Research Supervisor Support and Development

Review of Policy, Practices and Procedures

in five U21 Partner Universities

University of Auckland, University of Queensland, University of New South Wales, University of Melbourne, University College Dublin.

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UCD Graduate Studies

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Background Summary

Research supervision has been identified by graduate students as the single most influential factor on PhD satisfaction and has also been linked with time to completion (Taylor and Beasley 2005, Lee 2013). The significance and impact of good supervisory practice is not under dispute, however, a consensus on a definition of what good supervisor practice is and also on the kinds of support to be provided by universities, has proven difficult to reach and is often ambiguous.

Following a period of restructuring of the Doctorate in Ireland, University College Dublin (UCD), as part of a multi-institutional collaboration, developed a National Institutional Framework which acts as a guide for institutions considering programme development for research supervisors (http://www.nairtl.ie/workgroupDocs/SupervisorSupport_Guide.pdf). The need for innovation in university management, steps required for the professional development of supervisors and the growing need for prioritisation of research supervision in HE policy, were key action areas which arose out of this collaboration. The challenges associated with implementing this national framework, along with approaches taken by the diverse Irish HEIs involved have recently been published (Carton *et al*, 2013) and an overview of the NAIRTL project was presented at the QPR, Adelaide in April 2014, prior to commencement of this project.

The identification and application of good practices undertaken in the leading HEIs (Higher Education Institutions) in supervisor development was a key incentive to undertake this review, with the purpose of introducing and embedding, where appropriate, similar practices into Irish (and other U21 partners) HE policy. A number of the leaders in this domain are part of the U21 network and UCD proposed to carry out an investigative review of supports and practices in five U21 partners, the first initiative of its kind in the U21 network on research supervision. The overarching aim of this exercise was ultimately to inform the broader U21 network of existing quality practices in the support, provision and management of research supervision as well as offering the participating institutions, a unique opportunity to work together in underpinning good practice. One of the suggested outcomes of the project is being realised in the provision of an *International Workshop on Research Supervisor Support and Development* being held at the U21 DDoGs meeting in Shanghai Jiao Tong University, in March (25th/26th) of 2015.

Participating U21 partners

University of Queensland (UQ), University of New South Wales (UNSW), University of Melbourne (UoM), University of Auckland (UoA), University College Dublin (UCD)

Visits were undertaken by UCD's Graduate Education Development Manager over a two week period in April 2014 to four Universitas 21 partners in Australia and New Zealand. Meetings took place with colleagues from Graduate Schools and Graduate Studies units working in the support, development, management and provision of resources of research supervision.

The selected U21 partners have un-paralleled expertise in the accreditation of research supervision (Universities of Auckland and Melbourne), implementation of supervisor registration (Universities of Auckland and Melbourne), evaluation procedures on supervisory practices and approaches to

distance and part time supervision (University of New South Wales) and awards for excellence in research supervision, peer mentoring and implementation of research supervisor fora (University of Queensland, University of Melbourne, University of New South Wales and University of Auckland). Each has also introduced policy on mandatory engagement with support programmes for experienced supervisors as well as new recruits.

The strategic approaches demonstrated by partner institutions were evident on a series of levels within each university, offering organisational, academic and professional supports to a broad community of stakeholders. Each of the approaches highlighted some of the underpinning developments in research supervisory support at local as well as institutional level. A number of European partners currently exhibit strong activity in this space, but demonstration of engagement at multiple levels is rare.

This review of practices would not have been possible without the kind support of U21 and UCD International. Sincere thanks also goes to all of the colleagues with whom I met, who were exceptionally generous with their time, philosophies, practices and policies developed in respect of research supervisory support. This report reflects some of the particularly interesting 'top notes' of activity in this domain at each university. For further clarification or expansion on points raised please contact the author or specific university in question.

Please note that any errors of interpretation or otherwise are entirely my own!

University of Auckland

Meeting with *Assoc Professor Caroline Daley*- Dean of Graduate Studies & *Dr. Susan Carter*, Co-Ordinator of Research Development Programme (CLeaR)

Overview of Research Supervision at the University of Auckland (UoA)

The UoA takes a structured, supportive and reflective approach to research supervision of doctoral students which is not overly prescribed, but is managed and reviewed with quality assurance in mind. Most of the observed activity was provided *via* Graduate Studies and the Graduate Centre and CLeaR (Centre for Learning and Research in Higher Education). CLeaR specifically offers guidance on supervisory practices and facilitates training and development programmes for new and experienced research supervisors in which the Dean of Graduate Studies plays a key role. The doctoral student cohort has a strong international component with half of new PhD candidates being International, as does the research supervisory staff. An emphasis is therefore placed on supporting UoA students and staff who are new to the New Zealand higher education system.

Practices, policies and procedures for doctoral supervision and doctoral candidature are openly available on the Graduate Centre website and are framed in user-friendly guides, codes of practice and diagrammatic representations (*eg* Supervising a PhD: Supervisor's Calendar). These are an enormous resource for students and supervisors alike and condense the key information required for progression through candidature and management of the doctoral student and research degree.

Key information on supervisor eligibility and their track record in supervision is recorded on a supervisor register and student satisfaction is measured through exit surveys (amongst other approaches). The Graduate Centre produces an annual report of the previous year's activity and the Dean is engaged with Faculty Deans and Heads of School in the review of supervisor practices and student satisfaction on a cyclical basis.

*University of Auckland : Numbers of **Doctoral Students** (approximately) 2300*

*University of Auckland: Numbers of accredited main **Doctoral Supervisors** 1250*

Research Supervisor Eligibility, Accreditation and Registration

Principal doctoral supervisors must be a UoA staff member before they can supervise and must be on the supervisor register and be accredited. Employment contracts in Auckland include research supervisor capacity and responsibility. In order to act as principal supervisor, a staff member must have supervised a doctoral candidate through to completion at co-supervisory level at the UoA, or as a main supervisor at another institution.

All research supervisors in the UoA (with the exception of an external or advisory supervisor) must gain accreditation and be registered on the supervisor register. To gain accreditation, since 2001, research supervisory staff must engage in an ORIDOC (Orientation to Doctoral Education Policy and Processes) seminar. This seminar specifically addresses the policies/ regulations/ practices surrounding research supervision in the UoA and is delivered by Associate Professor Caroline Daley, Dean of Graduate Studies. This specific orientation must be completed within the first four years of employment or before supervision of a doctoral student, whichever comes first. Orientation for supervisors has been compulsory in UoA since 2007. In order to **maintain accreditation**, supervisors must attend a doctoral briefing on UoA policies/ procedures every five years. Staff who are new to doctoral supervision are also required to attend a CLeaR workshop on the Art of Graduate Supervision.

Details of participation in required seminars and briefings are held on staff HR records and there is a policy on continuation which highlights these requirements. The linkage of this process to HR gives accountability and credibility and also provides records of CPD (Continuing Professional Development) activity.

Role of Graduate Studies in Supporting & Managing Research Supervision- Facilitator/ Guide/ Gate Keeper

It is of importance to note that the Board of Graduate Studies appoints all supervisors for doctoral candidates, therefore maintaining oversight of the research supervising community within the University. Data-friendly reports are provided by Graduate Studies to schools/faculty and the Dean has a briefing with school Heads, where the data is discussed and placed in context.   Six month up-dates on key data are provided and GS also produces an annual report. The university's Planning Office holds data on registered supervisors which feeds from HR, who hold the research contract for the supervisor. The register is not owned by Graduate Studies but the office has access to the data and updates the information as staff meet accreditation requirements.

The Dean meets Faculty Deans on an annual basis to discuss doctoral matters, including supervision. If 10 or more candidates from a particular department/school complete a doctoral exit survey in any given year, the Dean meets with the head of that unit to discuss the exit survey and other matters related to supervision.   All doctoral students are encouraged to complete the exit survey on submission of their thesis; approximately 80% do so. Thus far, the supervisor satisfaction has been approximately 85-90%. The process of surveying students facilitates closer examination of the student – supervisor working relationship and the student's perception of their supervision experience.

