



Training for Universities

Supervision for New Supervisors



This programme is aimed at people who are probably new to formal supervision, taking responsibility for a student who is doing a Bachelor's, a Master's or even a PhD. You may well have had informal experience of supervision for many years and now you have responsibility for getting the student to their destination, that formal qualification.

In this workshop we're going to look at the roles and responsibilities of supervisors and students.

If a PhD is a training programme for students, then what are we training them for? We need to be aware of training student for possible or likely career destinations.

I want to reflect on how to use supervisory meetings to ensure that your student is making the progress that you anticipate and getting through the developmental phases that you want to see on that programme.

The final phase is preparing them to write their thesis and get ready for the viva exam.

Do use these slides to write reflective notes as you go through the programme.

After each of the video lessons, do use the button at the bottom to mark each lesson complete; should you leave the programme and come back later, this will help you to know exactly where to pick up and you'll go directly to the next lesson.

Trainer: Dr Margaret Collins

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Supervision for New Supervisors

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During the session we will explore:

- The roles/responsibilities of a supervisor
- The roles/responsibilities of a PhD student
- Career destinations
- How to use & structure supervisory meetings
- Plans for monitoring student progress/development
- Preparing their student for thesis submission and for the viva exam.

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What is a PhD?

A qualification...
 A training programme...
 Training someone to be an independent researcher...
 An entry-level qualification...
 A door to a career...



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What is a PhD?

“Getting a PhD” requires both the process and the product...

Candidates for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy must **show**:

- ability to conduct original investigations
- to test ideas, (whether their own or others')
- the relationship of their work to a wider field of knowledge

A doctoral thesis should be a piece of work which a capable, well-qualified and diligent student, who is properly supported and supervised, can produce in three years of full-time study

It should exhibit substantial evidence of original scholarship and contain material worthy of publication.'

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What is a PhD?

Research skills include being able to:

- organize one's own time
- create a research topic
- conduct research
- document as the research progresses
- find and read relevant literature
- write papers
- present seminars
- discuss and communicate ideas.

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What is a PhD?

Taking a keen student and, over the course of three or four years, creating a colleague...

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What makes a good student?



What are the responsibilities of students?

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What makes a good student?

Intelligent	Good time management
Motivated	Organised
Keen	Team player
Independent	Seeks/accepts feedback
Good communicator	Resilient
Problem solving skills	Willing to take risks/fail
Persistent	Aware of rules & regulations
Flexible	H&S
Creative	Ethics
Able to seek help	IPR
	Plagiarism...

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Doctoral degrees awarded to students who demonstrate:

- creation and interpretation of new knowledge
 - original research or advanced scholarship)
 - to satisfy peer review,
 - extend the forefront of the discipline,
 - and merit publication
- understanding of a substantial body of knowledge
 - at forefront of academic discipline / professional practice
- the general ability to conceptualise
- design and implement a project
 - for the generation of new knowledge,
 - at the forefront of the discipline,
 - adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems
- detailed understanding of applicable techniques.

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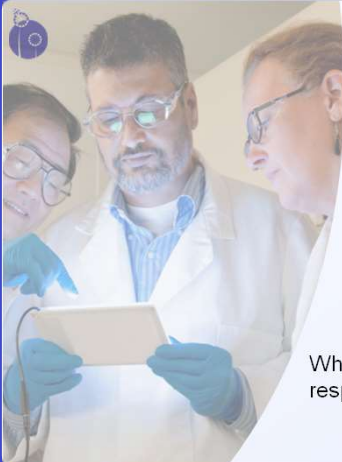
Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- make informed judgements on complex issues
 - often in the absence of complete data
- be able to communicate their ideas/conclusions
 - clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- continue pure/applied research at an advanced level
- contribute to new techniques, ideas, approaches.



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What makes a good Supervisor?

What are the roles and responsibilities of supervisors?



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What makes a good supervisor?

Expert

Motivating

Flexible

Creative

Patient

Good communicator

Problem solving skills

Generous...

Guides student through the process!

