing practices.

The facilitator will now take you through a PowerPoint presentation on student writing that emphasises the use of pre-writing tasks to develop students' writing practices. This will include an opportunity to try out a pre-writing activity.

Do you use any of these techniques with your students? Do you think they might be useful? Is this an appropriate response to developing student writing?

Your facilitator will take you through a further PowerPoint presentation on giving feedback on student writing which is focused on supporting students to write coherently and take on discipline specific practices. What kind of feedback do you give on student writing? What kind of feedback, in your view, is the most effective?

There are various videos on the EPE website on how to support your students' writing.

(Postgraduatenvironments.com)

For example, search for:

– Two-minute tips,

– Feedback, and

– Supporting academic writing practices.

DAY THREE SESSION 3:

Introduction to information and digital literacy

There is a research support triangle between the supervisor, student and librarian. All three have an important role to play in ensuring quality research. Librarians in your institution are offering a library session as part of Phase 2 of this course. You can take note of the details of the session here:

Date: ....

Time: ....

Place: ....

Contact person: ....

The library session will introduce you to the many support functions your library offers to postgraduate supervisors and students. If you are already an experienced supervisor, attending this session will provide a valuable refresher and may well introduce you to new resources. In preparation for that session, you should now work in pairs to discuss the self-exploration questions below.

Self-exploration questions in pairs:

1.   What relationship do you and your students have with the library?

2.   What kinds of library support services are there for your postgraduate students? Provide details.

3.   How do you access your own library's holdings?

4.   How do you keep up with the latest research in your field?

5.   What online databases does your institution use?

6.   Which referencing software does your institution provide? *(For example: Endnote, Refworks, Zotero, Mandeley and Paperpile)*

7.   What are the procedures that you need to follow to use your institution's interlibrary loan system?

8.   What referencing and style guides are available to you online at your institution?

9.   What is an open access site?

10.   Do you know how to create a search alert?

Read through the list below of responsibilities of the supervisor regarding use of library materials.

This list has been developed by experienced subject librarians. Make a note of the areas where you believe that you need to approach the library for training and support for yourself or your students:

– **Introduction to the library:** Supervisors need to introduce postgraduate students to the relevant library subject specialists and recognise the importance of this research-support relationship for the student. The supervisor needs to be familiar with the resources and library spaces available to doctoral candidates in their university. For example, this could include research and postgraduate commons areas in the Library, which promote a postgraduate community of practice.

– **Literature review and current awareness:** Supervisors need to ensure that their students are equipped to conduct thorough literature reviews. This entails finding relevant print and electronic materials using research databases and the use of current awareness options such as citation, search and journal issue tables of content alerts/RSS feed.

– **Referencing:** Supervisors need to be proficient in the use of reference software management tools, such as RefWorks, EndNote, Procite, Mendeley, Zotero, or Paperpile. Supervisors may need to be familiar with style guides and manuals.

– **Research analysis and dissemination:** Supervisors need to be able to use citations, journals and research impact analysis tools (Web of Science Citation Indices; journal analytics, for example: SNIP, SJR, ISI Journal Citation Reports; InCites, SciVal).

– **Research publication awareness:** Supervisors need to understand the world of scholarly publishing. This includes an awareness of the trends and pitfalls of academic publishing, and issues such as open access and institutional repositories.

– **Academic networking:** It is advisable for supervisors to be familiar with and create a profile on available academic networking options, for example: ORCID (increasingly essential in the SA context as preferred by NRF), Academia.edu, ResearchGate.