Focus on International Students

Compulsory Induction workshops are provided for student's whose first language is not English. There is no International fee for International students.

In 2013, a programme for international students was piloted. This 'extended' induction comprised 5 fortnightly sessions for a cohort of 15 students and facilitated students who were *New to the New Zealand Learning Environment***.** Many supervisors in UoA are International themselves, another

important consideration, as these supervisors come from varied learning and working environments, just like the research students they will mentor.

In 2014 this induction programme was offered to 4 cohorts of international students. As a result of student feedback it was offered in four weekly sessions, covering essential aspects of the provisional year. Student satisfaction rating has been very high.

Skills Training - Students

The university is aware that many of the research supervisors may not have the skill sets themselves which are needed when guiding students in developing the required or desirable transferable skills base. Central support in skills training for research students is therefore an important supportive factor and facilitated by the Library and CLeaR for students.

Research Supervisor 'Training' Programme/ Workshop Provision

The overall approach to research supervisor training in UoA is not overly-prescribed. Training is a requirement for registration, however the Graduate School is aware of the current lack of empirical evidence which supports that supervisor training has a direct and measureable impact on completion rates, throughput etc. There is however, a wealth of anecdotal evidence that training programmes which support development and CPD for research supervisors, are greatly valued by staff and are requested where absent and engaged with willingly where present. The CLeaR unit in UoA co-ordinates two mandatory training workshops for new doctoral supervisors and also offers assistance with local professional development of supervisors or departmental graduate advisers in faculties.

Many European HEI are in the process of implementing such frameworks. A stumbling block for many institutions in the implementation of supports is the positioning and provision of supports within the university. In addressing this challenge, CLeaR has helped to clarify the level of engagement and oversight required by 'central' supports or faculty themselves by asking the following kernel of questions;

What is best done a) at departmental level, b) supervisor level and c) central level?

Based on an interrogation of the answers to this important question, CLeaR offer the following services to research supervisors and to research students (offered by experienced academics) in the case of U3A.

- **Ask Your Auntie**. Academics only – inviting 'safe talk'. Group asked to think about supervision examples, such as a worst student. This approach facilitates free speech within the group.
- **U3A**. International Students requested support in academic writing. U3A was developed by volunteers from retired academic community. Students were mixed with different volunteers and the feedback was that U3A did help with improving English writing ability. Feedback was based on the premise of 'what did you expect from the process?' and 'what did you gain from the process?'

- CLeaR facilitates **ORIDOC** and the **Art of Supervision** seminars / workshops. Other doctoral training programmes, such as those targeted at students have moved under the remit of the library, but supervisor development stays in this domain.
- CLeaR attempts to capture the supervisor experience with a view using this information to review and fine tune supports.

Additional Support Tools for Research Supervision at UoA

- *Website information and Guideline Documents*

The University of Auckland website has a number of links to support documentation, including policies, guidelines, codes of practice, recommendations regarding problem resolution in research, and checklists, to name but some of the transparent and user friendly documentation available to research students and supervisors. The website is a fantastic tool, easily navigated and is indicative of the support being offered by the UoA in this domain. Some of the examples of the material available are highlighted in the supporting references section for the University of Auckland below.

- *Specific Documents as Tools of Note*

Doctoral Supervision Development Guide

The UoA Doctoral Supervision development Guide helps to a) facilitate discussion b) advice on clarification of expectations and c) offer support on developing a working relationship between supervisor and doctoral student.

Doctoral Supervisor Calendar

Doctoral Student Calendar

Both of these calendars offer diagrammatic representations of the life cycle of the doctorate and key timeframes and dates in relation to specific events, activities, requirements.

Doctoral Supervision Experience Questionnaire (facilitated by CLeaR)

An invaluable tool for consideration and adaptation by institutions who do not currently request information from supervisors about their experiences of supervision. This tool offers information on areas where staff need support and also facilitates them in reflecting on their practices.

Work Load Model

There is a University-wide supervisory guideline which recommends that research supervisors should not normally take on more than 6 full time equivalent research students (see reference below). Supervisors agree workload models with their Heads of School; for some staff this means taking on a higher supervision workload.

Supervisor Awards- Recognition for Excellent Practice

UoA does have award recognition for excellence in supervision. Faculties hold their own teaching award processes. Faculty nominees are then put forward for the university level awards.

Sometimes there is no award if applicants aren't strong enough. Those who are successful at university level go forward to national teaching awards.

Reference Material – University of Auckland

University of Auckland- Support Material

1. ***Supervision: University of Auckland***

https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/for/current-students/cs-current-pg/cs-current-pg-policies/cs-pg-supervision-tools.html

2. ***Supervision Limits (Workload Model – recommended no more than 6)***

https://cdn.auckland.ac.nz/assets/central/for/current-students/postgraduate-students/documents/supervision-tools/postgraduate-supervision-limits.pdf

3. ***Getting Into Supervision- A Checklist for Supervisors***

https://cdn.auckland.ac.nz/assets/central/for/current-students/postgraduate-students/documents/supervision-tools/checklist-for-supervisors.pdf

4. ***Senate Guidelines on Thesis Supervision***

https://cdn.auckland.ac.nz/assets/central/for/current-students/postgraduate-students/documents/policies-guidelines-forms/senate-guidelines-thesis-supervision.pdf

5. ***Doctoral Supervision Development Guide***

https://cdn.auckland.ac.nz/assets/central/for/current-students/postgraduate-students/documents/policies-guidelines-forms/doctoral-policies-guidelines/doc-supervision-development-guide.pdf

6. ***Research and Supervision at the University of Auckland – Website Link***

https://www.stat.auckland.ac.nz/en/for/current-students/information-for-phd-students/research-supervision.html

7. ***Research Supervision: Getting Started on Research Supervision***

https://cdn.auckland.ac.nz/assets/stat/for/current-students/documents/getting-started-on-supervision.pdf

8. ***Guidelines for Good Practice in Joint Supervision***

https://cdn.auckland.ac.nz/assets/stat/for/current-students/documents/guideliness-good-practice-of-joint-supervision.pdf

9. Doctoral Supervision Development Guide

https://cdn.auckland.ac.nz/assets/stat/for/current-students/documents/doctoral-supervision-development-guide.pdf

10. Supervising a PhD: A PhD Supervisor's Calendar

https://cdn.auckland.ac.nz/assets/stat/for/current-students/documents/supervising-a-PhD-supervisors-calendar.pdf

11. Pathways for Dealing with Problems in Supervision

https://cdn.auckland.ac.nz/assets/stat/for/current-students/documents/pathways-for-dealing-with-problems-in-supervision.pdf

12. Research Postgraduate Profile – Doctoral Graduate

https://cdn.auckland.ac.nz/assets/stat/for/current-students/documents/profile-doctoral-graduate.pdf

13. CLeaR

https://www.clear.auckland.ac.nz/en.html

https://www.clear.auckland.ac.nz/en/supervision.html

https://www.clear.auckland.ac.nz/app/index.php?p=courses-workshops Academic Development Courses and Workshops (accessed October 2014).

http://flexiblelearning.auckland.ac.nz/your-doctoral-supervision-experience/ Doctoral Supervision Experience – Questionnaire for Doctoral Students (as of 2014).

http://flexiblelearning.auckland.ac.nz/your-doctoral-supervision-experience/1.html

University Of Queensland – UQ

Meeting with *Professor Stephan Riek-* Acting Dean of UQ Graduate School & *Ms Marni Jacobi –* Director of UQ Graduate School

Approach to Management and Support of Research Supervision at UQ

A goal with respect to support and management of doctoral provision and supervisor support in UQ is to create and develop a **community of practice** across a) Academics, b) Administrative staff and c) Graduate co-ordinators. The underpinning premise is that any development in support services needs to give added value to existing practices and policies. A clear intention is not to enhance bureaucracy or administrative burden.

Provision is made for skills training which is available year round to doctoral students and support is offered to supervisors and managers of doctoral activities *via* workshops and professional development activities. Access to policies and procedures is made *via* the UQ Graduate School website which is password protected. The Graduate School site offers guidance on candidature management for staff and students with a strong focus for students on supporting career development.

