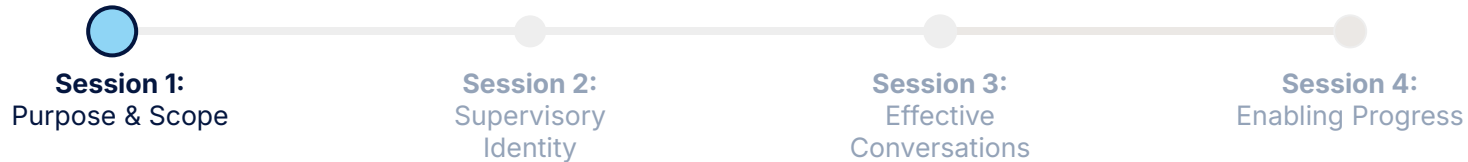


Session 1: The purpose and scope of supervision

Dr Julia Rayner



Programme overview

Session 1: The purpose and scope of supervision

Navigating the roles, responsibilities and competing demands required for effective doctoral supervision.

Session 2: Developing your supervisory identity

Understanding your own supervisor identity and unique contribution to research supervision and the wider supervisory team.

Session 3: Effective supervisory conversations

Focusing on how active listening and effective questioning can help supervisors hold clearer, more productive conversations.

Session 4: Enabling progress and independence

Exploring practical ways to help doctoral candidates stay motivated, build confidence, and move towards greater independence.

Programme Etiquette

Working with each other

Confidentiality

All discussions are confidential

Commitment

Attendance and Punctuality

Care

Listening, inclusive, non-judgemental

General housekeeping

- Mics off unless you are speaking (put your 'hand up' if you would like to contribute)
- Same rules for coming and going as a physical room
- Cameras on, especially for breakout room discussions
- All slides and resources available on the session webpage

Session overview

- Qualities of good supervision
- Changing doctoral landscape and implications
- Stakeholders and their expectations/needs/challenges in the doctoral experience
- Supervisors' roles and responsibilities and boundaries
- Navigating the complex and competing supervisory demands

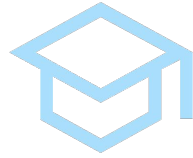
“

'Supervision is a central determinant of PhD candidates' progress and wellbeing'

- Tikkanen et al., 2024



**What are the behaviours, skills
and attributes of a good
supervisor?**



How do doctoral candidates define quality supervision?

Candidate perspective on what is quality supervision

Career support

Supportive

Understands doctoral processes

Direction and structure

Good communicator

Knowledge and expertise

Availability

Constructive feedback

Interest and enthusiasm

Builds rapport and is approachable

Tailor to individual's needs

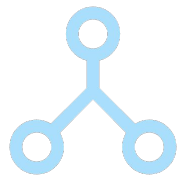
The doctoral landscape

- Increased student numbers
- Mixed student populations
- Divergent study modes
- Diversification in types and purpose of doctorates
- Multidisciplinary, inter-institutional, intersectoral team supervision
- Increased compliance and regulation

“

the '**extended supervisor**' (Taylor 2012) is required to develop student autonomy through **a range of skills and competencies**, such as teamwork, self-awareness, communication, networking, and malleability'

