A Guide to the UKPSF for Doctoral Supervisors
Aims and objectives

> The aims are to introduce the Guide and respond to any questions or issues.

> The objectives are to outline:
  • the background to the Guide;
  • the HEA project;
  • the mapping of supervisory roles to the UKPSF descriptors;
  • how Descriptors 2 and 3 might be interpreted in terms of supervisory practice;
  • how development/recognition can be supported by the scholarly literature.
The background
Historically....

> Doctoral supervision was an adjunct of the research function of academics. i.e., “…if one can do research, then one can presumably supervise it.” (Rudd 1985: 79-80);

> It was underpinned by ‘master-apprentice’ model with doctoral supervisors as experts passively transmitting expertise to novices who observed and hopefully emulated (Manathunga and Goozee 2007: 309).
Now acknowledged...

> Being an active researcher is a necessary but not a sufficient condition of being a good supervisor, i.e. ‘...to be an effective supervisor you need to be an effective researcher and [italics added] an effective supervisor’ (Brown and Atkins 1988: 115);

> So ‘the skills of being an effective supervisor are much broader than those of a successful researcher they would be recognised equally as the attributes of a successful teacher’ (Green and Powell 2005: 154).
Literature

Now a substantial literature on the pedagogy of doctoral supervision (see for example Grant 2000; Johnson et al. 2000; Brew and Pesata 2002; Green 2005; Green and Powell 2005; Hasrati 2005; Emilsson and Johnsson 2007; Engebretson et al. 2008; Lange and Baillie 2008; Taylor 2008; Bruce and Stroodley 2011; Lee 2012; Halse and Bansel 2012; Vehivilainen and Lofstrom 2014).
Implication

If doctoral supervision can then be conceptualised as a form of learning and teaching, then in principle supervisors should be able to use the UK Professional Standards Framework as a developmental tool, review their practice against it, and use it as evidence in claims for Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy.
In practice....

➢ Little evidence that the UKPSF is being used by doctoral supervisors for development purposes;

➢ Very few applications for Fellowship of the Academy mention doctoral supervision;

➢ Applications have been few in number from researchers for whom doctoral supervision may be their main or indeed their only teaching role.
In practice... (cont.)

> One reason for the lack of developmental use, the limited mention of research supervision in Fellowship applications and the specific lack of applications from researchers is that it may not be immediately obvious to supervisors how they might go about evidencing the alignment of their practice to the UKPSF.
The project
Higher Education Academy Project

Project involved:

- identifying relevant aspects of supervisory practice in relation to the UKPSF;
- mapping them against the Descriptors of the Framework;
- trialling them with a panel and revising the mapping;
- producing a Guide to the UKPSF for Doctoral Supervisors.
Process

> Idea floated at HEA OpenSpace event on 17th June 2015;


> Presentation to the Standing Conference in Academic Practice on 10th July 2015;

> Review by a distinguished panel selected for their familiarity with doctoral supervision and with the UKPSF. It included representatives of different mission groups of institutions, different kinds of doctoral programmes, staff in different supervisory roles and at different career stages, different higher education systems, and also a doctoral student. The author is very grateful for the contributions of the following panel members.
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They of course bear no responsibility for the content of the guide which lies solely with the author.
Mapping supervisory roles to the Descriptors of the UKPSF
Descriptor 1

> Individuals able to provide evidence of effectiveness in relation to their professional role(s), which, typically, will include at least some teaching and/or learning support responsibilities. This teaching and learning role may sometimes be undertaken with the assistance of more experienced teachers or mentors. Typically, these include:

• Early career researchers with some teaching responsibilities (e.g. PhD students, GTAs, contract researchers/post-docs. etc.);
• Staff new to teaching (including those with part-time academic responsibilities);
• Staff who support academic provision (e.g. learning technologists, learning developers and learning resource/library staff);
• Staff who undertake demonstrator/technician roles that incorporate some teaching-related responsibilities;
• Experienced staff in relevant professional areas who may be new to teaching and/or supporting learning, or who have a limited teaching portfolio;

> Individuals at D1 unlikely to be supervisors.
Descriptor 2

> Individuals able to provide evidence of broadly based effectiveness in more substantive teaching and supporting learning role(s). Such individuals are likely to be established members of one or more academic and/or academic-related teams. Typically, these include:

- Early career academics;
- Academic-related and/or support staff holding substantive teaching and learning responsibilities;
- Experienced academics relatively new to UK higher education;
- Staff with (sometimes significant) teaching-only responsibilities including, for example within work-based settings.