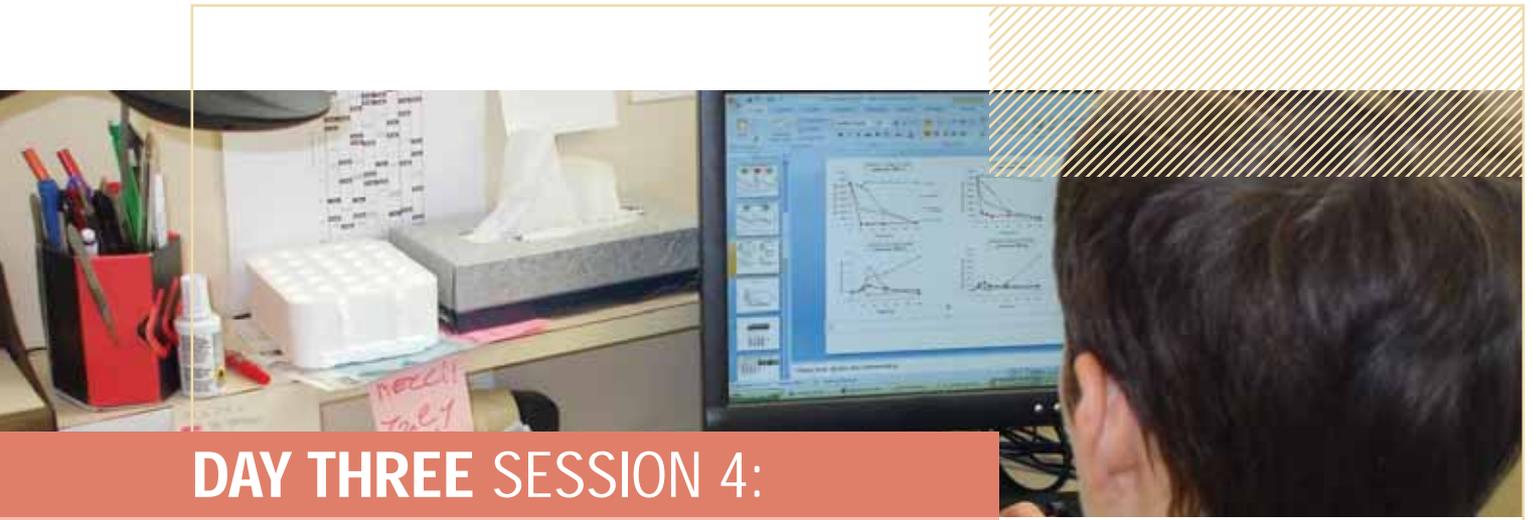There is a useful glossary of library terms available in the online site.

There are various videos on this issue on the EPE website:

(Postgraduatenvironments.com)

For example, search for:

– Library, and,
– Selecting a journal for your publication.

DAY THREE SESSION 4:

Wrap up and introduction to the next phases

This course, **Strengthening Postgraduate Supervision**, comprises three phases: three days of face-to-face, approximately six weeks of self-directed online learning and then three days of face-to-face workshops. You have now come to the end of the first phase. This session will serve as an introduction to the online phase, namely: Phase 2.

Getting online

During this session, you learn the following:

– How to log onto the site for this course,

– How to navigate around the site,

– How to adapt your profile,

– How to download a PowerPoint or one of the hyperlinked readings,

– How to complete a Poll, and

– What is expected of you during Phase 2 of the course.

Please feel free to play around with the online materials and use the resources as much as possible. Remember that you can drop an email to your facilitator if you have any difficulties accessing the online materials:

> Your facilitator will now ask you to complete an evaluation of Phase 1. We hope you have enjoyed it and that the course continues to be useful to you as you move into Phase 2.

EVALUATION

Please answer the following questions on a separate sheet and hand it to your facilitator. Please indicate the name of your institution and the date at the top of the page.

1. Please comment on the usefulness of Phase 1 of the 'Strengthening Postgraduate Supervision' course. If possible note specific areas that you hope to implement.

2. Please give feedback on the appropriateness of the materials for this phase (the Participant Guide, PowerPoint presentations and readings).

3. Which sessions were less useful or relevant to you and your practice as a supervisor and why?

4. Please comment on the facilitation of Phase 1.

5. Please share any other comments, insights or concerns you might have about this course.

We hope you enjoyed this course and we look forward to continuing the conversation online and to seeing you again in Phase 3.

PHASE THREE

Strengthening Postgraduate Supervision

PHASE THREE

Face-to-face

DAY ONE

DAY TWO

DAY THREE

The programme over these three days will build on the four major themes:

– social justice in supervision,

– the importance of scholarship,

– supervisory practices, and

– supervision processes.

The first theme focuses on issues of inclusion and exclusion and the relationship between the student and supervisor; the second theme is concerned with the supervisor's own academic identity and the research community to which he or she belongs; the third theme looks at various approaches and models of supervision, including coaching and mentoring; and the final theme considers the supervision of each stage of the research project, including attending to institutional requirements.