> *Number of Doctoral Supervisors – 6,500 (many are medical and not officially affiliated)*
>
> *Number of Research students - 4,300 of which 3,500 are doctoral students.*

Supervisor Framework

UQ are currently in the process of developing a **supervisor framework**. There are two key considerations for the development of this framework which are i) ease of implementation and ii) minimisation of overhead in administration. In line with UQ's ethos, sessions are provided in graduate research student management for a variety of key stakeholders offering a 'bigger picture' approach.

Research Supervisor Eligibility, Accreditation and Registration

Research of doctoral students in UQ is undertaken by an **Advisory Team** which is led by a **Principal Advisor**. All Principal Advisors must be registered on the UQ **Principal Advisor Register**. Staff are eligible for registration if they, as Principal Advisor have graduated at least one HDR (Higher Degree by Research) in the last three years and they have completed an experienced advisor training (anticipated to be offered online) or new advisor training (as appropriate) facilitated by the University, also within the last three years. **Maintaining registration** will normally, automatically occur, unless the Principal Advisor is no longer actively engaged in research, ceases employment or

has their privileges revoked. The Dean of the Graduate School and the Head of the Organisation Unit are responsible for making sure advisors meet the minimum registration requirements.

Mandatory training (online provision - to be implemented) will be required for maintaining registration on this database. Non mandatory training is already provided in face to face workshops. Supervisors are also required to complete re-fresher courses to maintain registration.

Graduate School – UQ

Academic responsibility for admissions, candidature and examinations lies with the UQ Graduate School. The Graduate School also provides research scholarships, offers supports throughout the student's candidature and assists with employment preparation. In the context of research supervision, the Dean of the Graduate School has final endorsement of supervisor appropriation. Applications for principal advisors must be recommended by Head of the Organisational Unit and endorsed by the Dean of Graduate School. The Dean maintains records of student throughput for Principal Advisors, including details on students failing and also has access to records of supervisors who may not complete mandatory training. The Graduate School is responsible for maintaining the UQ Principal Advisor Registry.

Research Supervisor / Advisor and Student Training

Non-compulsory training for supervisors can broadly be placed under **Research Student Advisory Skills** and **Research Student Management and Administration** categories. Examples of the workshops on offer, many of which are offered through the Staff Development Website, include;

- *Cross the finish line: guide to completion*
- *Effective RHD Advising*
- *Enhancing RHD Advisory Practice*
- *RHD Advisors: Policies, Procedures & Effective Management*
- *Research Integrity in RHD Training*
- *Strategies for advising international students*

As stated above, the protocol being adapted by UQ is that compulsory training which will be required for maintenance of registration status will be offered to supervisors online. Non-compulsory elements will continue to be offered face to face.

Research Student Training Supports

The Career Advantage Programme – is a unique training programme in Australian Higher Education which has offered three pathways to broad career sectors that doctoral students can engage with. This programme is being revisited by UQ in 2014* and will incorporate revisions in a new format. The aim of the programme, (unlike other transferable skills programmes), is to focus specifically on three broad career sectors. The programme incorporates an initial three day intensive workshop and up to 15 days intense learning per student over the course of their candidature. The three pathways covered by the programme include;

- *Higher Education, Practice and Leadership,*
- *Research Innovation, Translation and Commercial*
- *Global Collaboration*

*Please note this programme is being revised in UQ.

Transferable and Research Specific Skills are also offered to doctoral students covering topics such as time management, thesis submission and examination, conflict resolution, research integrity training, conceptualising thesis structures and surviving an HDR, specifically targeted at International students. This skills provision is divided into four main areas of;

a) Support and Guidance,

b) Researching and Writing,

c) Thesis and

d) Career.

Compulsory sessions for all new International students are also offered.

Internships –the Queensland government offer 30 day internships to graduate research students during which they are asked to solve a specific real life problems. There are a number of similar internship models such as that in SE Asia which are 3months in duration. All of this activity that the student engages with is highlighted on their **diploma supplement.**

Stakeholder Support Workshops

UQ Graduate School runs a number of workshops for external stakeholders in the doctoral research domain on 'bigger picture' matters such as;

a) *RHD Insights – Facts and Figures about research students globally, nationally and at UQ*
b) *Graduate School Future Directions – Goals for the coming year*

Work Load Model

With respect to work load models, the UQ Graduate School recommendation is that there should be at least one Principal Advisor for every 5 research students. Approximately 60 % of UQ supervisors currently have one research student.

Awards for Research Supervision

In UQ, supervisors nominate themselves for **Excellence in Research Supervision Awards**. To be eligible for this award, a supervisor must have three years experience undertaking research supervision, mentoring and training of research HD students at UQ. As well as the prestige of winning the award, there are also two financial awards, $5000 for the excellence award itself and $2000 for a commendation. These awards are placed in the school accounts of the award recipient.

1.Guidelines for Excellence in Research Award - UQ

http://www.uq.edu.au/grad-school/content/RHD-excellence-awards/Awards-RHD-Supervision-2014-Guidelines.pdf

2.Information on supports and skills programmes for current students

http://www.uq.edu.au/grad-school/current-students

3.Career Development Framework

http://www.uq.edu.au/grad-school/career-development-framework

4. Research Student Advisory Skills Programme

https://staffdevelopment.hr.uq.edu.au/program/MAXRHD

5.Information for Staff and Examiners

http://www.uq.edu.au/grad-school/staff-examiners

6. Awards for Excellence in Research Supervision

http://www.uq.edu.au/grad-school/awards-rhd-supervision

7. fIRST – Online resources for Improving Research Supervision and Training

http://first.edu.au/

8. RHD Management and Administration

https://staffdevelopment.hr.uq.edu.au/program/RESMGT

University of New South Wales - UNSW

Meeting with *Ms Cecilia Stenstrom-* Director, (Researcher Development (RDU), *Ms. Margaret O'Byrne* - Director, Graduate School*, Ms Margaret Gardoll* - Research Development Consultant *& Professor Laura Poole Warren* (Pro Vice Chancellor (Research Training) & Dean of Graduate School)

Approach to Management and Support of Research Supervision at UNSW

UNSW facilitate a collaborative, inclusive approach to research student and supervisor management and support, with the provision of workshops for academic, professional staff, research students and key stakeholders. An emphasis is placed on evaluation, feedback and reflection which informs provision in this domain.

Research management in UNSW falls under the remit of two key units, the **RDU** or **Researcher Development Unit** (offering training provision for academic and professional staff engaged in research) and the **Graduate Research School** (Central Administration Unit for all stages of HDR candidature and training provision for research students). The presence of a dedicated researcher development unit demonstrates strategic support and backing by the university in the area of training and professional development. Both the RDU and Graduate School fall within the office of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research Training) & Dean of Graduate Research. The two units work seamlessly in the provision of guidance, support and training for research active staff and students at UNSW. Excellence in research supervision is acknowledged *via* the Vice-Chancellor's Awards and the Graduate School guides staff in the application process for this award.

*Number of Doctoral Supervisors – approximately **3,000***

*Number of Research students – **4,100** of which **3,500** are doctoral students.*

Research Supervisor Eligibility, Accreditation and Registration

At UNSW, Research supervisors are not required to register as supervisors on a specific research supervisor database before supervising research students. Supervisors are however required to engage with professional training and development, as offered by the university and agreed with their Head of School, especially if they do not have supervision to completion experience. There are four categories of research supervisor recognised in UNSW, Primary, Secondary, Joint and Panel Supervisors and eligibility for supervision is clearly laid out in policy documentation (see Higher Degree Research Supervision Policy below). HDR students (masters and doctoral) must be supervised by a team of at least two supervisors.

Detail of Support Structure in UNSW: RDU and Graduate Research School

The RDU facilitates and develops training and support for academic and professional staff engaged in research while the Graduate Research School administers and manages key areas in the HDR candidates life cycle such from recruitment to registration through thesis submission. Importantly, both units dovetail activities to maximise support offered. The unit produces a bi-monthly bulletin (Research Training and Development Bulletin) which highlights the workshops and services available to staff.