> Individuals at D2 likely to be principal or second/associate supervisors.
Descriptor 3

Individuals able to provide evidence of a sustained record of effectiveness in relation to teaching and learning, incorporating for example, the organisation, leadership and/or management of specific aspects of teaching and learning provision. Such individuals are likely to lead or be members of established academic teams. Typically, these include:

• Experienced staff able to demonstrate, impact and influence through, for example, responsibility for leading, managing or organising programmes, subjects and/or disciplinary areas;
• Experienced subject mentors and staff who support those new to teaching;
• Experienced staff with departmental and/or wider teaching and learning support advisory;

Individuals at D3 likely to be directors of doctoral training centres/postgraduate studies/research degree programmes, mentoring research supervisors, or postgraduate research tutors.
Descriptor 4

> Individuals, as highly experienced academics, able to provide evidence of a sustained and effective record of impact at a strategic level in relation to teaching and learning, as part of a wider commitment to academic practice. This may be within their institution or wider (inter)national settings. Typically, these include:

  • Highly experienced and/or senior staff with wide-ranging academic or academic-related strategic leadership responsibilities in connection with key aspects of teaching and supporting learning;
  • Staff responsible for institutional strategic leadership and policymaking in the area of teaching and learning;
  • Staff who have strategic impact and influence in relation to teaching and learning that extends beyond their own institution.

> Individuals at D4 likely to be PVCs Research or Deans of Graduate Schools and while they may have responsibility for supervision this would be a part of a broader portfolio which would indicate strategic impact.
At D2, individuals should be able to provide evidence of broadly based effectiveness in supervising doctoral students. Such individuals are likely to be members of one or more supervisory teams. Typically those would include:

- Academics and researchers with supervisory responsibilities, e.g. as principal and/or secondary/associate supervisors
- Experienced supervisors relatively new to supervising doctoral students in the relevant national higher education system.
At D3, individuals should be able to provide evidence of a sustained record of effectiveness in co-ordinating, supporting, managing and/or mentoring of others in relation to doctoral supervision. Such individuals are likely to lead or be members of established academic teams. Typically those would include:

- Experienced staff who play roles in supporting and mentoring fellow-supervisors;
- Experienced staff able to demonstrate impact and influence through, for example, responsibility for leading, managing, co-ordinating, or organising doctoral supervision in faculties, departments, research institutes and research group.
Re-interpreting D2 and D3 in terms of supervisory practice

Areas of activity
A1 - Design and plan learning activities and programmes of study

> At D2 evidence of designing and planning:
  • learning activities to develop students’ understanding of research;
  • where appropriate, of activities to support students to choose a suitable topic, e.g. giving them the criteria and asking them to self-evaluate topics;
  • activities to support students to develop research proposals and research plans;
  • supervisory meetings to support students to progress their research projects.

> At D3 evidence of:
  • mentoring or supporting less experienced supervisors to undertake the above;
  • co-ordinating, supporting or managing or leading the design of doctoral programmes or of components of doctoral programmes, for example induction and research training workshops or modules.

A1 supporting literature can be found in the handout document
A2 - Teach and/or support learning

> At D2 evidence of:

  • awareness of different approaches to supervision and their relationship to student needs;
  • adapting approaches to meet the differing needs of individual students;
  • maintaining alignment of approaches as the needs of students change and evolve over the course of the research project;
  • encouraging students to write early and regularly;
  • supporting students to complete their projects;
  • where team supervision is the norm, the development of strategies to secure the quality of the student learning experience.

> At D3 evidence of mentoring or supporting less experienced supervisors in undertaking the above.

A2 supporting literature can be found in the handout document.
A3 - Assess and give feedback to learners

>At D2 evidence of:

- giving students timely and constructive feedback on their work which is clear and actionable;
- giving students feedback on their writing;
- familiarising students with assessment criteria and examination requirements;
- supporting students to prepare for examination, including where appropriate offering the opportunity for a practice viva;
- supporting students after the examination including where appropriate advising on major revisions and resubmission;
- acting as an internal or external examiner or as an independent chair.

>At D3 evidence of mentoring or supporting less experienced supervisors and/or examiners in undertaking the above.

A3 supporting literature can be found in the handout document.
A4 - Develop learning environments and approaches to student support and guidance

> At D2 evidence of:

- ensuring that students have adequate resources to undertake their research projects including study facilities, storage facilities, IT, and where appropriate, equipment, and in the case of practice-based doctorates, workshop facilities;
- ensuring that students are fully informed about issues relating to research integrity;
- empathising with students’ facing personal issues and being aware of institutional support services to which they can be referred for help;
- understanding why students may fall behind and supporting them to progress;
- where appropriate, assisting students in applying for positions and grants.