DAY ONE SESSION 1:
Review of Phase 2

Work in groups to reflect on the activities, tasks and reading you have done in Phase 2.

You might like to consider the following questions:

– Which activities did you find most useful? Why?

– Which readings would you recommend? Why and to whom? and

– Which areas do you think you need to focus on? Why?

From your reading and reflection and from doing the various tasks in Phase 2, what issues about supervision do you think still need to be addressed in Phase 3?

DAY ONE SESSION 2:

Free writing towards course assessment

As you will recall, the assessment of this course is through an assignment comprising a reflective essay and supporting evidence.

This session comprises a series of free-writing tasks that allow you to reflect on the four themes of the course. This begins your preparation for doing the assignment. Remember that free writing entails non-stop writing for a short period of time. You are writing only for yourself and you do not need to concern yourself about neatness, spelling or grammar.

These four free-writing activities revolve around the following issues:

– The context in which you supervise,

– Your sense of yourself as a supervisor,

– The practices and processes involved in your own supervision, and

– Ways in which this course may have impacted on your supervision.

> When your facilitator gives the instruction, you should write for five minutes about the context in which you supervise. What is that context and how does the context affect the what, how and who of your supervision?

> Once your facilitator gives you the instruction to stop, you should spend five minutes chatting to the person next to you about this issue of your own supervision context and how this affects supervision. Think about which key issues about context you would need to include in your reflective essay. Think about what readings you have done or will need to seek out to enable a deeper consideration of the effect of context.

You will then repeat this for each of the issues below. Five minutes of free-writing on your own, followed by five minutes of chatting to the person next to you.

– Your sense of yourself as a supervisor.

– The practices and processes involved in being a supervisor.

– The ways in which this course may impact on your supervision.

DAY ONE SESSION 3:

Research ethics

Your facilitator will take you through a PowerPoint presentation and discussion. Behaving in ethical ways is fundamental to quality research though the ethical dilemmas that are faced vary significantly from field to field.

DAY ONE SESSION 4:

Role of the Higher Degrees Committee, Examiners and Vivas

Postgraduate supervisors are also expected to take on other related roles in the institution. This session considers two such roles: being a Higher Degrees Committee member and being an external examiner. Your facilitator will now take you through a PowerPoint presentation and a discussion of what these roles entail.

Many institutions use vivas as part of the doctoral process. In some of these institutions the viva is an examination whereas in others it is simply a sharing of the doctoral findings. Your facilitator will now share a PowerPoint presentation and a discussion of vivas. The extent to which you engage with this will be dependent on the role that vivas play in your institution.

DAY TWO SESSION 1:
Supervisory practices using intervision

This session draws together some of the theory about supervisory practices that you have interrogated during the courses of Phase 1 and Phase 2 and explores ways in which you are applying this theory in your own practices as a supervisor. The aim of the session is to highlight important issues that have already been dealt with and to elicit your own opinions that have been developed during the learning.

Intervision is a process of structured contact between colleagues, involving mutual support, giving feedback and learning from each other in a professional manner to network, develop and share specific competencies.

Intervision follows a very structured approach to group work and you need to read through all the steps before you begin.

STEP ONE

Selection of an incident (10 min)

- Each group member should select a supervision incident/event where they were unsure of what to do or concerned about how the incident played out.
- The incident should be:
  - one that has already happened and falls within the postgraduate environment;
  - recent, short and factually stated.
- Each group member should briefly describe the beginning of their incident and *only up to the critical moment*; do not say how the incident ended.
- The group should then select just one person's incident for the rest of the task.
- Once the group has selected one incident on which to focus, a chairperson and a note-taker need to be selected; the person whose incident is chosen cannot be elected to these roles.

STEP TWO

Questions about the incident (10 min)

- The person whose incident is chosen should give a broader but still factual description without referring to possible solutions or how the incident was resolved.
- Group members should formulate questions to gain more insight.
- Group members may ask questions but no discussion is allowed.

STEP THREE

Analysis of the incident (10 min)

- With the exception of the person involved, the group should analyse the selected incident.
- The chairperson should lead this plenary discussion.
- The group should arrive at a common point of view (what would you do and why?)
- The chairperson should make notes and summarise.