Approachable

Available

Well networked

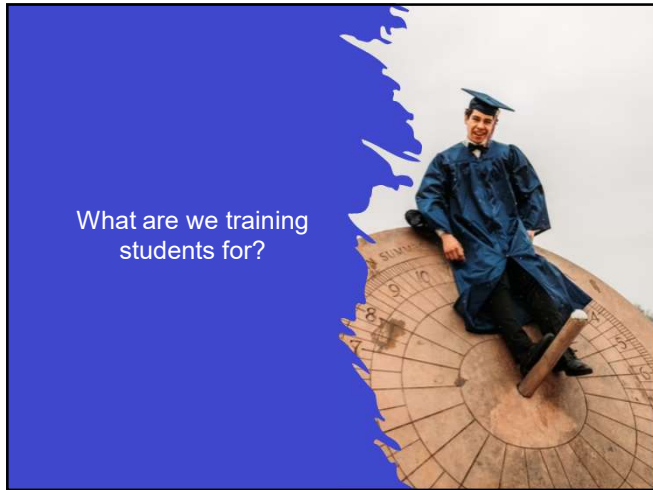
Give constructive feedback



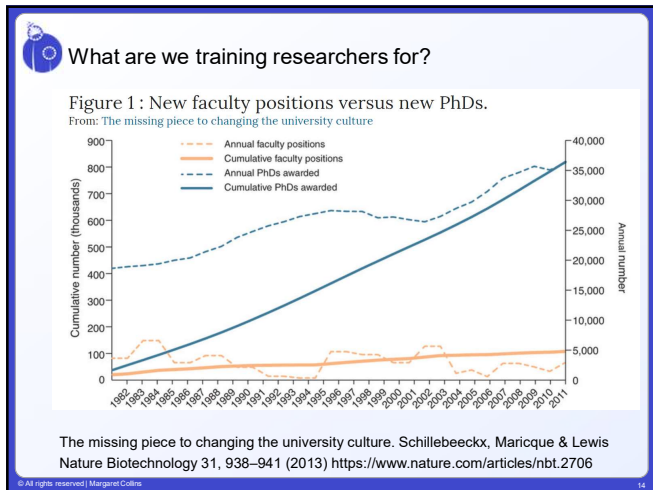


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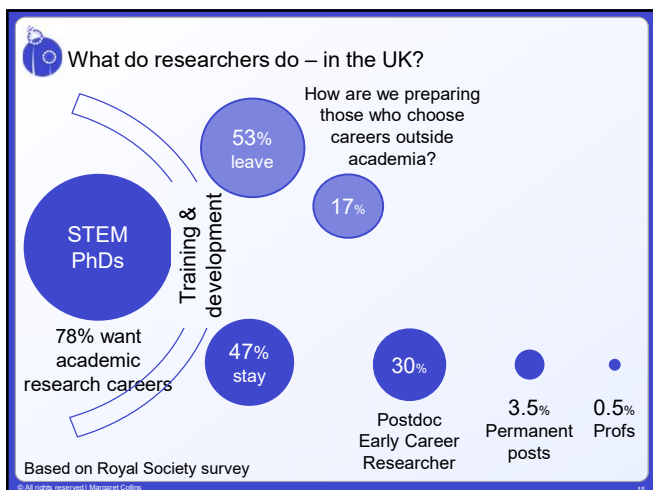
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What do researchers do?

Diverse destinations

- Higher education
- Life sciences and pharmaceuticals
- Public administration
- Charities/the third sector
- General manufacturing
- Health and social work
- Consultancy; Finance, Business and IT;
- Publishing and media; Non-HE education

Janet Metcalf, Vitae Conference, 2018. What do research staff do next? CRAC 2016

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What do researchers do?

Diverse roles

- Researcher
- Research and Development Manager
- Function Manager
- Research Policy and Administration Manager
- Trainer/Instructor/Adviser/Coach
- IT and Technology Professional
- Public/Science Engagement Professional
- Teaching
- Journalist

Janet Metcalf, Vitae Conference, 2018. What do research staff do next? CRAC 2016

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What do researchers do?

We still need to train independent researchers capable of conducting research to professional standards



It's highly likely they will end up managing something!

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Supervision has a broader context

Research Councils UK
Statement of Expectations for Doctoral Training

The Research Councils' ambitions are to develop highly-skilled researchers to achieve impact across the whole economy, as well as developing the next generation of researchers to maintain national capability.