The RDU has introduced the **RTDF** (**Researcher Training and Development Framework**), *specifically designed to operate as an integrated and comprehensive researcher induction, training and development framework which is aligned with the career path of a researcher*. The RDU has strategically grouped workshops within the RTDF which can be self-selected by researchers, based upon their individual career stages and needs.

The four main categories of workshops offered under the RTDF include;

- **Foundation Essentials** (Welcome, Publications, Connecting & Networking, Supervision)

- **Scholarly Research** (Seeking Funding, Project Management, People & Performance)

- **Scholarly Teaching** (e-Learning, Teaching Practice, Curriculum Design, Qualifications/Career)

- **Scholarly Service** (Community/Public, Professional/Discipline, Institutional

Link to the RTDF chart

https://research.unsw.edu.au/sites/all/files/related_files/regular_page_content/unsw_rtdf_v3.pdf

Foundation Essentials-Targeted at Research Supervisors

The Foundations Essentials series of workshops is specifically designed for research supervisors, particularly those new to supervision. This series of workshops also includes support *on how to build a research profile* and the *management of research projects*.

Specifically within *supervisor development* the following areas are focussed upon;

- *Approaching the HDR supervision experience*
- *Am I ready to supervise? Are you the right student for me?*
- *Starting HDRs off on the Right foot*
- *Conversations matter*
- *Supporting HDR's academic reading and literature review*
- *Supporting HDR's thesis writing*

RDU Management of Supervisor Workshops and Alignment with Supervisor's Needs

The ethos of the RDU is to operate supports in line with supervisor training and development needs. To achieve this, an approach involving consultation, feedback and review has been adopted. *'Workshops are designed using a performance based / instructional design methodology which ensures outcome based workshops. This can be a more labour intensive approach than others'.* Fifty workshops (normally of 3 hours duration) are offered annually, each workshop or supervision suite being offered twice, with an average of 35 participants per workshop. It is anticipated that online training resources will be incorporated in a blended, but not compulsory learning approach in 2014 (*eg Epigeum Supervising Doctoral Studies* Programme). Registration for workshops is carried out through Survey Monkey and information is also disseminated in the bi-monthly Research Training and Development Bulletin. https://research.unsw.edu.au/researcher-training-development-bulletin

Training Methodology

There are three distinct stages operated by the RDU in the approach to the provision of workshop programmes, which are outlined as follows;

Step 1:

Development of a high level learning plan in consultation with research supervisors to achieve;

- *Clarification of learning objectives*
- *Development of workshop content*
- *Determining mode of workshop delivery/ presenter*
- *Provision of post workshop resources*

Step 2:

Pre-Survey of research supervisors, identifying where strength areas and interests are and what are the specific needs of the community.

Step 3:

Feedback and review is required after every workshop with an additional random sample being reviewed of those of particular interest to RDU staff (to help determine suitability). Survey results of HDR students are also used for workshop development and in supporting the development of the student-supervisor relationship.

The Graduate Research School provides training to graduate research students and works with the RDU in respect of supervisor workshops. The Graduate School also supports Graduate Co-ordinators by facilitating *Postgraduate Co-ordinators Practice Sharing Workshops*

Some of the Skills workshops offered to HDR students include the following;

- *Animal Ethics, Training and Resources*
- *Annual Progress Review Seminar*
- *Postgraduate Research Student Induction*
- *Thesis Submission Seminar*

- *Three minute thesis competition*
- *U21 Research Mobility Programme*
- *U21 Global Research Ethics and Integrity Module (GREIM).*

Award for Excellence in Research Degree Supervision

The Graduate Research School also administers and advises interested candidates on the *Excellence in Research Degree Supervision* Award. Up to two awards for excellence in research supervision are awarded annually offering both prestige and a monitory award ($7000). Recommendations for this award are made by the Dean of Graduate Research and Associate Deans to the University Teaching Excellence Committee. Academic staff who have supervised at least three HDR to completion are eligible to apply for the award and a tool kit to guide applicants in the submission process is provided.

Workload Model

The recommendation at UNSW is that research supervisors take on no more than 6 full time research students for supervision at any one time. Supervisors can take on more than 6 students if they have adequate time and have a track record of successful completions within 4 years for a PhD and 2 years for a masters and or they have approval form their Head of School. Supervisory loads are monitored by the Faculty Associate Dean and an annual report is provided to the Dean of Graduate Research for review.

Reference Material – University of New South Wales

1.Higher Degree Research Supervision Policy

https://www.gs.unsw.edu.au/policy/documents/hdrsupervisionpolicy.pdf

2. Vice-Chancellor Awards for Excellence in Research Degree Supervision

https://www.hr.unsw.edu.au/employee/acad/VCAward_Supervision_Information2013.pdf

3. Supervision Award Tool Kit

https://www.hr.unsw.edu.au/employee/acad/VCAward_Supervision_Toolkit2013.pdf

4. RTDF Chart

https://research.unsw.edu.au/sites/all/files/related_files/regular_page_content/unsw_rtdf_v3.pdf

5. Researcher Training and Development Bulletin

https://research.unsw.edu.au/researcher-training-development-bulletin

6. Graduate Research School

https://research.unsw.edu.au/current-students

University Of Melbourne

Meetings with *Professor Dick Strugnell* - Pro Vice-Chancellor, Graduate Research*, Dr Sylvia Schaffarczyk* - Researcher Development Manager*, Ms Robyn May* - Senior Programmes Officer*, Mr Simon Clews* - Director, Writing Centre for Researchers and Scholars

Approach to Management and Support of Research Supervision at the University of Melbourne

The University of Melbourne has a dedicated Graduate Research School, the Melbourne School of Graduate Research or **MSGR**. The MSGR has been held up as an exemplary graduate school model by a number of other higher education institutions (particularly European). The MSGR has an overarching role in the university which facilitates oversight in a number of key areas in graduate research management, skills acquisition and stage specific career development. Candidate management is seen as a partnership activity, which is engaged with by the graduate research students and supervisor, advisory committee, graduate research co-ordinators and MSGR.

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*Number of Doctoral Supervisors – **2,500-3000***

*Number of Graduate Research students - **5000** of which **3,800** are doctoral students.*

Melbourne School of Graduate Research (MSGR)- Graduate School Structure

The Melbourne School of Graduate Research is a dedicated facility, with six teams governing the following areas;

- *MSGR Executive (Academic Leadership Team)*
- *Office of the Pro-Vice Chancellor*
- *Research Higher Degrees*
- *Admissions and Current Candidature*
- *Examinations*
- *Academic Support*

MSGR offers training and support for university staff who work with graduate research students, including, training and professional development programmes for graduate researchers, provision of resources and advice to research supervisors, as well as RHD specialists in the University's Faculties and Graduate Schools. The MSGR also supports a dedicated graduate centre which is a 24 hour accessible facility for graduate students and offers access to IT facilities. Approximately 24 MSGR staff (6 dedicated to researcher development), also support and provide information and guidance on supervisor registration.

Research Supervisor Eligibility, Accreditation and Registration

There are two main categories of research supervisor in the University of Melbourne, the **Principal Supervisor** and the **Co-supervisor**. Principal supervisors '*must be academic staff of the university in a continuing or fixed term role and must, as per their contract, be classified as Teaching and Research, Research Focussed or Academic Specialist and have continuing active participation in original research as defined by their Faculty/ Graduate School Criteria'*. Staff must normally act in a co-supervisory role (to completion of research student's degree) before acting as principal supervisor. External supervisors may also form part of the supervisory team.

Registration of principal and co-supervisors is required in the University of Melbourne and is reviewed annually. Compulsory registration on supervisor development programmes has only been introduced in 2013-14 and the register of supervisor details and role of the supervisor is overseen by the Deputy Dean, who reviews this information. Applications for registration must be endorsed by the supervisor's Head of Department or Faculty Associate Dean. For registration, academic staff must have;

- *Supervised or co-supervised Doctoral students to completion (timely completion- 5 years)*
- *Be research active*
- *Attended refresher training courses (Experienced Supervisor Workshops) in last 5 years*

Or

- *Completed the new supervisor training offered by the university.*

University staff registered to supervise will remain on the supervisor register (the status of which is maintained by the Head of Department) unless they cease employment, discontinue their engagement in original research or have their supervisory privileges revoked.

