
Institutional support workshop: What can institutions do to better support doctoral progress?

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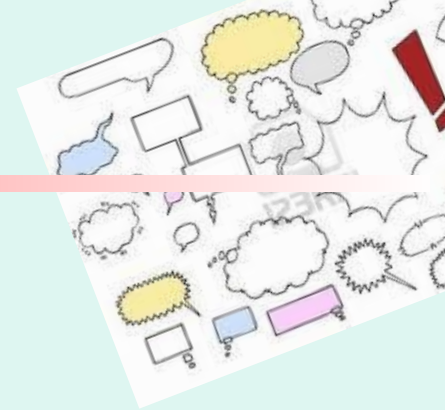
Goals

- Get to know each other and share experience related to doctoral education
- Develop collective understanding of
 - Institutional promising policies and practices (based on some evidence); and
 - Unresolved issues
- Consider some research-based evidence that might be useful in addressing the issues



Plan

- Part 1:
 - Individual work
 - Exchange of experiences in like-minded groups
 - What has worked and why?
 - What has not?
- Part 2:
 - Plenary reports from groups
 - Research evidence on PhD education that might be useful
- *Premise*: Enhancing PhD progress, satisfaction and completion involves integration of policy and support/ training for supervisors and students in order to create new practices



Part 1

- Form like-minded groups
- Individual work
 - Write down two things your university is doing that you think represent promising policy/practice
 - What issue the policy/ practice was designed to address
 - What evidence there is that it works
 - Write down two things that you feel need addressing, i.e., are still problems; include
 - What has been tried and not worked
 - Why nothing has been tried if this is the case
- Role group discussion:
 - Exchange information on 2 things that work
 - Review group issues and choose 2 you want to discuss in plenary

Part 2: plenary

- Groups report 2 issues they want to work on; plenary tries to problem solve
- Finally, quick overview: examples of policies/practices that draw on research evidence

Issues named by groups

Issue	Research-based policy
Heavy Sup. workload	Policy re max # of S'S in relation to Sup. experience
Annual progress reports not read	Online system with 'red flag' to signal Program Director
No supervisory training	Policy on req'd preparation to be Sup.; occasional Briefing for exper. Sups.
Low completion rate	Institute benchmarks with reported progress tracking
Integrating international students	Ensuring good briefing resources; create mentoring program
Ensuring science in society	Training opportunities in non-academic sector; possible

Policies & practices drawing on research re satisfaction, completion, etc. 1

Theme	Research	E.g., Policy and training
Selecting SS	Presently unreliable; precise measure of critical thinking → better decisions	Blind-reviewed critique of common article; (T) Suggestions to Sup on how to decide to accept a SS
Transition into degree	Clear expectations re nature of learning & doing research → satisfaction, completion	Rights of authorship required to be discussed and noted; (T) Student orientation and codes of practice
Sup-SS meetings	Sup absence/ meeting at least 1/mth	Clear 'expectation' to meet minimum 1/mth
Sup availability	Absence → anxiety, disrupted progress	Require Sup to notify PD if away more than 4 wks
Progress	Clear benchmarks that document progress → satisfaction, completion	Assessment by individuals other than supervisor: more than only early assessment, e.g, C of S

Policies & practices drawing on research re satisfaction, completion, etc. 2

Theme	Research:	E.g., Policy and training
Timely progress	Robust tracking → catch problems early, completion	SS & Sup required online termly reports (done consecutively); issues forced to be noted each time (Y/N)
SS agency/independence	SS involved in, e.g., choosing sup → reinforces agency, satisfaction, completion	Supervisor set only after a year AND/OR Co-sup required: SS chooses (T) Suggestions how to establish Co-sup
Timely completion	Dept. & sup focus on timely completion	Consistent departmental message, orally & in writing
Transition out of degree	SS look to Sup for career advice, not Careers; Sups not able/willing	Ensure career services can counsel re PhD; encourage PhDs to use service → triples employment likelihood in 1 yr

Action items

- Review what we have discussed in this session
- Make a list of
 - Things you can act on when you return home
 - The affordances and constraints
 - People you need to talk with in order to make progress