> At D3 evidence of mentoring or supporting less experienced supervisors in undertaking the above.

A4 supporting literature can be found in the handout document
A5 - Engage in continuing professional development in subjects/disciplines and their pedagogy, incorporating research, scholarship, and the evaluation of professional practice

> At D2, reviews of what was learned and what changed through:

- acting as a second/associate supervisor;
- the initial professional development programme;
- engagement with the scholarly and research literature;
- subsequent reflection on and evaluation of practice.
A5 - Engage in continuing professional development in subjects/disciplines and their pedagogy, incorporating research, scholarship, and the evaluation of professional practice (cont.)

> At D3, reviews of what was learned and what changed through:
  • the experience of supervision;
  • undertaking roles in leading, managing, and co-ordinating supervision;
  • engagement with the scholarly and research literature on these functions;
  • organising and contributing to the development of their less experienced colleagues;
  • ‘top up’ professional development.

A5 supporting literature can be found in the handout document
Re-interpreting D2 and D3 in terms of supervisory practice

Core knowledge
K1 - The subject material

> At D2 evidence of:
  
  • matching the student’s research project and the research expertise and interests of the supervisory team;
  
  • where appropriate, supporting students in selecting appropriate topics;
  
  • supporting students in overcoming academic problems with the research;
  
  • supporting students engaged in interdisciplinary research.

> At D3 evidence of mentoring or supporting less experienced supervisors in undertaking the above.

K1 supporting literature can be found in the handout document
K2 - Appropriate methods for learning and teaching in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme

> At D2, evidence of awareness of:
  > • the disciplinary framework and of associated pedagogic approaches to supervision;
  > • the different methods of supervision associated with different kinds of doctoral programmes and ability to adapt their supervision accordingly;

> At D3 evidence of mentoring or supporting less experienced supervisors or examiners in undertaking the above.

K2 supporting literature can be found in the handout document
K3 - How students learn, both generally and within their subject/disciplinary area

> At D2 evidence of awareness of:

  • how students generally learn to become independent researchers and of how this influences practice;
  • how students in the discipline learn to become independent researchers and of how this influences practice;
  • where appropriate, how students from other disciplines learn and how to adapt and support them in their studies.

> At D3 evidence of mentoring or supporting less experienced supervisors or examiners in undertaking the above.

K3 supporting literature can be found in the handout document
K4 - The use and value of appropriate learning technologies

> At D2 evidence of:

• supporting students to acquire the relevant technological skills to undertake their research projects, including information searching, retrieval, storage, and sharing;
• understanding the role of appropriate technologies, including social media, in maintaining contact with students, and using these effectively;
• encouraging students to use relevant media to contact other researchers and build their profile in the research community.

> At D3 evidence of:

• mentoring and supporting less experienced supervisors in undertaking the above;
• being responsible for ensuring that the relevant resources are available to supervisors and students.

K4 supporting literature can be found in the handout document
K5 - Methods for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching

> At D2 evidence of:
  - awareness of the range of methods for evaluating supervision;
  - using an appropriate mix of methods for evaluating supervision;
  - demonstrating effective responses to feedback.

> At D3 evidence of:
  - mentoring and supporting less experienced colleagues to evaluate their supervision;
  - undertaking formal roles in evaluation processes, e.g. as members of staff student liaison committees, Directors of Studies managing the administration of internal and external student questionnaires and reporting on the results, or members of review bodies reviewing the comments of examiners relating to the student experience.

K5 supporting literature can be found in the handout document
K6 - The implications of quality assurance and enhancement for academic and professional practice with a particular focus on teaching

At D2 evidence of awareness of policies and procedures for quality assurance and enhancement relating to doctoral supervision including:

- eligibility requirements for acting as principal or secondary/associate supervisors;
- supervisory loads and limits on numbers of students;
- monitoring student progress;
- examination policies and procedures;
- mechanisms for quality enhancement, e.g. departmental annual reviews, supervisor forums, excellence in supervision awards.
K6 - The implications of quality assurance and enhancement for academic and professional practice with a particular focus on teaching (cont.)