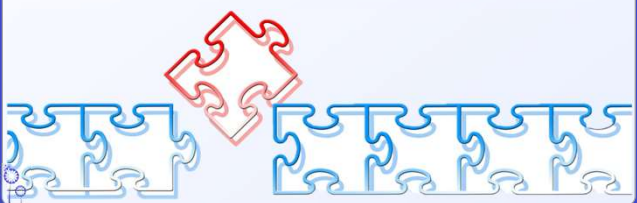
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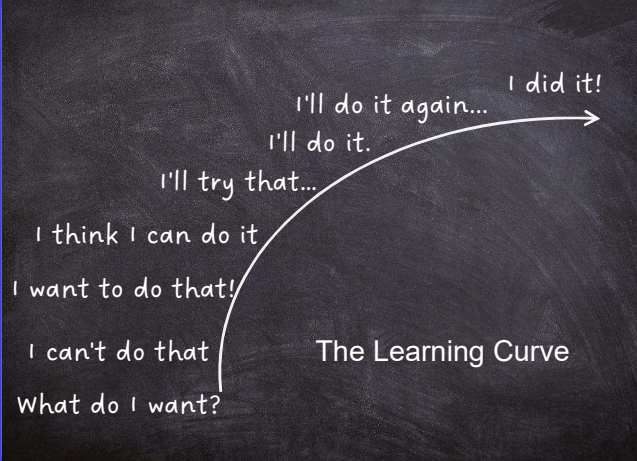
How do see your role in supporting career development?

- What has been your experience?
- Do you know people who chose different destinations?
- How can you best support your students?



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I'll do it again... I did it!

I'll do it.

I'll try that...

I think I can do it

I want to do that!

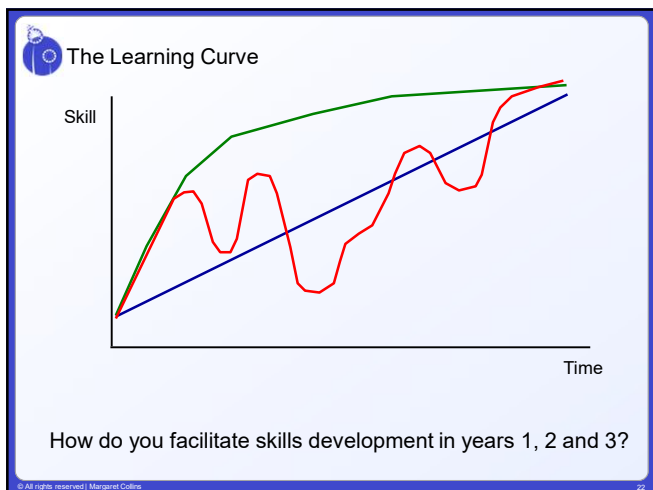
I can't do that

What do I want?

The Learning Curve

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Skills development

The Researcher Development Framework

Domain A: Knowledge & intellectual abilities
 Domain B: Personal effectiveness
 Domain C: Research governance & organisation
 Domain D: Engagement, influence & impact

- Based on analysis of successful researchers
- Online, interactive tool
- Available to registered users
- Encourages awareness of wider skills development goals
- Practical goals and actions.

See: <http://www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf> – Researcher Development Framework

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Skills development/the Learning Curve

How will you consciously guide skills development over the course of the PhD?

- What activities helped you?
- What do you do with your students?
- What is available?

Can you make it easier/automatic?

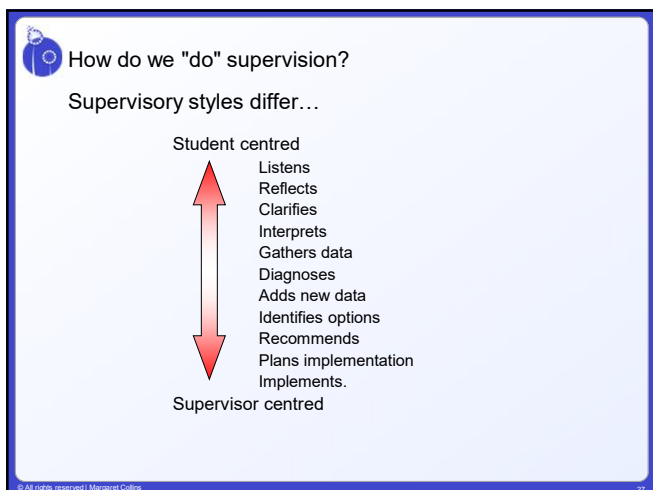
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How do we "do" supervision?

Autocratic: work gets done faster
rigid and dictatorial

Laissez Faire: encourages independent problem solving
student feels lost/abandoned

Democratic: consensual and participatory
takes a long time...

Bureaucratic: done properly
monitoring, authoritarian, not joyful?

 What are the pros and cons?

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How do we "do" supervision?