Workload Model

Supervisors are required to abide by their individual departmental workload models, however, it is recommended that supervisors normally have no more than seven research students at any one time.

Professional Development Workshops for Research Supervisors

MSGR supervisor 'Training' focuses on issues relevant to research supervisors who are at different levels of supervisory experience.

Workshops are offered normally in three hour sessions and cover;

- *New Supervisor Training*
- *Experienced supervisor training – refresher courses*
- *Thesis with publication information sessions*
- *Mental health essentials for academic supervisors.*

New Supervisor Workshops - Structure

The first hour of these stage specific workshops is dedicated to discussion and information sharing on university policy/ expectations/ student selection and confirmation. The second hour is focused on working with international and part time students. The third hour offers a chance to further explore any particular area that was raised in the first two hours. Delivery of this workshop is between 2 and four times per year. All staff new to supervision at the University of Melbourne are required to attend this workshop which covers topics including;

- *University Expectations of a supervisor*
- *Advice from experts on how to establish a strong working relationship with students*
- *Information about university support and academic enrichment*
- *Research higher degree policy and procedures*
- *Intellectual property, copyright and digital thesis requirements*

Once they have attended **New Supervisor Training**, all supervisors are required to attend at least one experienced supervisor refresher training workshop every five years to maintain their supervisory registration status.

Experienced Supervisor Workshops- Structure

The first hour covers the same content as the new supervisor workshops *ie.* policy etc. The second hour focuses on the working relationship with the co-supervisor. Delivery of this workshop is between 2 and 4 times per year.

Evaluation

Evaluation of workshops is carried out *via* Survey Monkey and for supervisory practice also through research **student exit surveys**. Approximately 18 workshops per year are delivered with on average 150 participants attending for the New Supervisor workshops and 2-4 times per year for the experienced supervisor workshops.

Specific Supports of Note

Website

The MSGR has a website specifically targeted at supervisors, offering details on pertinent information. This site is an enormously useful tool and offers information on the following;

- *Supervisor Registration*
- *Effective Candidature Management*
- *Policy Information for supervisors and GRCS (Graduate Research Co-ordinators)*
- *Professional Development*
- *Resource repository for supervisors*
- *Examination information for the Chair of Examiners*
- *Professional Development of the supervisor's graduate research candidate*

Handbooks

A number of handbooks are available online to guide research students, their supervisors and heads of department through enrolment, changes to candidature, submission and examination processes.

PhD Handbook

http://gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au/handbooks/phd/index.html

MPhil Handbook

http://gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au/handbooks/mphil/index.html

Masters by Research Handbook

http://gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au/handbooks/mres/index.html

Writing Centre

The University of Melbourne has a virtual writing centre which supports research students and staff in the communication of their research activity to non-academic audiences *via* a number of media (social media/ books/magazines *etc*).

Library Support

Library Research Consultant / Statistical Consulting Centre (6 hours support for doctoral students per year).

Focus on Graduate Research Skills Acquisition and Career Development

UpSkills

The MSGR also offers workshops, classes and seminars to graduate research students. In the careers series, upskilling is focussed in three main areas; *Considering careers in academia and industry*, *marketing yourself to employers* and *careers and employment* (what the jobs market is currently like). Senior and junior academics deliver different workshop sessions

GReP

The Graduate Research e-Portfolio is a tool for graduate researchers which enables them to find resources and courses online and connect with other graduate researchers. MSGR offer a Postgraduate Essential Course online which is designed to enable student to equip themselves with the academic skills and practical information needed over the course of their research career. It is composed of two offerings *Postgraduate Essentials: Strategies for a successful start to your degree* and *Postgraduate Essentials: completion and beyond*. The e-portfolio also offers access to DAW or the Doctoral Attributes Workshop which assists students identifying the skills and attributes they will acquire over the course of their research degree. Students can also access the U21 GREIM Module which is an online ethics and integrity module available through the e-portfolio. GReP master classes also offer guides to information skills, publishing attending conferences etc.

GCALL

This is an exclusive course with two streams, in Ethical Leadership and The Futures Project which are offered by Melbourne University for doctoral candidates and early stage researchers. The underlying premise of this course is to broaden and hone the attributes associated with doctoral learning, enabling students to be more prepared to play a leadership role in their chosen area of interest.

Orientation

Orientation workshops for new research students are run up to four times per year.

Start of Career Researcher Series

This series of workshops focuses specifically on later stage doctoral students within two years of their conferring and covers areas such as career planning, grant seeking and publishing.

Thesis Boot Camp / Shut up and Write/ Pomodoro Technique

Research students can also avail of support from the Thesis Boot Camp which can last from 1 day to one week retreats. The boot camp is normally run over weekends and focuses on the compilation of the thesis more so than academic or English writing skills. Students can participate in *Shut Up and Write* working groups, which often incorporate the Pomodoro technique (intense writing activity for approximately 25 minutes followed by a brake).

This suite of supports available to graduate research students are also useful tools for research supervisors in the process of supervision.

Reference Material – University of Melbourne

1.Writing Centre for Researchers and Scholars

http://gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au/writingcentre/index.html

2.Resources for Supervisors

http://gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au/info-resources/links.html#staff

3.Research Training and Professional Development for Researchers

http://gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au/programs/index.html

4.Library Research Consultant

http://gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au/research-consultant.html

5.Handbooks

http://gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au/handbooks/index.html

6.Information for Staff

http://gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au/staff/supervisor_index.html

7.Graduate Research Policy

http://gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au/staff/supervisor&GRC_policy.html

8. The Melbourne School of Graduate Research

http://gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au/msgr/contact.html

University College Dublin - UCD

Dr. Barbara Dooley (Dean of Graduate Studies and Deputy Registrar) & Dr Janet Carton (Graduate Education Development Manager)

Approach to Management and Support of Research Supervision at UCD

Research supervisor registration is not evident, let alone prevalent in the Irish higher education system at present, or indeed in Europe. UCD currently operates a supportive, organic approach to supervisor support and development which constitutes a number of local, discipline specific activities as well as a university wide support programme. At present, engagement in staff development of this nature is neither compulsory, or a prerequisite for supervision of research students, and staff engagement is on a voluntary basis. There are however, regulations regarding eligibility for supervision and codes of practice for supervisors of research degrees.

UCD, in conjunction with number of other Irish HEI have worked towards a concerted approach to research supervisor supports and the professionalization of practices in this domain in Ireland. A vehicle for this activity was funded under NAIRTL (National Academy for the Integration of Teaching and Learning) and resulted in the development of a guide for institutions who wished to develop supervisor support programmes (http://www.nairtl.ie/workgroupDocs/SupervisorSupport_Guide.pdf).

The core principles agreed under this framework combined with experience in the provision of supervisor support programmes by key staff, currently forms the foundation of activity in research supervisor support and development in the Irish HE sector.

Additional reference tools and guides referred to in developing practices are the *Salzburg Principles I and Salzburg Recommendations (2010)* defined under the EUA-CDE (European Universities Association- Council for Doctoral Education) in 2005 and 2010 respectively. UCD played a key contributory role in the development of both the Principles and Recommendations. The Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) also produced an all-Ireland directive in 2009 of the provision of quality in doctoral supervision as part of their Good Practice Series, specifically the *Guide to the Organization of PhD Programmes in Irish Universities.*

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*Number of Research Supervisors-approximately **700-900** (Active in supervision)*

*Number of Doctoral Students – approximately **1600***

Research Supervisor Eligibility, Accreditation and Registration

UCD regulations stipulate that each doctoral student is supervised by a DSP or **Doctoral Studies Panel** which is normally composed of 2-4 individuals who collectively guide the student and supervisor through the doctoral candidature. The main supervisor or Principle supervisor must be a member of UCD staff, have a PhD if supervising a PhD and be active in original research. External supervisors can be appointed as adjunct or visiting supervisors, details of whom are maintained on a centrally held database in Academic Secretariat and approval of such supervisors takes place at Graduate School Board and University Programme Board Level. UCD does not operate a research supervisor registration system at present. Supervisor details are recorded on the doctoral student's records and held centrally, but with access available to the relevant College where the supervisor is based.

