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Doctoral supervision practice models: Where to from here?
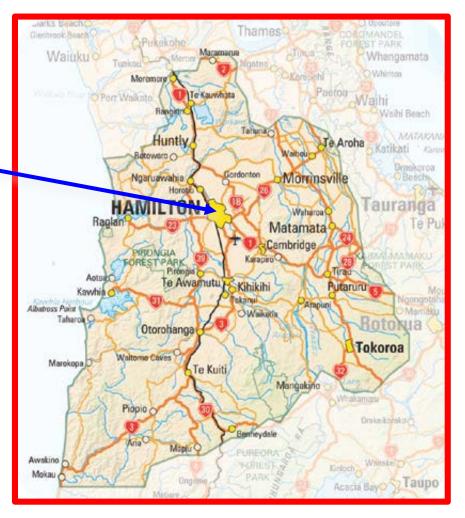
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- The Hamilton population is approximately 140,000.

- The University of Waikato has around 10,000 EFTS and about 1,500 FTE staff.

- Waikato has 6 Faculties (Education, Management, Arts and Social Sciences, Science and Engineering, Law, and Computing and Mathematical Sciences. It also has the School of Maori & Pacific Development.

- There are approximately 600 FTE PhD students.

Background to the research

- Previous research focused on doctoral writing as a threshold concept (New Zealand study)

- Collected student and supervisor data – related to doctoral writing

- All of the supervisor data was collected in face-to-face interviews.

- Most supervisors had had very little professional development related to supervision.

Supervisors' professional development

- Osmosis—learning from others on the job [Supervisor 12]

- No formal training. I just got my own PhD in [year] and was put on a few panels as second supervisor. On some of the panels I was with colleagues and friends. I had my own supervisory experience to go by and it wasn't pleasant. [Supervisor 10]

- There may have been some things offered here, but I didn't attend. [Supervisor 2]

Changing nature of supervision

- Doctorate is changing
  - Increased numbers of students, many of whom are international
  - Changed and changing funding models
  - Extended range of employment opportunities

- These factors are interconnected.

- Existing supervision models are / will be very difficult to sustain.

- Conducted a literature review of models of doctoral supervision – but the review extended into other areas.

  - The doctoral curriculum,
  - Research skills and generic transferable skills,
  - Writing as a mediating tool for academic development,

- Implications for supervisor professional development

Five Themes from the Literature Review

- Regulations and compliance,

- Develop understanding of a doctoral epistemology,

- Problems and issues beyond supervision,

- Supervision of international students, and

- Developing cross-disciplinary communities of professional practice.

Hammond, J., Ryland, K., Tennant, M., & Boud, D. (2010). *Building research supervision and training across Australian Universities*. University of Technology, Sydney: Australian Learning and Teaching Council. http://www.altc.edu.au

WHERE THE WORLD IS GOING

- **Regulations and compliance issues**
  - ensure systems, guidelines, and regulations be reviewed to ensure they keep pace with the changing nature of research education;
  - review existing and future resources for supervisor development;
  - identify gaps in student preparation to undertake doctoral study and recommendation of courses;
  - develop a flexible, current, FAQ website information for supervisors.

- **Develop understanding of a doctoral epistemology**

  - support and develop leadership in research education at central and local/faculty levels;
  - address the challenges faced by supervisors as a result of increased growth and diversity in research education;
  - address explicit writing needs of students and feedback mechanisms.

An institutional response

- **Dealing with problems and issues beyond supervision**
  - address pressures on supervisors by identifying and responding to supervisors' major concerns in supervision;
  - acknowledge pressure of supervision when negotiating workloads;
  - develop mechanisms for handling frustration (of both students and supervisors);
  - legal issues affecting supervision.

- **Supervision of international students**

  - review generic writing support initiatives across the university;
  - provide step-by-step models of how to understand writing requirements within specific chapters;
  - explore and normalise writing processes and practices across disciplines;
  - articulate students' expectations of supervision in an English-speaking environment.

- **Developing cross-disciplinary communities of professional practice**
  - provide additional ways of facilitating rich and sustained conversations about research education and ensure systems and processes are in place to support such conversations;
  - review and revise existing professional development programs within institutions to ensure they address the different needs of new and experienced supervisors.

Concluding thoughts

- How can a complex model be implemented?

- Who does what within the institution?

- How do we know that what we are doing is effective?

- What could be enhanced, extended, or added to the model?

Change takes time

"We like to bring together people from radically different fields and wait for the friction to produce heat, light and magic. Sometimes it takes a while."

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