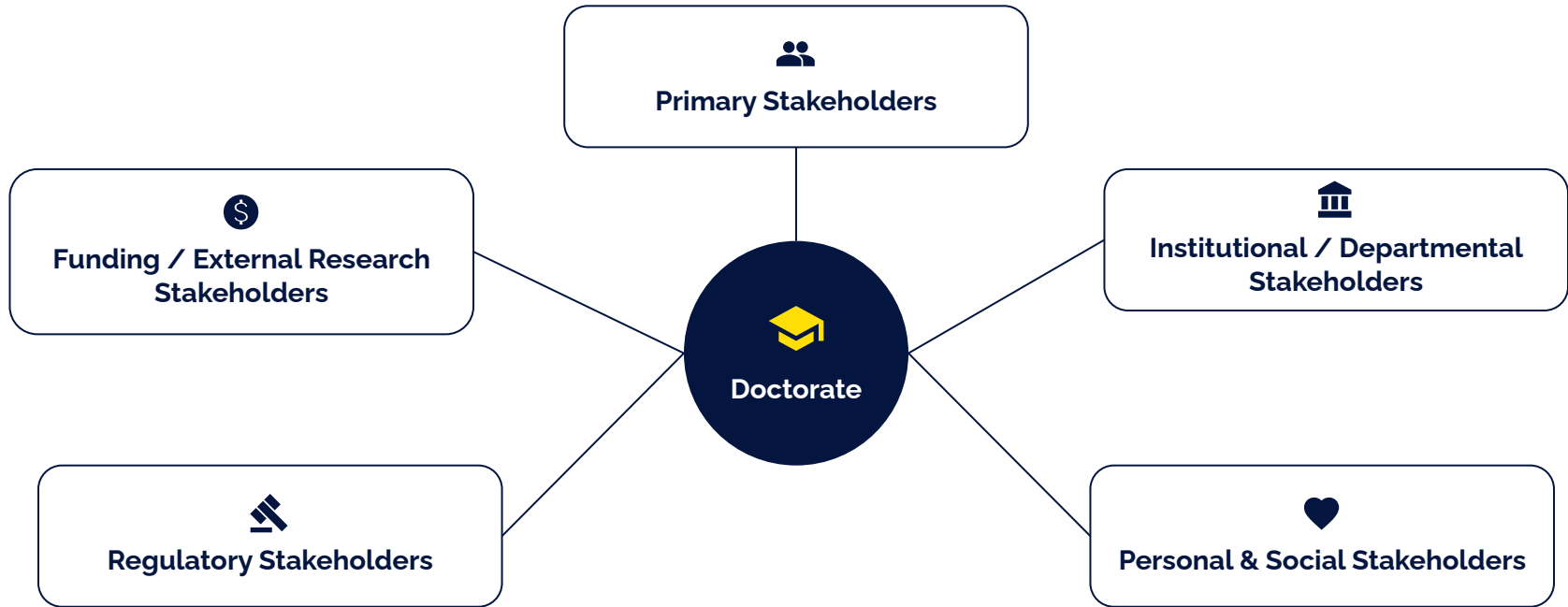
- Bordogna & Lundgren-Resenterra, 2023



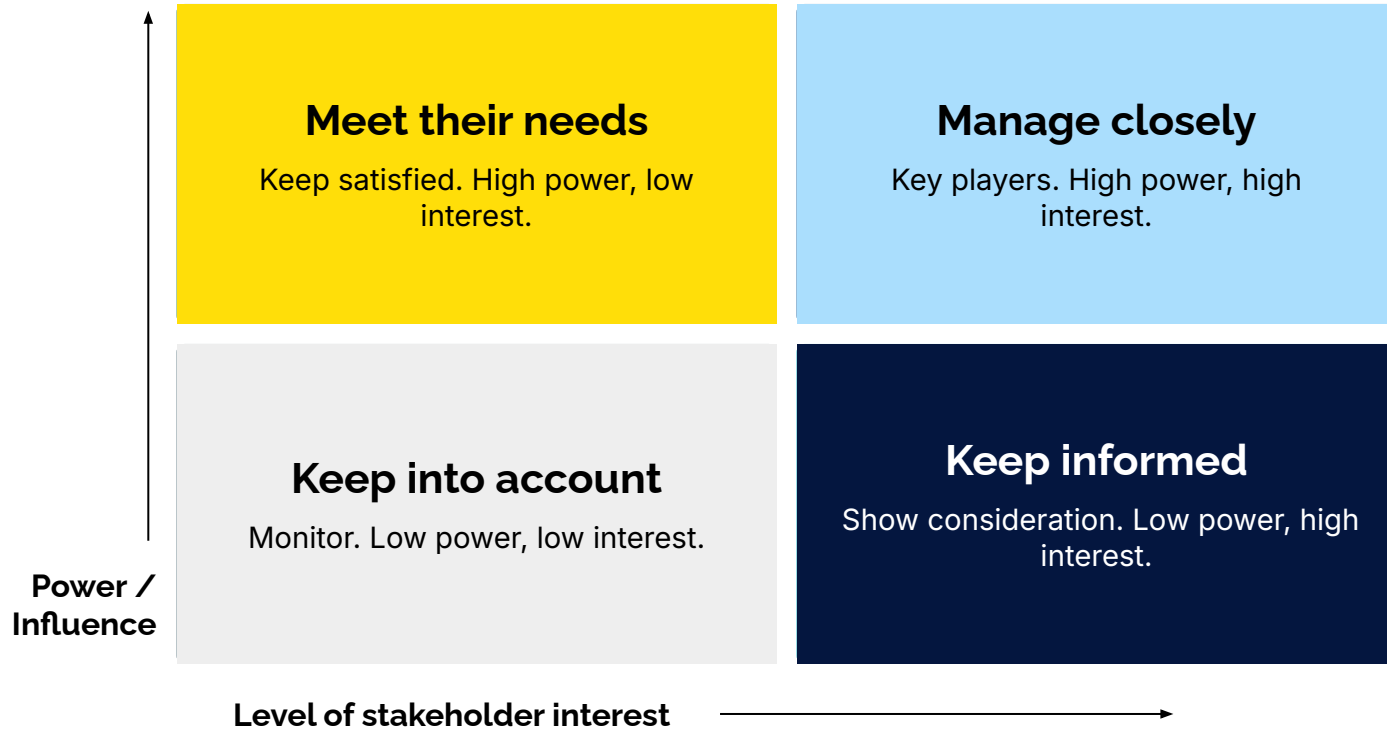
The doctoral landscape: mapping the stakeholders