Workload Model

UCD does not operate a university-wide workload model. Some colleges have implemented recommendations for research supervisor-student workloads such as the College of Science which recommend no more than 6 doctoral students per research supervisor. Workloads are normally agreed by the supervisor with the Head of School.

Specific Supports

RSSDP – Research Supervisor Support & Development Programme

UCD Graduate Studies run the UCD *Research Supervisor Support and Development Programme* (RSSDP) for new and inexperienced research supervisors annually. The programme is comprised of a series of workshops covering the following core areas in supervisor support;

- *Optimising Quality Student Attraction (Attracting and selecting the 'right' student)*
- *Supervisory Styles, Roles and Responsibilities*
- *Avoiding Common Pitfalls and Optimising the Research Student's Skills Base*
- *Visiting Expert- Master Class*
- *MAEV (Monitoring, Assessment, Examiners, Viva)*
- *Prior Experience / Reflective Practice (In collaboration with Trinity College Dublin)*

Key Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the programme, participants will be able to;

- *Approach student recruitment in a manner which maximizes the likelihood of best candidate selection*
- *Navigate institutional policies and procedures*
- *Identify their own role as supervisor and frame the doctoral supervision process*
- *Advise and assist students on structuring and managing their work*
- *Be capable of carrying out a training needs analysis*
- *Appreciate the challenges, problems and pitfalls of the supervision process and identify approaches to overcome these*
- *Provide guidance to students on thesis and viva preparation*
- *Handle conflict and understand mechanisms through which to seek resolution*

- *Gain an understanding of the international norms associated with acting as an external examiner of research degrees*
- *Engage in reflective practice of research supervisory activity and engage with the pedagogies that guide it.*

One of the **unique traits** of the UCD RSSDP being introduced in 2015, is the anticipated sharing of resources by participants from Ireland's two largest Universities, UCD and TCD (Trinity College Dublin). It is envisaged that staff from both institutions will open workshops to new and inexperienced research supervisors, providing a mixed institutional forum. Furthermore, NAIRTL is hosting two all-Ireland Master Classes on Research Supervision in 2015, and the programme participants from both universities will participate.

Continuing Professional Development- CPD

UCD is currently consolidating its RSSDP into a structured CPD offering and linking staff engagement with the programme to their HR records.

UCD Structured PhD- Assisting Supervision

The UCD-Structured PhD is comprised of a series of quality assurance mechanisms to support progression for the doctoral student and to assist the supervisor in student and programme management. The structured PhD is comprised of a two stage registration period, stage 1 and 2, mapping a pre and post transfer process. Students undertake a **transfer assessment** at the 12-18month stage of research to confirm candidature on the PhD register. The **Doctoral Studies Panel** (DSP) is appointed for each student offering broader guidance and support *via* a supervisory team. The RPDP (**Research and Professional Development Plan**) assists students in the planning process towards achieving their research and professional development goals and is a tool designed to be driven by the student with assistance and guidance by the supervisor. A suite of **Transferable Skills** and discipline specific skills also form an integral component of the UCD Structured PhD. Student effort in this domain is recorded on the **Diploma Supplement**, whether credit-bearing or not.

Graduate Studies Office

The UCD Graduate Studies Office is comprised of five staff, including the Dean, Two Graduate Education Development Managers (GEDMs), one Projects Officer and an Executive Assistant. One of the GEDMs is directly responsible for Research Supervisor Development. The Graduate Studies Office run the UCD RSSDP (Research Supervisor Support & Development Programme) annually, targeting new and inexperienced research supervisors and the Transferable Skills Programme for graduate research students.

The Unit identifies and supports innovative projects towards the development of graduate education in the university, especially in the areas of the Structured PhD, Transferable Skills acquisition, provision, enhancement of the Graduate Taught portfolio and enhancement of the 'face' of graduate study and research opportunities at UCD to an internal and external audience.

Transferable Skills Programme

The Graduate Studies Unit provides a suite of non-credit bearing Transferable Skills workshops which is aligned with the IUA (Irish Universities Association) Skills statement- http://www.4thlevelireland.ie/publications/Graduate_Skills_Statement.pdf. The aim of this provision is to ensure that all doctoral students, irrespective of discipline have access to the same core transferable skills workshops university-wide. UCD Graduate Studies facilitates, participates and manages this programme with a number of university colleagues and some external experts.

A number of additional workshops and credit-bearing modules (face to face and online) are offered at College and School level and UCD students are required to take a minimum of 30 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credits as part of the requirements for fulfilling the award of the doctorate.

Awards for excellence in Research Supervision

UCD does not currently offer an award targeted specifically at research supervision, but for excellence in University Teaching. This is currently being reviewed.

Reference Material

1. **Code of Good Practice in research Supervision**

http://www.ucd.ie/registry/academicsecretariat/docs/researchs_code.pdf

2. **UCD Structured PhD**

http://www.ucd.ie/registry/academicsecretariat/docs/researchs_code.pdf

http://www.ucd.ie/registry/academicsecretariat/docs/conflictr_code.pdf

http://www.ucd.ie/registry/academicsecretariat/docs/academic_r.pdf

3. **Irish University Skills Statement**

http://www.4thlevelireland.ie/publications/Graduate_Skills_Statement.pdf

4. **UCD Graduate Studies Transferable Skills Programme**

http://www.ucd.ie/graduatestudies/currentstudents/transferableskills/

5. **Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB)- Good Practice in the Organization of PhD Programmes in Irish Universities**

   http://www.iuqb.ie.webhosting.heanet.ie/info/iuqb-good-practice-guides8501.html?article=3f9c31c9-f5e5-410e-aa75-eaa172c713a1

6. **Salzburg II Recommendations**

http://www.eua.be/Libraries/Publications_homepage_list/Salzburg_II_Recommendations.sflb.ashx

Author Suggestions/ Recommendations for Consideration

This project provided UCD with a unique opportunity to visit world class innovators in doctoral education and exchange ideas regarding the supports in place for the development of supervisors in their practice of research supervision. In spite of this excellence, each of the project partners would be quick to state that their offerings in the support domain are works in progress and flexibility of approach is an important consideration for implementation. There have been many points of interest, perspectives and practices of note identified during this project. However, some of the highlights, suggestions, considerations and recommendations, which may be of interest to institutions aiming to examine and improve their practices in supervisor support are summarised below.

1) Appreciation of the Environment

An important aspect in the provision of doctoral supports is an awareness of what the internal and external demands on the university and on the award are. In recent years, funding bodies have placed an emphasis on skills training, internships and career development as part of the doctoral training agenda. The landscape has changed and the role of supervisors and demands on students has now added breadth and depth.

An appreciation of the perceived, familiar or traditional vs actual role of the research supervisor requires consideration by universities. Supervisors and students need to be engaged in the determination of current needs in the management of doctoral candidature, which can be specific to each institution, with disciplinary nuances. The practical aspects, resources required and infrastructural needs for the effective management of the stages of the doctoral life cycle within institutions, also requires careful consideration.

Finally, institutions should be aware of the current best practices globally and commit to benchmarking themselves regularly against leading peers. One aim of this project was to disseminate its findings in the context of supervisor practices and supports to the wider U21 community. A vehicle for doing so is primarily this report and also the provision of a U21 wide workshop *(see SJTU, March 2015, DDoGs Meeting)*.

2) University Backing

Support or 'buy in' from senior university management is essential in establishing credibility with the academic research community when establishing supports and implementing policies and practices. University backing can be demonstrated in the provision of specialist facilities, support staff, budgets for training and development of key resources. University College Dublin engage senior staff to open workshops and emphasise the importance of the research supervisor community to the university. It is also demonstrable through the recognition of excellence in supervision awards (evident in UQ, UNSW, University of Melbourne and University of Auckland).

