



# LERU's view on holistic doctoral supervision

Recommendations from the LERU Policy Group on Doctoral Studies

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### Joint effort by the members of the Doctoral Studies policy group

- Emphasis on a **forward-looking** and **aspirational** way to reflect **visionary practices** for doctoral supervision within LERU institutions
- **Development** of the core tenets of the paper in 2-3 online discussion sections
- The propositions of this paper reflect the **collaborative process**

**Consultation** of the paper by the larger LERU community







### Setting the scene for productive doctoral supervision

Doctoral researchers should be supported in a most holistic fashion possible

We want to facilitate their growth into future leaders in all sectors of society inside as well as outside academia

Holistic doctoral supervision may take cultural change insync with every institution's local conditions, vision and structure

Communication is key, and all stakeholders need to do their share

Training supervisors is a chance for every institution to teach them the institution's core and cultural values







## The aim of the paper

Create awareness among research-intensive universities for their responsibility to nurture an appropriate culture for successful supervision. The doctoral degree is a unique differentiator for these universities.

- Highlight supervision as central aspect of doctoral education
- Underscore the crucial role of research-based universities for doctoral education
- Bring into focus best practices of supervision after many years of improving framework conditions for the doctorate
- Presenting knowhow and principles from LERU institutions that foster good practice in supervision
- Nurture a culture for mutually productive supervision and training of supervisory skills
- Showcase the universities' pivotal role for a knowledge-based society by leveraging the potential of beneficial supervision for doctoral education
- Producing forward-looking principles aiming to inspire other higher education institutions when developing their conditions for successful doctoral education





### Holistic view on supervision: doctoral researchers are the future leaders in all sectors of societal relevance

#### **Key components of mutually productive supervision:**

- Clear expectation management from the beginning (incl. recruitment)
- Positive institutional culture
- Appreciative individual communication
- Beneficial structural conditions
- Research assessment considers investment in supervisory tasks
- Create awareness among the supervisees of their responsibility in this relationship
- Training opportunities for supervisors as well as supervisees







## University leaders take ownership in disseminating principles of holistic supervision

Universities provide supervisors with the necessary skills and resources to support doctoral researchers:

Comprehensive and motivational onboarding of newly hired staff

Transparency on rules, guidelines and individual space

(Mandatory) supervisory training at all career stages

Strengthen the role & visibility of the service providers on campus

Communicate a clear vision on the institution's leadership culture





#### **Core messages**

- 1. Ab initio a consistent and realistic expectation management between all the stakeholders
- 2. **Professional recruitment** starting at the doctoral level, fostering a diversity-friendly and inclusive environment in research and training
- 3. Proper recognition of supervision responsibilities as part of formal performance assessments
- 4. Broadening responsibilities by establishing supervisory teams
- 5. Call for **trustworthy communication** between all stakeholders
- 6. Monitoring and fostering the **well-being** of doctoral researchers
- 7. Encouraging meta-disciplinary skills training
- 8. Recognising the **relevance of support structures**
- 9. **Separating** the supervision process from thesis evaluation

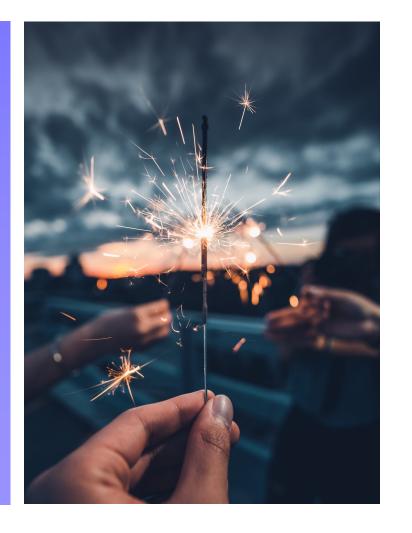
▶▶▶ Empathic leadership, availability, and responsibility characterise good practice in supervision.





### Core message in a nutshell

LERU universities propose the nurturing of an improved institutional culture of appreciation characterised by effective communication and reliable expectation management towards a more impactful and consistent supervision process.







### What else?



1 It takes a village to raise a PhD2 It takes two to tango





### **Questions for supervisors**

- Can you think of an inspiring role model for a supervisor? Or of the most wanted characteristics of a productive and successful supervisor?
- Have you ever received supervisory or leadership training? And if so, what was helpful?
- A more personal one: what do you need to feel comfortable in a supervisory or leadership role?
- Do you take time to (regularly) reflect your supervisory style, your tenets?

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#### **Questions for all**

- How do you rate your own supervision experience throughout your PhD? And what was your best experience at the time?
- What is in your eyes a deadly sin in the context of supervision?
- What would be your recommendation to an organization seeking to improve their supervision culture - what kind of "quick win" would you have in mind?
- What makes in your eyes a good supervisor?