Alfred Kadushin described 3 domains

- Administrative – how to do things "right"
- Educational – teaching/learning, doing research...
- Supportive – developing the individual

Do you have the balance right?

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How do we "do" supervision?

Co-supervisory teams:

The roles may change with the maturity of the student

- Each team is unique
- Supervisors can have different expertise
- Supervisors can have different roles
- Initially, agree the objectives established for the student
- Be careful of setting up conflict
(before the student knows how to manage this)...
- Agree the course of action/priorities at end of meeting.

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How do we "do" supervision?

UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE)

Good Supervisory Practice Framework (Prof Stan Taylor):

- Recruitment and selection
- Supervisory relationships with candidates
- Supervisory relationships with co-supervisors
- Supporting candidates' research projects
- Encouraging candidates to write and giving appropriate feedback
- Keeping the research on track and monitoring progress
- Supporting candidates' personal, professional & career development
- Supporting candidates through completion and final examination
- Supporting candidates to disseminate their research
- Reflecting upon and enhancing practice

The Research Supervision Recognition Programme (self-study).

<https://supervision.ukcge.ac.uk/good-supervisory-practice-framework/>

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Student – Supervisor meetings



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What happens at a meeting?

What's your plan for early student-supervisor meetings?

- How do you like to be managed?
- Who to turn to for support with...
- Expectations
 - Working hours, contact methods, boundaries?
 - Honesty, ethics, behaviour?
 - How to record lab work, store raw data etc

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What happens at a meeting?

Do you or the student set the agenda?

- What do you want to achieve in this meeting?
- What actions did we agree last time?
- What did you actually do?
- How did it go/what did you learn?
- What are you going to do next?
- Housekeeping? Personal check-in?
- Diary dates/seminars/conferences/papers...

Who keeps the records?

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Keeping records/notes

- Good practice in meetings
- Can be used to monitor and review progress
- Identify student's development & training needs
- Check on understanding...
- Agree actions.

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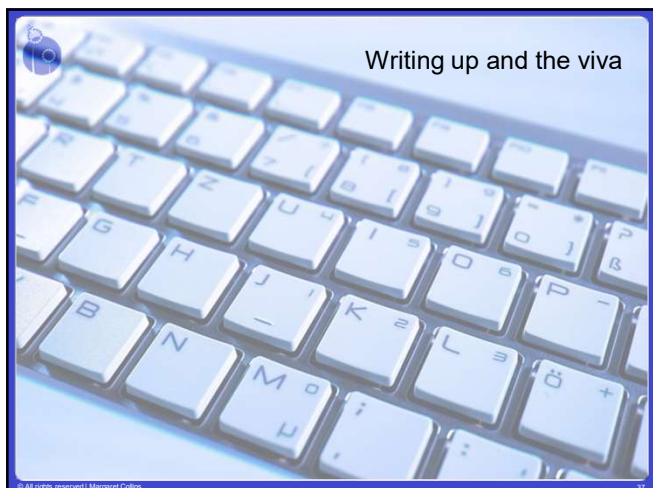
What happens at a meeting?

- Set concrete tasks at each meeting
- Make sure students start writing early
- Look out for problems
- Know where and when to refer students
- Ensure they are familiar with policies/procedures
- Identify development opportunities/ensure they attend
- Help them identify their most productive time
- Encourage use of e.g. Nvivo, Endnote etc
- Make sure they keep track of paperwork
- Be employability minded
- Stay in contact.