- ✎ **Activity: Identify and map the key stakeholders in your doctoral landscape**

The doctoral landscape: mapping the stakeholders



Managing your stakeholders



UKRI: A New Deal for Postgraduate Research



'Good supervision is fundamental to getting good outcomes for the PGR student, research team, RO, funder and future employer. All PGR students should have access to high quality supervision and ROs should ensure that everyone in the supervisory team is well supported, including through **induction** for new supervisors and **Continuous Professional Development (CPD)**'

[New deal for postgraduate research: response to the call for input, 2023](#)

Institutional realities

- Supervision Team
- Structure and frequency of supervisory meetings
- Thesis Advisory/Confirmation Panel
- Progress monitoring
- Ethics and integrity
- Annual Leave and working hours
- Candidate and Supervisor training and personal development
- Leave of absences and extensions

Key policies/guidelines

- [The Policy on Research Degrees \(PoRD\)](#)
- [Code of Practice on Research Integrity](#)
- [Research Publications and Open Access Policy](#)
- [Principles of Research Supervision document](#)
- [Research supervisor roles and responsibilities](#)

Managing the doctoral process

- [Formal supervisory meetings](#)
- [Thesis Advisory Panel \(TAP\)](#)
- [Formal progression of PGRs](#)
- [SkillsForge: Progression Forms Completing a Progression Preparation form](#) (a guide for supervisors)

Good Practice

- [Anti-Racist Research Toolkit and Harassment and sexual misconduct Toolkit](#)
- [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion for staff](#)
- [Building a positive research culture](#)

Development

PGR

- [Professional Development Plan \(PDP\)](#)
- [Researcher Professional Development & Skills Training Programme](#)
- [Vitae's Researcher Development Framework \(RDF\) 2025](#)

Supervisor

- [Being an Effective Research Supervisor Tutorial \(BERST\)](#)
- [York Research Supervisor Workshops](#)
- [Peer Mentoring Circles for Research Supervisors](#)

Key teams

- [York Graduate Research School \(YGRS\)](#)
- [Research Culture & Researcher Development Team](#)

Doctoral candidate realities

- Financial challenges
- Managing a lengthy project
- Mental and physical wellbeing
- Supervisory relationships
- Developing the necessary academic skills
- Administrative processes

“

'The hidden curriculum in doctoral education comprises all unofficial mechanisms of learning that take place within and outwith academia.'

- Elliot et al., 2020

Hidden realities

- Career uncertainty
- Power dynamics
- Isolation/Loneliness
- Self doubt
- Emotional toll
- Perfectionism and productivity culture
- Social and cultural barriers
- Erosion of work and non work boundaries impacting relationships
- Academic hidden curriculum

Which of these realities do you also experience as a supervisor?



Comfort Break

See you in 10 minutes

Supervisors' multiple roles

- Quality assurer
- Supportive guide
- Researcher trainer
- Mentor
- Knowledge enthusiast
- Evaluator
- Gatekeeper
- Project Manager



'Your roles as supervisor are partly prescribed by the nature of the position but there is an element of choice as to which additional roles you take on and this will depend on factors such as values, identities, academic background and experience.'