STEP FOUR

Approaches in dealing with the incident (10 min)

- The person responsible for introducing the incident should tell how they actually dealt with the situation or what they planned to do.
- The group should have a final discussion where the pros and cons of certain approaches are discussed (what are the opportunities/pitfalls for the person in question?).

STEP FIVE

Final evaluation (10 min)

- Each group member should:
  - Write down what they think of this method of discussion, and
  - Write down what they learned.
- The person who introduced the incident, should voice an opinion on the discussion and possible outcomes mentioned.
- Group members should tell the others what they have learned.
- The chairperson should summarise the evaluation of the method.

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DAY TWO SESSION 2:

## Coaching and mentoring

In this session, you are going to explore the concepts of coaching and mentoring and how these relate to your work as a supervisor.

Your facilitator will take you through a PPT presentation on coaching and mentoring. There are questions in the PPT presentation that will stimulate a plenary discussion about coaching and mentoring, and the challenges posed by each of these.
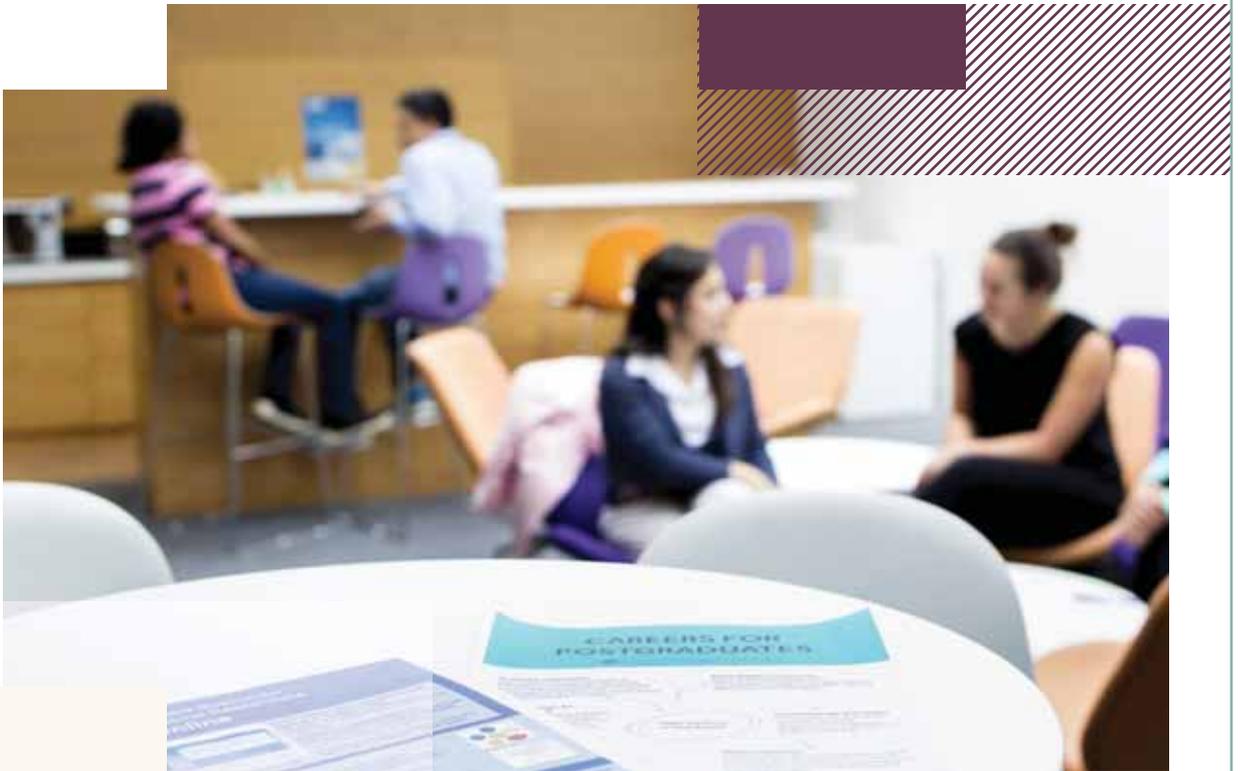
DAY TWO SESSION 3:

Project management, time planning & supervisory agreements

In this session, you will explore how to use project management skills to be a more effective supervisor. You will also learn more about how to plan your research effectively. Even if you are good at planning, you can benefit from this session.