3) Structure of Management / Support Units

Dedicated, easily navigable and identifiable facilities, demonstrate commitment by the university towards supporting supervisory practice. Successful implementation of a support

framework requires the establishment of clear lines of responsibility for relevant aspects of support provision. For example, the RDU in UNSW, CLeaR in the University of Auckland or the MSGR in Melbourne are clearly distinct and recognisable entities within the university structure. A body of work exists for graduate unit and support staff to clarify and advertise their roles clearly within the university so there is no ambiguity. Easily navigable websites are useful tools in this respect (*eg.* University of Auckland)

4) Developing Communities of Practice

A common objective of each of the universities visited in this review was the importance of engaging, supporting and training all stakeholders in the doctoral process. Of particular note was the degree of inclusion of supervisors, students, co-ordinators and even external stakeholders (in the case of UQ), by support staff in the university of Auckland and UNSW. An emphasis was placed on identification of the specific needs and provision of appropriate support programmes for research supervisors and students and collectively approaching the management of research degrees and supervision by developing a community of practice.

5) Methodology – Enquiry/Evaluation/Review

The active evaluation and review of support provision continually informed further development in those universities who had examined the methodology around support provision. The University of Auckland and UNSW both placed an emphasis on evaluation, review and initial consultation with supervisory staff in order to offer the most effective workshops which could address specific university and staff needs.

6) Contextualisation of key information - Supervisor Registration

Many universities acquire a plethora of data on student activity and statistics relating to key stages of the doctorate. The University of Auckland collated and interpreted this data with the support of their Statistics unit and used it annually as a 'snap shot' or situation piece reflecting the activity in student completion rates, satisfaction and supervision experience. This information was then shared in a contextualised form with the Heads of School by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Information pertaining to research supervisor eligibility, experience and engagement with training provisions is also routinely kept in three of the four universities visited. Supervisor registration is a transparent method of recording activity in this domain.

Although the practice of research supervisor registration was relatively common in Australia and New Zealand, it may take time before Irish universities for example would consider the introduction of compulsory registration.

7) Professional Development of Supervisors

Universities are looking at the professionalization of research supervision and the professional development of staff in this context. The use of Human Resource departments in the collation and recording of supervisory activity in the context of professional development is a valuable tool towards realising professional development in supervision. Modern academic contracts of employment normally stipulate specific engagement with research and supervision, however,

recording this activity in the HR space is not always carried out. Supervisor registration and activity is linked with HR records in the University of Auckland for example.

8) Recognition of Excellence

UQ, UNSW, University of Melbourne and UoA all recognise excellence in research supervision. This is a hugely important reflection of university support and recognition for this activity. In the University of Auckland, winners of supervision awards are also put forward for national awards. Universities that do not exercise this practice, should consider the message this may send to staff engaged in the '*highest form of teaching'*.

9) Support Tools/ Resources

A core element in support provision, once again demonstrated by each of the institutions visited was the use of dedicated Websites giving access to Handbooks, Questionnaires, Supporting Policy Documents, Calendars, Guides, staff and related supports. It is important that supervisors have a clearly identifiable 'hub' where relevant information and staff details are accessible.

10) Training Requirements

Even in the absence of definitive empirical evidence that research supervision works, each of the universities visited demonstrate a mandatory requirement for new, inexperienced research supervisors to engage with training and for experienced supervisors to engage in refresher programmes. UQ offer refresher programmes online to experienced staff, while new supervisors engage in face to face workshops. Nearly all of the universities have mandatory induction activities for research supervisors and the University of Auckland also offer workshops on the *'Art of Supervision'.* Consultation on local training needs is also prevalent.

11) 'New to Learning Environments'

While considering growing global engagement in higher education, a fresh approach to the challenge of integrating International students and staff was demonstrated in the University of Auckland. The approach of providing workshops to those who are 'new to the New Zealand learning environment' specifically addresses differences in cultures of learning demonstrated between countries/ regions. Many institutions approach the integration of international students and staff from a cultural perspective, but approaching integration with respect to learning cultures is a support which can be integrated into supervisor development.

12) Asking the correct questions

Colleagues at CLeaR in the University of Auckland have an interesting way of addressing the issue around who should offer training and supports, what form they should take and to whom should they be offered within the university structure. It would be very useful for universities to consider the questions of

- *What needs to be done?*
- *Who should do it?*
- *How should this be done within the university?*

Universities are enormously complex and often resources are wasted due to repetition of effort across departments and units. A clear understanding of who should do what and where it should be done can maximise the efforts and offerings made.

13) Minimising Bureaucracy

UQ's approach to the provision of supports to research staff and students is based on the premise that anything the Graduate School introduce cannot add to the already existing workload or create further bureaucracy for supervisors. Furthermore, UQ are introducing mandatory refresher training for experienced supervisors online which will minimise resource requirements and hopefully maximise engagement of staff.

14) Contextualising the Doctorate

Finally, in the consideration of designing and implementing appropriate supports for research supervisors, an important consideration is to reflect on where the doctorate sits within the culture and economy of the country in question as well as globally. The doctoral student is being recognised as an equally important product of the doctorate as the thesis. *'Criteria for quality in doctoral education is broader than the product, it includes the training environment, support structures and facilities'* Dominic English, Strategy & Delivery Division. Australian Government. DDoGs Meeting, Adelaide 8/4/14. This should bring the role of supervisors and the supports they need into sharp focus for universities. The future of the doctorate and the 'fit for purpose' debate are currently underway and it would be advantageous for universities to consider where their realities and aspirations lie for their doctoral programmes and students.

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NAIRTL (National Academy for Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning) (2011). *Developing an institutional framework for supporting supervisors of research students.* A Practical Guide. http://books.google.ie/books?id=714OqTES-G8C&pg=PP1&lpg=PP1&dq=nairtl+supervisor+guide&source=bl&ots=obhpM7zx4P&sig=FewsVt9m-2Q5U7lKA0K61kS6RxM&hl=en&sa=X&ei=0IbmUr3GPOKy7AbHlYHIBw&ved=0CD4Q6AEwBA#v=onepage&q=nairtl%20supervisor%20guide&f=false

Taylor, S. and Beasley, N. (2005). *A Handbook for Doctoral Supervisors*. London, Routledge Falmer.

Appendix- Survey Material to Support Review

This survey was used as a basis for information gathering at meetings with U21 partners during this project.

Survey for Benchmarking – Review of Best Practices project – U21 / April / 2014 JCarton.

University of _____

Visit with _____

Date:_____

- Approximate numbers of Research supervisors:-
- Approximate numbers of doctoral students:-
- Profile of Doctoral Population (eg Part time, Distance learners, mature students etc).
- Average number of students per supervisor . Qs. Is there a policy to recommend the number of doctoral students any research supervisor should have? If s, is this discipline specific?
- On Average, what does a STEM PhD and an A/H/SocSci PhD cost in Australia?
- Are doctoral students considered employees of the university? / clients?

University Ethos / Policy and Approach to Doctoral Supervision

Eg. AREDE (Accountable Research Environment for Doctoral Education)- funded by EC Lifelong Learning Programme

University Stance on PhD/ Doctoral Management:

- *Prescribed number of doctoral students per supervisor?*
- *Obligatory and or voluntary training for supervisors?*
- *Recommendations with respect to student-supervisor frequency / content of meetings*
- *Recommendations for construct of supervisory teams*
- *Written agreement between supervisor and students*
- *Procedures for conflict resolution*
- *Systematic feedback from doctoral candidates*
- *Other?.. specify*

Governmental Policy

Qs. What is the most relevant and /or influential governmental policy or approach to the training and support of research/doctoral supervision in your opinion?

Qs. What is the government's approach to the current role of the PhD, Research supervisor?

Eligibility for Doctoral Supervision (Uni Policy)

Qs. Are there specific training requirements before a supervisor can engage in doctoral supervision as

i) a primary supervisor?

ii) a co-supervisor

Qs. Do staff have to demonstrate successful supervision prior to acting as primary supervisor (minimum number of doctoral students successfully completed?)

