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Citation: Walker, Michelle (2012) Supporting Research Students by Barbara Allan [book review]. Records Management Journal, 22 (2). pp. 139-140. ISSN 0956-5698

Published by: Emerald

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Allen, B. (2010) *Supporting Research Students*. London: Facet.

Book Review for Records Management Journal – Michelle Walker

Many library and information professionals will not have experienced the distinct processes in studying for a doctorate and so this might be seen as a disadvantage in supporting this group. The aim of the book, according to the author, is to give library and information professionals in the higher education sector an insight into the research process and the support of research students. Supporting research students has risen up the higher education agenda with the growth of different types of doctoral awards and recognition of a doctorate beyond the academic sphere.

The first two chapters deal with the PhD scene in the UK, stakeholders in the research process and then move onto a general overview of the research process and most common research methods. This is useful for library and information professionals unfamiliar with the language and methodologies, but it is only an introduction rather than an extensive study. Chapters 3 and 4 focus more on the research process from the student's perspective, indicating milestones such as the research proposal and the literature review through to the viva. It also covers the role of the supervisor. Chapters 5 and 6 concentrate on research skills training. Beginning with the UKGRAD's, now Vitae, Joint Statement of Skills Training (now replaced by the Researcher Development Framework), it then narrows to library and research skills training and provides an interesting case study on skills training offered in a research skills training module. Chapter 6 continues on with providing more case studies and practical approaches, which readers can use or adapt to support and engage with research students. It includes from induction through to online support and also deals with ideas for communication strategies to reach students throughout their research career. The next two chapters cover topics in the wider area of supporting research students: virtual graduate schools and research communities. These chapters again give library and information professionals' insight into an area they may not have much knowledge of and serves to broaden the support context, giving implications for library staff. Finally, chapter 9 concerns the professional development of library and information professionals giving details of organisations and practical ideas to enhance their knowledge and research support strategies.

Overall, the book is well structured and flows well. Each chapter is concise, easy to read and provides a useful introduction and a summary. The contents layout and indexing allow the reader easy access to specific areas and promotes the author's aim that the book can be "dipped" into and chapters read in any order. Perhaps a further enhancement for the second edition would be to acknowledge the different support required by part-time, international or distance-learning students, as the book has tended to focus on full-time students. Despite the skills frameworks provided by UKGRAD/Vitae changing, this book still presents a good general introduction to this area. The vast majority of the basics have not changed since it was published and Allen provides a solid base from which library and information professionals can learn about research students and their needs and to formulate strategies to support this group.