In this activity, you will first reflect on your own capacity to manage your time effectively. This should also reveal some of your perceptions about time management and planning. Which of the following statements are true about you and the way in which you work? (There are no right or wrong answers to these statements.)

1.	I find it difficult to concentrate for extended lengths of time.	☐
2.	I spend too much time completing administrative tasks.	☐
3.	I find it difficult to balance my time between my teaching responsibilities and other academic responsibilities.	☐
4.	I find it easy to leave a task for a few days and then come back to it.	☐
5.	I am good at planning my week.	☐
6.	I develop a time schedule and am generally able to stick to it.	☐
7.	I am usually able to meet deadlines.	☐
8.	I find that I am usually behind in my work.	☐
9.	I am flexible about my time management.	☐
10.	I get stressed if I am behind in my work.	☐
11.	I like to be spontaneous in terms of my work activities.	☐
12.	I sometimes overbook my diary or double book events.	☐
13.	I don't find using a diary useful.	☐
14.	I am good at preparing a project budget.	☐
15.	I am good at adhering to a project budget.	☐
16.	I find it easy to balance my academic responsibilities with my home responsibilities.	☐
17.	I get irritated if other people don't adhere to deadlines.	☐
18.	I get stressed if I am going to miss a deadline.	☐
19.	I have a system for flagging emails and responding to them on time.	☐
20.	I have a system for tracking my postgraduate students' progress.	☐

Review your answers and reflect on how you:

- Handle deadlines,
- Plan your time,
- Adhere to compliance requirements, and
- Deal with variances in time management.

What else did you learn about yourself?

Your facilitator will take you through a PowerPoint presentation and then lead a discussion about project management and planning. The PowerPoint also discusses the use of a supervision agreement between supervisor and student which details roles, responsibilities and deadlines.

There are various videos on this issued on the EPE website:

postgradenvironments.com

For example, try searching for:

- Formatting your thesis, and
- Setting up your digital workspace.

DAY TWO SESSION 4:

Supervisory issues

Consider the questions on supervisory issues in the squares in the graphic that follows. Work in groups of five or six to discuss these. You have only five minutes per question and the facilitator will tell you when to move on to the next question.

You will each be given 13 matches. Every time you add to the conversation, you need to 'pay' one match to the middle. When you have no matches left, you can no longer participate in the discussion and must simply listen and learn. You should not be left with many matches as this means you are not contributing to the discussion. You should also not use up all your matches too quickly as this could indicate that you are dominating the conversation.
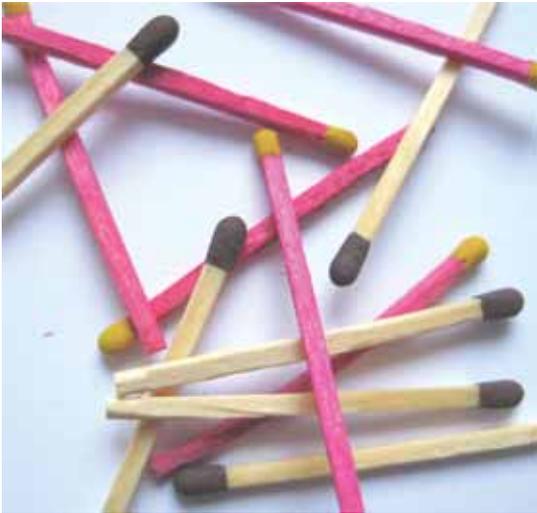
Picture by Johnny Chicago CC BY-SA 3.0,
https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=19430554 from Wikimedia Commons.

SUPERVISORY ISSUES

01 Are resources available to support the supervisor?

02 What happens when the experiment goes wrong - a year or two down the line?

03 Is the supervisor preparing future academics, professionals or simply overseeing the completion of a dissertation? What are the implications of these variations for the role of the supervisor?

04 How do you assure the quality of supervision in a school, faculty or institution?

05 Can supervision be over-regulated?

06 What happens when your student's topic is published by someone else - just months before he submits?

07 In the examination process who is judged: the candidate or the supervisor? Is this different to external examination at UG level?

08 Is the supervisor a mentor or minder? Or perhaps a supervisor is something else entirely?

09 What happens when your student vanishes and does not return emails, or when they make repeated promises that they fail to keep?

