

**UKCGE Inaugural Colloquium
on Graduate Education 2007, Dublin, Ireland**

**Generic Development of Essential
Skills for Research Supervisors**

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Generic Development of Research Supervisors

- **International / National context**
- **Modes of Programme Delivery**
- **Key Elements of Programmes**
- **Current issues**

International / National context

- **Bologna Declaration – EHEA – 1999 / 2003**
European dimension, QA, mobility, ECTS, Integrated Training & Research, European PhD
- **QAA Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes – September, 2004**
 - September 2004 – Audit 2005 – 06
<www.qaa.ac.uk/public/COP/cop/contents.htm>
- **IUQB: Good Practice in the Organisation of PhD Programmes in Irish Universities**
 - National Guidelines – February 2005 <www.iuqb.ie>
- **Bergen, May 2005 – EU Charter for Researchers**
- **London, May 2007 – Focus on Doctoral Cycle**
 - Supervisor development, performance review, team approach

Modes of Programme Delivery

- **Dedicated programmes at Faculty/subject domain level**
- **‘Generic’ programmes for all scholastic domains across Institution**
- **Mixture of both – with materials (eg Case Studies) focused on specific subject areas**
- ***Essential pre-requisite:* strong support from top management for:**
 - **Formalised supervisor training**
 - **Updates for established supervisors**
 - **Performance review of supervision**

Key Elements of Training Programmes

- [A] Small group discussions on a range of issues
- [B] Discussion of Case Studies
- [C] Overviews on key stages & issues in supervision
 - Initial phase: Selection; Outline research programme ...
 - Progress monitoring and review;
 - Thesis completion and assessment

General principle of programme design:

Maximise discussion and experience-sharing among participants, with *minimum* of formal lecture presentations

[A] Small Group Discussions

- **Groups of 2-3 (“buzz groups”) share personal experience of good aspects of being supervised for a research degree**
 - **Plenary debrief develops quick list of positive attributes of effective supervision**
- **The ideal characteristics of a research student**
- **The nature of a PhD – different paradigms for research**
- **Role play scenarios of e.g. supervisor interviewing a new research student**

[B] Case Studies

- **Based on real life scenarios**
- **Illustrate typical supervision problems at all stages of a PG research programme e.g.**
 - “Amy’s first year” (with an absent supervisor ...)
 - “Jean-Pierre’s Final Year” (case of an unfocused student ...)
 - “Freddy’s *Viva voce* Exam” (two supervisors rarely meet ...)
- **Discussed in small groups (8 – 12) with Rapporteur and experienced facilitator**
- **Presentation by Rapporteur in Plenary Session for exploration of general and specific issues**
- **Excellent basis for exchange of experience and for developing insight into supervisory process**

[C] Overviews on key stages & issues – Initial phase

- **Selection of research students – key issues**
- **Outline of research programme / research problem**
 - Paradigms for Science, Engineering / Humanities
 - Gantt chart analysis
- **Induction**
- **Development of research/employment skills**
 - Training Needs Analysis – regular review and update
 - Generic & transferable research skills
 - Specific research skills
 - Training as Graduate Teaching Assistant
 - Attendance at / presentation of Seminars etc
 - Use of PDP / Electronic logs – significant trend
- **Managing expectations**

[C] Progress monitoring & review

- **Supervisor/s and student should meet appropriately**
 - Joint responsibility to define minimum contact
- **Records of supervisory meetings essential**
 - Student can e-mail draft record to supervisor (audit trail)
 - Can assess student's understanding of agreed goals
 - Edited & formative feedback – empowerment of student
 - Rapid distribution of final record (to sponsors etc)
- **Need for prompt, clear and constructive feedback**
- **Clarify process for annual monitoring / PhD transfer**
- **Clarify need for independent advice / process if relationship breaks down (*cf* Codes of Practice)**

[C] Thesis completion/assessment (1)

- **Clarify Thesis submission process**
- **Best practice for successful completion**
 - **Models of supervisorial support for thesis writing**
 - **Develop Thesis plan – early start essential e.g. beginning of final year**

Thesis Planner - 1

Name:

Date:

Title:

Version:

Description of Chapter	Initial Draft	Supervisor	Revised	Revised again	Final version	'Word-count
Front page						
Abstract						
Acknowledgements						
List of Contents						
List of Figures						
List of Tables						
List of Presentations / Published papers						
List of inserted materials in end- papers						
1.0 INTRODUCTION						
1.1 Topic #1						
1.2 Topic #2						
1.2.1 Subtopic #1						
1.2.2 Subtopic #2						
1.2.2(a) Theme (a)						
etc						

* NB Maximum word-count allowed for PhD Thesis (text only – excluding figs, tables, references, appendices etc): 100,000 words

Thesis Planner - 2

Name:

Date:

Title:

Version:

Description of Chapter	Initial Draft	Supervisor	Revised	Revised again	Final version	Word-count
2.0 TOPIC P						
2.1 Topic #1						
2.2 Topic #2						
2.2.1 Subtopic #1						
2.2.2 Subtopic #2						
2.2.2(a) Theme (a)						
2.2.2(b) Theme (b)						
etc						
X.0 TOPIC X						
etc						
Y.0 RESULTS & DISCUSSION						
Z.0 GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS						
REFERENCES						
APPENDICES						
INSERTED MATERIALS (CD-ROM, magnetic media, reprints etc)						

[C] Thesis completion/assessment (2)

- **Clarify selection of Examiners and *Viva* process**
 - ‘Balanced’ team – experience, independence, expertise
 - Roles of External / Internal Examiners & Chair of Board
- **Clarify the *Viva voce* process**
 - Value of Practice or ‘Mock’ Viva – esp. overseas students
 - Independent pre-Viva Reports (required in UK)
 - The *Viva* – How long ... ?
 - Outcomes – Joint Report / Independent Reports
- **Approval of Thesis corrections**

Current issues

- **Emerging practice for Institutional or external accreditation of Supervisors (in UK)**
- **Retraining / Refresher programmes – how best to update established supervisors & extend / develop skills (cf UK QAA Code of Practice) – *cf* Workshop 3**
- **Partition & exploitation of Intellectual Property Rights**
- **Appeals & complaints – OIA – “Ombudsman”**

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