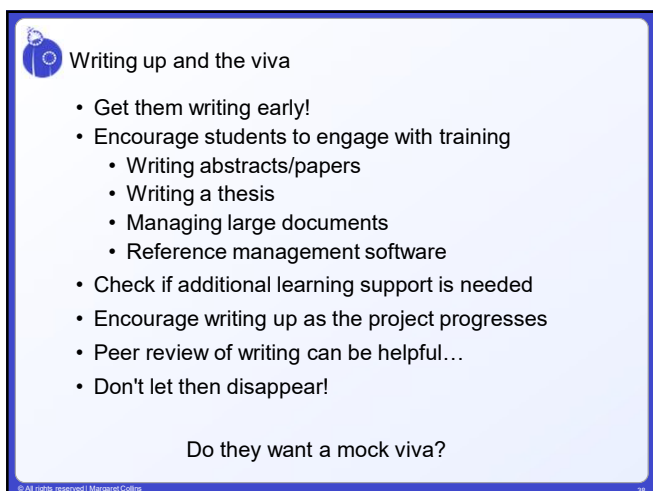
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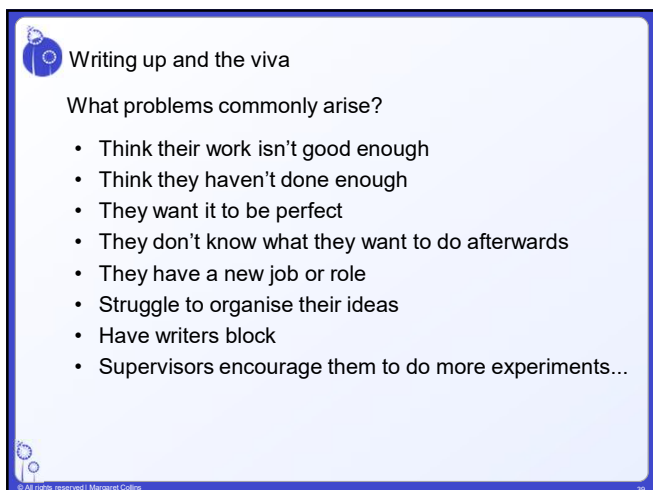
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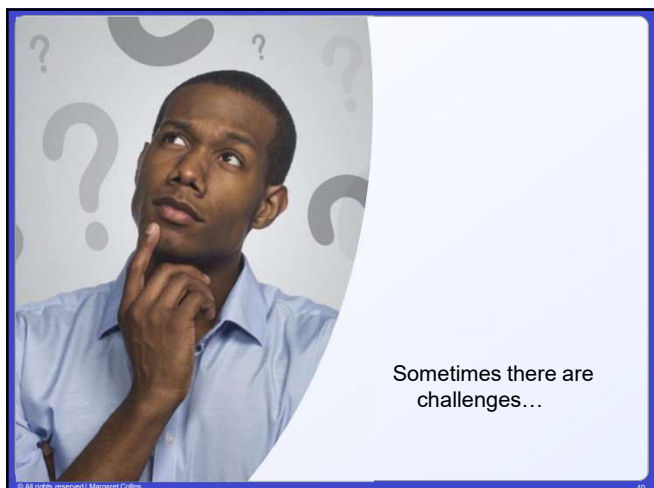
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 What causes problems?

Problems can arise through:

- Poor communication
- Not monitoring/managing timelines
- Lack of clarity around goals/objectives
- Starting writing
- Notification to submit
- Organising external examiners/the viva
- Examiners producing their report
- Completing corrections
- Returning paperwork to the administrators....

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In Summary

You're helping create a colleague...

Treat them with respect
Encourage them
Recognise and develop their strengths
Provide structure, accountability, realistic goals,
Deliver constructive feedback kindly
Guide them through the programme
Prepare them for life/work after the programme



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If you fail to plan, you plan to fail!

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So what have we learned?

My objectives for this session were for you to:

- Be clear on your responsibilities as a PhD supervisor
- Know the responsibilities of a PhD student
- Reflect on how to prepare students for future careers
- Understand how to use & structure supervisory meetings
- Have clear plans for monitoring student progress
- Have a plan for preparing students for thesis submission and the viva exam.

What is your most important learning?



Supervision for New Supervisors

Suggested reading

Rugg, G and Petre, M. (2010). The Unwritten Rules of PhD Research. (2nd ed.). OU Press

Phillips E. (2010) How to Get a PhD: A Handbook for Students and their Supervisors. (4th ed.). OU Press

Eley, A and Murray, R. (2009) How to be an Effective Supervisor: Best Practice in Research Student Supervision. OU Press

Wisker, G, Exley, K, Antoniou, M. and Ridley, P. (2008). Working one-to-one with students: supervising, coaching etc. London: Routledge Press

Kearns, H and Finn, J (2017): Supervising PhD Students: A practical guide and toolkit. Adelaide: Flinders Press.

Reflections/Opinion

A good shepherd guides gently

<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp>

Tough love: An insensitive guide to thriving in your PhD

<http://neurochambers.blogspot.co.uk/2012/05/tough-love-insensitive-guide-to.html>

The Thesis Whisperer: <https://thesiswhisperer.com/>

Many resources for Supervisors and for Students on:

<http://www.Vitae.ac.uk>

<http://ukcge.ac.uk> : UK Council for Graduate Education:

The representative body for postgraduate education and research

See the Good Supervisory Practice Framework.

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