10 What is the supervisor's role in the examination process?

11 What effect do changes in your work conditions have on the way you supervise?

12 How does running a research project with a team of PG students, as opposed to a one-on-one supervision relationship, affect the role of the supervisor?

13 Do supervisors have a choice - whom they accept, whether they supervise, how they supervise?

14 Other supervisory issues...

DAY THREE SESSION 1:

When things go wrong

This is a rough outline of some of the stages in the postgraduate journey.

In groups, select two or three stages and list what can go wrong in these stages.

Application →	Selection →	Registration →	Appointment of Supervisor

Data Collection ←	Ethical Clearance ←	Proposal Approval ←	Proposal Development ←	Literature search, reading & writing (throughout)

Data Analysis →	Writing →	Feedback →	Editing & Proofreading →	Appointment of examiners

GRADUATION ←	Examiners' reports & corrections ←	Assessment Process ←	Submissions

You will now work through the following story and answer the related questions: Here are the main players in the story:

Student	**Ms Julie Workalot**
Supervisor	**Professor Kay Worthy**
Dean	**Professor Clementine Hardasnails**
Examiner	**Dr Solomon Seldomseen**
Registrar	**Ms Ruby Rule**

Chapter 1:
The Story Begins

It was a lovely day at the University of Gracelands when this email was sent.

Date:	23 September
To:	Ms RR
cc:	Prof CH
From:	Prof KW
Subject:	Submission of Doctoral thesis for examination purposes
Contents:	This email is just to confirm that I have submitted my student (JW) thesis to your office for examination by the examiner as selected at Senate last month. I understand that the examiner has six weeks in which to conduct the assessment.

Sometime later, still at the University of Gracelands ...

Date:	12 October
To:	Ms RR
cc:	Prof CH
From:	Prof KW
Subject:	Submission of Doctoral thesis for examination purposes
Contents:	As I received no reply to my previous email, (dated 23 September) I would like to confirm that the thesis has indeed been posted to the examiner.

Sometime later, still at the University of Gracelands ...

Date:	16 October
To:	Prof KW
cc:	Prof CH
From:	Ms RR
Subject:	Submission of Doctoral thesis for examination purposes
Contents:	Apologies for the delay in my reply. The thesis of student JW has been posted to the examiner as indicated in the Senate minutes of August. We await the examiner's report.

Chapter 2:
The plot thickens...

Date:	4 November
To:	Ms RR
cc:	Prof CH
From:	Prof KW
Subject:	Submission of Doctoral thesis for examination purposes
Contents:	It has now been six weeks since the submission of my student JW thesis and I was wondering if there was any response from the examiner yet?

Date:	8 November
To:	Prof KW
cc:	Prof CH
From:	Ms RR
Subject:	Submission of Doctoral thesis for examination purposes
Contents:	As you know the examiner has six weeks in which to conduct the assessment and, while I understand your need to know the outcome, let's just give it a few days more and then I will phone the examiner.

Date:	9 November
To:	Ms RR
cc:	Prof CH
From:	Prof KW
Subject:	Submission of Doctoral thesis for examination purposes
Contents:	Thanks for your understanding in this matter. I would be grateful if you gave this matter your full attention as the student must make travel plans to be at graduation in April.

Chapter 3:
Disaster looms...

Date:	3 December
To:	Prof CH
cc:	
From:	Prof KW
Subject:	Submission of Doctoral thesis for examination purposes
Contents:	As you know I have been copying you on all my correspondence to the Registrar and I would like to request that you intervene on behalf of the student in this instance.
	It has now been nine weeks since the thesis has been submitted to the examiner and we have not had a response. Please could you follow up on my behalf.

Date:	8 January
To:	Ms RR
cc:	Prof KW
From:	Prof CH
Subject:	Submission of Doctoral thesis for examination purposes
Contents:	I would like to enquire about the outcome and the examiner's report for student JW for whom a thesis was submitted more than twelve weeks ago. We need to know the outcome of the assessment process as the student hopes to graduate at this year's ceremony and needs to make travel arrangements.

