

N12.2 Raglan Thursday 6 December 16.00-16.30

Re-framing Supervisor Development for Internationalisation and Professionalisation (0476)

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As part of a team (Tarragona Think Tank, TTT) associated with the EUA-CDE (European Universities Association - Council for Doctoral Education) and committed to developing ideas and research related to the professionalisation of doctoral supervision, we present here ideas fostered over the last two years (Reguero, 2017) . The summary below will be augmented with the results of further deliberations of the TTT in September 2018.

In 2000 Barnett discussed the transformation of university scholarship and research in a world he described as supercomplex (Barnett, 2000). It is more so now. Research problems increasingly require multi-disciplinary perspectives and multi-national funding, with both theoretical and practical outcomes made relevant, impactful and accessible to diverse audiences. Simultaneously, doctoral education and training has metamorphosed in a multitude of parallel ways, as evidenced by presentations at SRHE and EUA-CDE events. Yet supervisors remain a neglected species, expected to keep up with the pace while transmogrifying daily between tutor/colleague, guide/assessor, supporter/challenger throughout each individual doctoral process. The rhetoric now derides the master/apprentice model of the doctorate, but the practice of supervisor development remains stagnant in all but a few dispersed situations.

Most universities have compulsory, but usually short and intensive, workshops for new supervisors while some try to provide additional workshops on specific topics such as doctoral examining. Very few support the supervisory skills of collaborating industrial or practice-based supervisors. It is probably no exaggeration to say that the majority of the skills of supervisors are learnt 'on the job' from early research experience , either emulated or rejected, during their own doctorate, from observing colleagues, and by trial and error. From a doctoral candidate's perspective, this is not reassuring, especially given the huge investment, financial-emotional-intellectual-social- temporal, required to complete a doctorate successfully. Neither is it comforting for those supervisors dedicating time, energy and professional reputation to the task. Doctoral study is a perilous business in many ways so reducing the risk to all concerned (candidates, supervisors, and to the institutional reputation) should be a priority for institutions through ensuring competent supervision by professionals well versed in recent and relevant requirements of doctoral study in addition to being experts in their specific research field.

Further, in the globalised world of the 21st century we must recognise the high level of mobility of researchers, whether doctoral, academic or industrial, and thus prepare all for skills and qualifications that are relevant and recognised as equivalent wherever they may roam (EUA, 2016). This requires a change in perspective of what a doctorate is for, and how it can be supported.

While it is recognised that there is value in the provision of diverse doctoral degrees and experience (disciplinary, institutional and national differences interacting) there is, nevertheless, a need to ensure equivalence of quality of those degrees. Their degrees, including the skills as well as the knowledge developed in their process, must be transportable. It has long been recognised (Denicolo 2016, 2018) that supervisors are crucial to researcher development while inter-institutional and

inter-sector collaboration has increasingly become important (Jorgensen 2014, Duke and Denicolo 2016). Thus, a minimum quality of support for doctoral candidates is a critical factor.

To enable supervisors to excel in this new context, universities must provide doctoral supervisory training and all its accompanying procedures. Further, if the needs of internationalisation are to be met as well as those of the professionalisation of supervision, there needs to be collaboration between universities globally on quality standards for doctoral support to which supervisors contribute. This is a huge and radical undertaking but could be activated by first establishing general standards across universities within each country. Metrics such as completion rates and 'happiness sheet' evaluations of supervision, while providing some information, offer little to supervisors wishing to professionalise their practice. Rather, in line with other comparable professions with Continuing Professional Development requirements for practice, they have need of guidance on and opportunities to update on such things as: the currency of their discipline knowledge and that of related disciplines; the relevance of their discipline to society (impact value); how informed is their expertise in research methodology; the latest criteria used by examiners; and recent/relevant developments in doctoral education.

Competition for doctoral researchers is growing with China and other nations establishing exponentially new Graduate School provision (EUA-CDE Conference 2018) so that if Europe is to maintain and sustain its place in the postgraduate education market, this issue is becoming critical. It is also critical for the supervisors themselves both in daily practice and for their curricula vitae. With academic workloads diversifying, expert practice in supervision diminishes the potential for time-consuming 'fire-fighting' and, with the increase in research collaboration with and in other countries, international recognition of supervision expertise is advantageous.

These changes require the co-operation and informed contributions of supervisors within and between universities. Conference attendees will have an opportunity to contribute their views on these issues.

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