At D3 evidence of:

• mentoring or supporting less experienced supervisors in quality assurance and enhancement;
• co-ordinating, supporting and managing policies and procedures for quality assurance and enhancement such as:
  • approving recommendations for the appointment of supervisors;
  • monitoring supervisory loads and numbers of students;
  • monitoring continuity of supervision and, if appropriate, appointing new or additional supervisors;
K6 - The implications of quality assurance and enhancement for academic and professional practice with a particular focus on teaching (cont.)

- monitoring student progress across cohorts;
- reviewing cases of termination and making recommendations;
- reviewing and responding to the reports of examiners;
- reviewing complaints and appeals;
- leading or participating in internal and external reviews of doctoral programmes and responding to findings;
- organising and/or delivering events designed to enhance the quality of doctoral supervision.

K6 supporting literature can be found in the handout document
Re-interpreting D2 and D3 in terms of supervisory practice

Professional values
V1 - Respect individual learners and diverse learning communities

> At D2 evidence of awareness that:
  - every doctoral student is different and must be respected as an individual;
  - doctoral students constitute diverse learning communities which need to be respected;

> At D3 mentoring and supporting less experienced colleagues in respecting individual learners and diverse learning communities.

V1 supporting literature can be found in the handout document
V2 - Promote participation in higher education and equality of opportunity for learners

At D2 evidence of:

• reaching out to try and recruit doctoral students from all sections of the population;
• ensuring fair selection;
• an awareness of issues stemming from:
  • the social and economic diversity of the doctoral student population;
  • the international diversity of the doctoral student population;
  • part-time and distance modes of doctoral study;
• the development of strategies for supporting all students to successfully complete their studies.
V2 - Promote participation in higher education and equality of opportunity for learners (cont.)

> At D3 evidence of:

- mentoring less experienced supervisors in relation to undertaking the above;
- co-ordinating, supporting, or managing initiatives to recruit and select doctoral students.

V2 supporting literature can be found in the handout document
V3 - Use evidence informed approaches and the outcomes from research, scholarship & continuing professional development

> At D2 evidence of:

- familiarity with the relevant scholarly and research literature on doctoral supervision and evidence of its influence upon practice;
- engagement in appropriate continuing professional development (for example participating in initial training programmes, keeping supervision logs, attending supervisor forums, training as examiners) and its influence upon practice.
V3 - Use evidence informed approaches and the outcomes from research, scholarship & continuing professional development (cont)

> At D3 evidence of:

• mentoring and supporting less experienced colleagues in undertaking the above

• familiarity with the relevant scholarly and research literature on co-ordinating, supporting, mentoring, and managing doctoral supervision, and evidence of its influence upon practice

• engagement in appropriate continuing professional development (for example top up training, modules on leading doctoral supervision) and its influence on practice

V3 supporting literature can be found in the handout document
V4 - Acknowledge the wider context within which higher education operates, recognising the implications for academic practice

> Massification
> Diversification
> Internationalisation
> Regulation
> Commodification
> McDonaldisation
> Dislocation
> Casualisation
> Cross-fertilisation
> Proliferation
> Collectivisation
> Capitalisation

Sources: Taylor 2012, 2014, forthcoming
Traditionally, the function of the doctorate was to prepare students for an academic career, but in many developed countries only a minority of doctoral graduates gain tenured academic posts and most work outside academia;

Now function of doctorate increasingly seen in terms of supplying human capital for the knowledge economies;

Development has led to pressures from research sponsors and employers for provision to be made in doctoral programmes for students to acquire the relevant skills to work outside as well as inside academia;

Supervisors expected to directly support academic career development and indirectly support non-academic career development.
V4 - Example of capitalisation

> At D2 evidence of:
  - awareness of the need for doctoral students to develop the knowledge and skills to prepare them for careers inside and outside academia;
  - supporting students to enhance their employability, for example by conducting training needs analyses to identify gaps in their portfolio of skills and encouraging them to take advantage of relevant development opportunities;

> At D3 evidence of mentoring and supporting less experienced supervisors in undertaking the above.

V4 supporting literature on capitalisation can be found in the handout document
Conclusions
Conclusions

➤ UKPSF enables academic staff engaged in teaching and supporting learning to develop their practice and to gain professional recognition;

➤ Purpose of the Guide is to show how the framework can be applied to what Atkins and Brown (1988: 115) have described as ‘...probably the most complex and subtle form of teaching in which we engage’, namely doctoral supervision;

➤ If this is accepted, the UKPSF has the potential to be a powerful tool for the development and enhancement of supervisory practice and an important source for structuring evidence in applications for Fellowship of the HEA.
Thank you for taking part

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