Date:	30 January
To:	Prof CH
cc:	Prof KW
From:	Ms RR
Subject:	Submission of Doctoral thesis for examination purposes
Contents:	In response to your email, I phoned the examiner in person to find out how far she was in the process of assessing the thesis. She informed me that she had received the thesis, but she was unable to examine it due to her lack of subject matter expertise in the field. What do you suggest we do? Please bear in mind that all results must be finalised by 14 of March for the student to graduate at this year's ceremony.

Date:	14 February
To:	Ms RR
cc:	Prof KW
From:	Prof CH
Subject:	Submission of Doctoral thesis for examination purposes
Contents:	I have discussed the matter with Prof KW and she finds this very hard to believe. Dr SS is a renowned specialist in the field of microbiology and was approved at the Senate meeting in August last year. We are also puzzled about that you refer to Dr SS as 'she' in your correspondence.

Chapter 4:
All is revealed…

Date:	28 February
To:	Prof CH
cc:	Prof KW
From:	Ms RR
Subject:	Submission of Doctoral thesis for examination purposes
Contents:	I must apologise most profusely. There seems to have been an error in the Senate minutes of August last year and it appears that the names and addresses of the examiners for microbiology and neuropsychology were transposed. The result is that the thesis went to the wrong examiner. Your advice in this matter would be highly appreciated.

1. What went wrong in the processes?

2. How could this situation have been avoided?

3. Was the supervisor correct in copying the Dean of the Faculty?

4. Was the Dean correct in intervening on behalf of the supervisor?

5. What is the best course of action to follow now?

6. Has protocol been adhered to?

DAY THREE SESSION 2:
Meeting the outcomes

Remember that your assignment does not need to show that you have mastered all these aspects of supervision - we would be highly sceptical of such claims. Rather you need to show an awareness of the importance of these aspects of supervision and an ability to reflect upon them in terms of your own practice.

There are no set requirements as to how you go about writing your reflective essay or which kinds of evidence you should include supporting the claims you make. There is much freedom in terms of structure and form. It is however essential that somewhere in your essay and in the supporting evidence, you show that you have met the outcomes. You will now do three different activities developed around the four outcomes, which might help you in the planning of your assignment.

The first task is to develop a set of mind maps, the second is a group activity, and the third is a discussion in pairs. First, look again at the ELOs and Assessment Criteria on **page 3**

TASK ONE

Mind Map

Develop a separate mind map for each of the four outcomes on **page 3**. Include ideas for yourself of how you have met or are in the process of meeting each outcome. Also jot down the kinds of evidence you might include in your assignment.

TASK TWO

Outcome key points

Now work in groups of four. Each person should be allocated a different one of the outcomes and prepare a brief list of five to ten essential points about it. You will have ten minutes to prepare your list. The group should then come together and listen to each person present the essential points for their allocated outcome. There are no right or wrong answers so the group might want to add some of their own points. As a group, you might also want to discuss the kinds of evidence you could call upon to support claims made around these points.

TASK THREE

Personal experience

Now work in pairs to share a personal experience of supervising or of being supervised in terms of each of the four outcomes. Discuss with your partner what each 'supervision story' illustrates about supervision style, what you have learnt about supervision, what was done particularly well or what you would like to do differently in the future.

DAY THREE SESSION 3:

Queries and concerns

If you have any issues, concerns or queries related to postgraduate supervision including things that you think should have been addressed but have not been, then this is the session during which you can raise them. The facilitator will call on the expertise in the room to deal with the issues as a group.

Wrap up

Your assignment is due on: _____

It should be submitted online.

You will receive developmental feedback on your portfolio within six weeks of submitting your work. You will be given an opportunity to use this feedback to develop your work further and to resubmit this within two weeks of receiving the feedback.

Evaluation

Please answer the following questions on a separate sheet and hand it to your facilitator. Please indicate the name of your institution and the date at the top of the page.

1. Please comment on the usefulness of Phase 3 of the 'Strengthening Postgraduate Supervision' course. If possible note specific areas that you hope to implement.

2. Which sessions were less useful or relevant to you and your practice as a supervisor and why?

3. Please give feedback on the appropriateness of the materials for this phase (the Participant Guide, PowerPoint presentations and readings).

4. Please comment on the facilitation of Phase 3.

5. Please share any other comments, insights or concerns you might have about this course.

> We hope you enjoyed this course and we look forward to continuing the conversation online and to receiving your portfolio.