- Benmore, 2017

Changing Roles

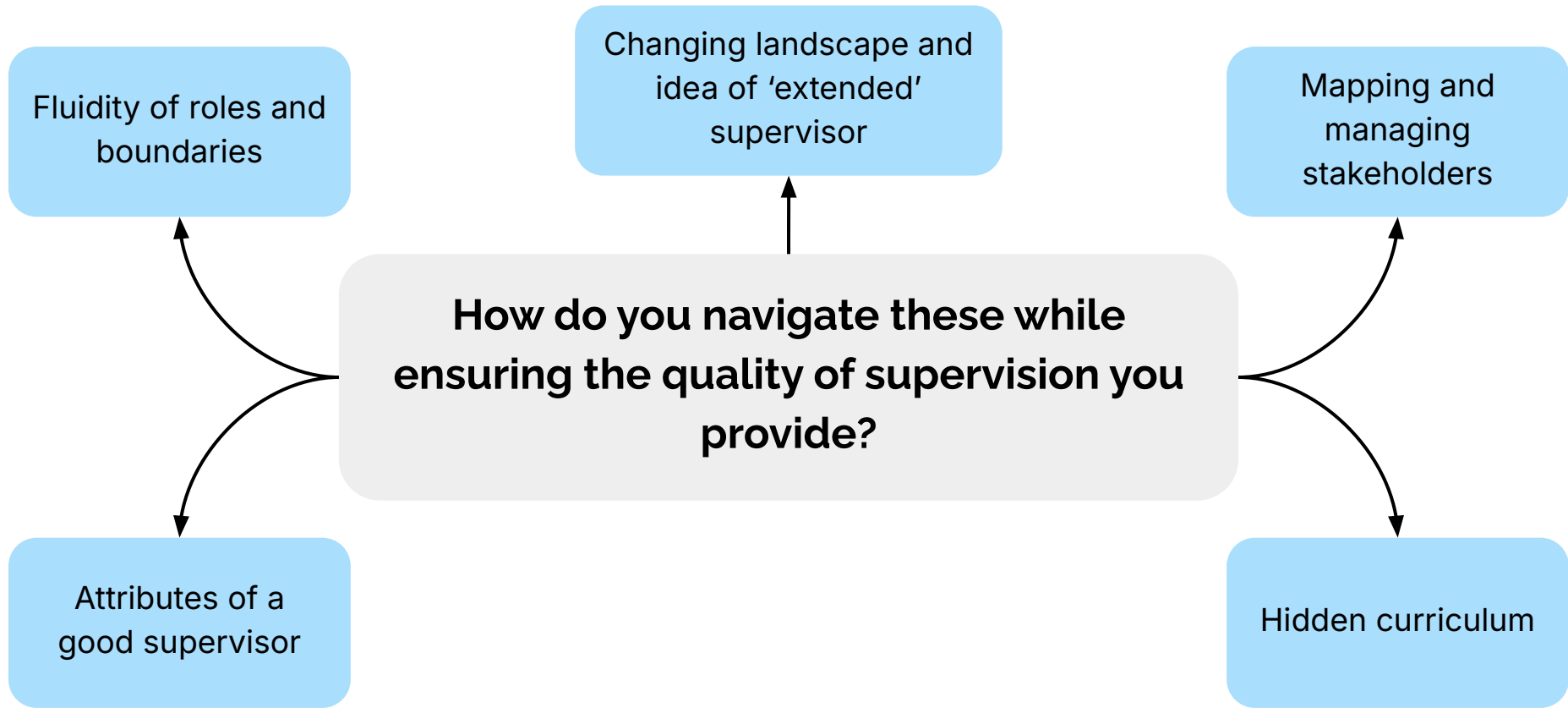


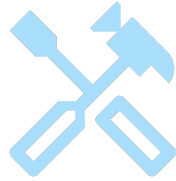
'critical to interpretation and implementation of supervisors' roles is their recognition of how students change in terms of identity and power and how these changes signal a shift in the relationship. The way supervisors respond to these issues influences boundary management of the supervisory process.'