Qs. Do doctoral supervisors have to have a PhD?

QS. Do Doctoral supervisors have to be permanent members of academic staff?

Qs. Can Postdocs supervise if their contract covers the duration of the doctoral project?

Qs. Is single supervision or doctoral panel/ team supervision more prevalent?

Qs. Research / Supervisor specific contracts vs Teaching contracts

Maintaining Eligibility to Supervise – Registers

Qs. Does the university operate / maintain a Research Supervisor Register system?

Qs. How does this system work?

Qs. How does a new supervisor get on to the register?

Qs. Does prior supervisory experience in other institutions count?

Qs. How does a supervisor maintain their position or move to a different level (if this is possible) on the register?

Qs. How does the university remove a supervisor from the register and does this happen in reality?

Qs. Does participation in supervisor training programmes improve the chances of;

-Getting on the register?

-Continuing professional development/promotion?

Motivations for Doctoral Supervision & Workload Contribution/ Recognition

Qs. Is there a shift in the motivations for academics undertaking doctoral supervision? Is there more/less of a sense of duty and/or promotional influencers?

Qs. Is there any financial benefit to supervising doctoral students in this university?

Qs. Is there a workload model in operation? If so, what is this universities workload model for supervision?

Qs. Are there any disadvantages from a workload perspective that could be addressed in your opinion?

Qs. Does the presence of training and developmental supports for doctoral supervisors act as a motivational factor (in your opinion)?

Doctoral Student Recruitment/ Admission (Uni Policy)

Qs. Is there a university-wide process regarding doctoral student recruitment? Which unit / department is charged with this responsibility? Do supervisors play an active role across the university?

Qs. Do doctoral supervisors actively seek out students? Is this discipline specific? Do they attend national and international recruitment fairs?

Qs. Does the recruitment policy incorporate an interview or is this left for local decision?

Qs. Do supervisors use agents for recruitment of potential doctoral applicants?

Qs. Is there university –wide recruitment strategy, specifically in the doctoral domain? If so, is there focus placed on intangible characteristics (for weathering the doctorate) as well as minimum academic entry requirements?

Qs. What is the overall university admission process for doctoral applicants?

Qs. Does the university offer any English supports for Doctoral students who are non-native English Speakers?

Development & Support for Doctoral Supervisors within the home University

Qs. Who/ what is the main advocate of supervisor development in the university? Does HR play a role in training initiatives? Or is it Research/ Graduate Studies?

Qs. What kind of training is offered to new and inexperienced research supervisors?

Qs. Is training also targeted at more experienced/ vintage supervisors! And if so how is this managed and received/perceived?

Qs. Is the training voluntary or compulsory?

Qs. What is the overall motivation and ethos for the training / is it university, student or supervisor driven?

Qs. How is the training structured? (eg. Workshops, course work, reflective practice , journals etc).

Qs. What forms the major part of the course content?

> Institutional requirements / regulations and policies?

> Roles / Responsibilities / expectations

> Reflective Practice

> Transferable skills development – for students

> Examination/ Thesis preparation

> Conflict resolution

Other: please specifiy

Qs. Is there doctoral student representation on the training programmes?

Qs. Do support/ professional/admin staff play a role in training programmes?

Qs. Is reflective practice a component of the training programme and if so, how is this 'handled'

Qs. How is supervision as pedagogy addressed?

Qs. Who runs the training and how often is it run annually?

Qs. Is the training accredited?

Qs. What other supports are available for research supervisors?

Qs. How do supervisory staff perceive the training?

Qs. Is there any evidence to suggest that the training / support programmes are useful as measured by;

    i)   Supervisor experience / confidence in supervising
    ii)   More effective PhD project management?
    iii)   Improved completion &/or through put rates?
    iv)   Anecdotal evidence?

Qs. Is there any collaboration between universities with respect to delivery of training / sharing of resources?

Qs. Is there an emphasis on pedagogy?

Qs. Do supervisors engage with pedagogical training models?

Funding to Support Doctoral Supervision

Qs. Is it primarily university funding or governmental funding that is used for supervisor support and development initiatives?

Qs. Which funding source is primarily accessed by this university and why?

Qs. Is any part of the student grant allocated to supervisory support elements?

Qs. Is any part of the doctoral grant allocated to transferable skills development for students?

Skills Acquisition for Students – Role of the Doctoral Supervisor

The AQF outlines 4 categories which align with the level, type and purpose of the qualification of doctorate: **Qs**. Does RTS funding address these skills specifically?

    i)   Fundamental Skills
    ii)   People Skills
    iii)   Training Skills

iv)   Personal Skills

Vitae carried out a recent survey which showed that the motivation for undertaking a doctorate was currently as an exploratory career stage not a definitive step to becoming an academic – have supervisors acknowledged this?

Qs. How do supervisors view their role in the development of transferable skills for doctoral students? Do they play a role which helps the students identify their skills deficits and strengths? Or are they more hands on? What does the university expect is the responsibility of the student or supervisor in this context?

Qs. Does the university use external supervisors in the context of skills acquisition? Does industry / professions or the voluntary sector have an input in doctoral shaping or training in this regard and therefore have an influence on supervisory practice? If so, expand..

Qs. How are universities / supervisors managing employers expectations (requirement for additional skills sets and realism about salary expectations) and student expectations (better paid employment, more prestige)? How is the reconciliation of the specialisation obtained and the generalisation required of doctoral graduates managed?

Qs. Does doctoral supervision now support the idea of internships/ placements? Do co-supervisors from the internship destination come on board the supervisory team? If so, how does, has this worked and how is it managed? How do doctoral supervisors prepare their students for internships?

Supervisory Management of Doctoral Student Diversity

Qs. How does the university specifically address diversity (of students and within student approaches to doctoral training).

Qs. Is there specific training for supporting supervisors in the supervision of:

- o Part time students
- o Distance learning students
- o International students
- o Minority groups
- o Students with disabilities

Qs. How does the university promote inclusivity?

Changing role of the PhD – perceptions of the university and doctoral supervisor

Qs. Is there an awareness of the tension between what employers are looking for, what doctoral students are trained to do, what the purpose of the doctorate therefore is and by implication, what the specific role of the research supervisor is in this context?

Qs. Are research supervisors supervising along a well-worn path? If not, how are they, and the university addressing this complexity of conflicting demands?

Qs. Is there anything currently controversial?

Qs. With respect to the role of the PhD and its perceived effectiveness and quality, should universities introduce a cap on the number of doctorates produced?

Qs. Are there enough qualified research supervisors to supervise the increases in doctoral students? And who can also represent a breadth of disciplinary areas? Or is this not an area that the university would like to control?

Qs. How do you see supervisor support changing? Or what needs to be changed in the future in your opinion

Qs. How do research supervisors (or the university) measure the student satisfaction / experience of undertaking doctoral degrees?

Acknowledgement/ Recognition of Good Supervisory Practice- (Uni Policy)

Qs. Is there a formal recognition for good supervisory practice?

Qs. How is this award determined? Do students have an input? Is there any financial benefit or otherwise for the recipient?

University Initiatives with Respect to Research / Doctoral Supervision

Qs. What are the universities current priorities, initiatives in relation to research supervisor support and development?

Qs. Do you think supervisor training and development is prioritised sufficiently, if so give examples, if not, how could this be improved upon?

Monitoring / Assessment/ Examination

Qs. What specific milestones is the doctoral supervisor engaged with across the doctoral life cycle?

Qs. Does the supervisor pick external / internal examiners?

Qs. Does the research supervisor 'sign off' of the 'readiness' of the submitted thesis for examination?

Qs. Is there an assessment panel / DSP of which the supervisor is part of?

Qs. Most Doctoral students do not have a viva voce examination. Does this disadvantage the student (wrt skills demonstration for example).

Doctoral Student Experience

Qs. Does the university / supervisor have a balances approach to student outcomes and realisation on the individual's potential vs the research produced? Where does the heavier balance lie?

Qs. How is the doctoral supervisor / university handling the changing needs and values of an increasingly diverse student population?