

TRUST ME!

Inspiring
Leadership
**Leadership
Foundation**
for Higher Education

**++ Behaviours that build and break trust
in doctoral supervision relationships.**

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why did I do this work?

++ impact of supervision on progress

“I’m terrified of being asked how it’s going – I have no idea how it works, I’m lost and it’s scary, so I avoid contact.”

Unspoken rules
Role boundaries blurry
Unclear end goals
Original contribution?
Project management

why did I do this work?

++ how best to help students progress

“I’ve tried hands on, I’ve tried hands off, I just don’t know what they need, and they’ve stopped responding to emails.”

Chase/quarry effect
What works for me
Silence is golden
More reporting?
I don’t know either

++ insecurities = vulnerabilities

Trust as a workplace phenomenon can be defined as '*willingness to accept uncertainly and make oneself vulnerable in the face of insecurity*' (Hope-Hailey et al., 2012)

transitions are
hard

++ the life and times of supervision

1. Doctoral development is continual identity reappraisal in response to new learning, changing priorities, and working relationships (Gardner, 2008).

2. Rapid identity shifts create feelings of confusion, conflict, and evokes an emotional response (Eraut, 2004).

3. Making sense of developmental experiences can be supported by good professional relationships (Clegg, 2008).

4. Doctoral transition difficulties that go unresolved, are sustained and mediated by the relationship with the supervisor (McAlpine *et al*, 2012).

++ support for supervisor development

Emotionally competent leadership, as well as technical and intellectual mentorship is required of academic leaders, who must establish good rapport and 'high-quality' student-supervisor relationships (Jairam and Kahl, 2012).

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++ does more trust = quality?

1. what are the vulnerabilities that exist within doctoral student-supervisor relationships

2. how is trust built, how is it eroded, how is it broken?

++ research study design

Critical
Appreciative
Inquiry approach
(Cockell &
McArthur-Blair,
2012)

Phenomenon:
facilitate discussions of
common experiences of
enablers and disablers
of doctoral
progression through a
social/relational
lens. Appreciative
enquiry.

prelim interviews (5)
group interviews (54)
3rd year (or PT≡) PGRs
15% non-STEM
Interpretive analysis

PLUS: supervisor data
PLUS: blog data

students

++ 1. what are the vulnerabilities

<http://predoctorbility.co.uk/willingness-to-accept-uncertainly-and-make-oneself-vulnerable>

Unclear expectations

Learning involves not knowing

Research is all about the unknown

Define doctorateness? Define OC? Define critical?

Academic rudeness

'Fine' is not the same as good

All or nothing stakes

Absent/changing ECR colleagues

Tied to one person (grant exacerbates)

No-one really wants to help (status quo)

Non-responsive supervisors

Conflicting agendas (grants/publishing)

supervisors

++ 1. what are the vulnerabilities

<http://predoctorbility.co.uk/supervisor-uncertainty-and-vulnerability>

Recruitment practices (culture)

People management is difficult – unsupported

Accountable for funding (reputation)

Data integrity (reputation)

Complicated processes and checkpoints

Supervision is not talked about

No prizes for good supervision

Supervisory team ‘mentoring’ backfires

++ 2. trust building / erosion / breaking

1. assumed trust: derived from the supervisor's institutional affiliation, research status, or prior experience e.g. Masters supervisor. *Implicit trust (Frowe, 2005).*

2. building trust: knowledge and guidance, openness, disclosure and finding common ground; having the student's best interests at heart; inclusion and giving credit where due; socialising, and professional integrity. *4 domains of trust: Competence, Integrity, Benevolence, and Predictability (Dietz & Den Hartog, 2006).* Give trust, get trust. *Being trusted raises self-esteem, personal worthiness, and job satisfaction (Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2012).*

++ 2. trust building / erosion / breaking

3. eroding trust: predictability: expectations vs reality (e.g. unavailability of supervisor, lack of specialist expertise); insecurity about progress, standards and achievements. Benevolence and integrity blaming (e.g. for failed experiments); experienced unfairness (favouring students on 'productive' projects); 'checking/snooping' activities. *Sanctions or penalties increases mis-trust (Groundwater-Smith & Sachs, 2002).*

4. breaking trust: breaking confidences, consulting third parties; acute incidents related to the 'competitive' nature of research or the 'high expectations' on research careers e.g. research integrity issues related to publication, public criticism, or appropriate credit for intellectual contribution.

++ so far...

Vulnerability is inherent in the processes of research...

Supervisors can help students build security, by providing safe spaces to test their abilities...

Trust is build by creating certainty from uncertainty piecemeal over time...

Where trust is not present, a student is more likely to isolate themselves. *Isolation = delay (Gardner, 2008).*

++ further thoughts, anonymous stories

About Trust Me! [share your supervision stories](#) [Project updates](#)

share your supervision stories



predoctorbilty

April 18, 2016

Uncategorized

Please use the comments box to share your experiences of doctoral supervision.

Doctoral students, I'm interested in hearing about what your supervisor does that impacts on you, what makes all the difference, how are you supported, what does good supervision look like, how do you and your supervisor interact, how did you come to trust each other, is your relationship typical?

Supervisors, what's your approach, where did you learn about supervision, how is it working for you, what does good supervision look like, what are the essentials for supervision, where does trust come from, how do you interact with your students?

Information on this study can be found [here](#). Ethical approval was granted by the University of Sheffield Ethics Committee on 11 May 2016.

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This project is led by [Kay Guccione](#).

PROJECT TWITTER

Tweets by [@predoctorbilty](#)



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If you don't work well with your supervisor... (archive article) [#trust #doctoral #sheffpgr](#) what to do... [theguardian.com/higher-educati...](#)



thanks!

++ acknowledgements

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