- Benmore, 2014

Boundary management in doctoral supervision (Benmore, 2014)

Time boundary	Cognition boundary	Possible supervisory roles (through secondary boundaries: relational, emotional, physical)
Early days	Exploring, discovering, focusing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Guide or direct● Encourage and/or expect development of independence
Data collection	Doing and finding out	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Balance monitoring progress with responding to updates - hands off or hands on
Progression to PhD	Analysis and sense-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Challenge and/or inspire● Intervene and/or influence● Provide feedback
Completion	Critically thinking about originality and contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Be a sounding board● Shape the outcome● Let go● Edit



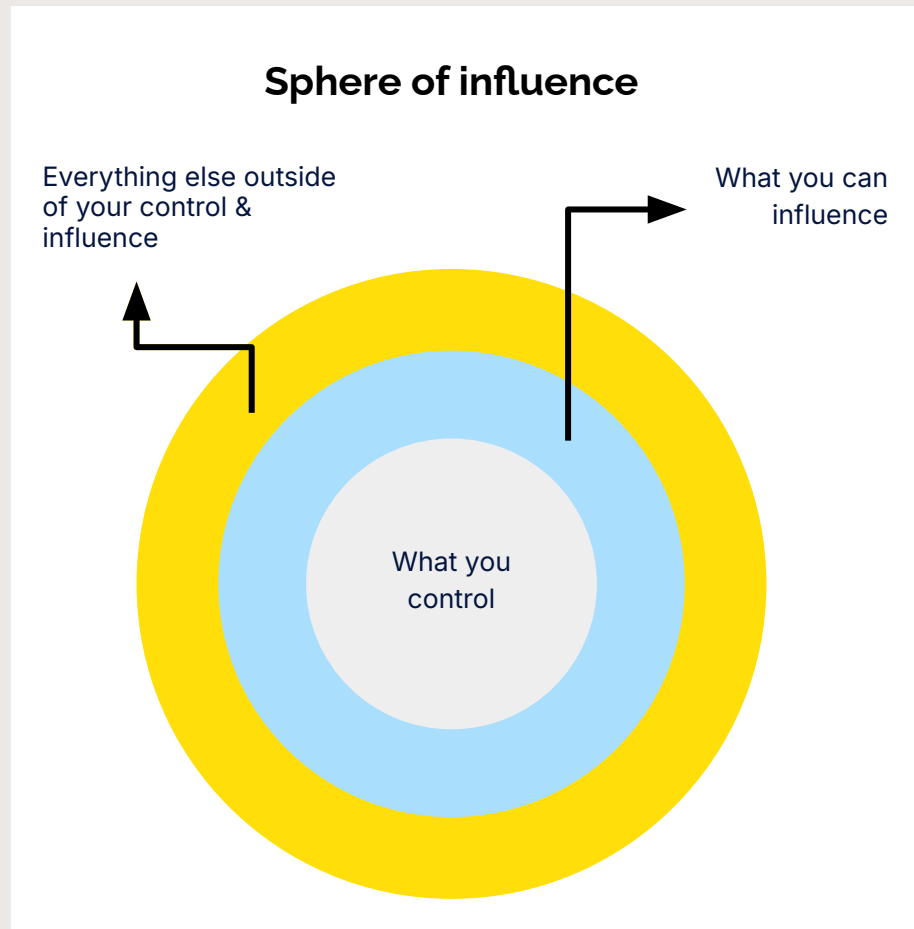


Practical strategies

Know your limits

Do you know:

- institution supervision workload allocation?
- your own capacity?
- your capabilities and gaps?
- how you fill the gaps?
- your candidates' needs and the limits of your responsibility?



Plan and manage the process



Communicate, communicate, communicate

- Clear and transparent communication **avoids confusion** and **second guessing**
- Making the implicit explicit **better equips your candidate for success**
- Dialogic approaches rather than monologue encourages **independence** and **creativity**

“

'two way reciprocal communication serves as the foundation for transformative supervision.'

- MnCina et al., 2024

Support networks

- The supervisory team/advisors
- Professional networks
- Postgraduate leads/administrators
- Other support staff
- Peers / Colleagues
- Mentors
- Friends





**Questions or
comments?**

**Provide feedback for this
session**



Scan QR code for feedback form or go to:

forms.gle/BshSqUWAS7eKEsfc6

References and Further Reading

- Benmore, A. (2014). Boundary management in doctoral supervision: How supervisors negotiate roles and role transitions throughout the supervisory journey. *Studies in Higher Education*, 41(7), 1251–1264. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2014.967203>
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