



## TQF Domain 4

# Integrate sources of feedback to evidence and improve teaching and student learning

## Evidencing HDR supervision approach and impact (Established)

### Kyra's Challenge

Despite clear indicators of effectiveness, Kyra faces a challenge: that evidence of her supervision is mostly inferred from outcomes - a track record of on-time completions, co-publications with students, steady enrolment of new HDRs, and invitations to examine. While these achievements are laudable, they do not yet convincingly convey the educational approach behind Kyra's approach to supervision.

### 1. The Context

As a Senior Lecturer in Biology, Kyra really loves being an HDR supervisor and works hard at doing it well. Much of her approach mimics her own wonderful experience as a research student and she suspects that's because her own PhD supervisor was a researcher who really taught her to value teaching, rather than see it as a distraction. The lab Kyra spent most of her time in as a research student was a beehive of learning - an experience she would like all her students to have.

Most of Kyra's current 4 HDRs are full-time, and her previous 7 students all completed their degrees on time and received glowing examiners' reports: 3 students have gone on to postdocs in Europe, US and Canada, and the remaining 4 are working in industry. These outcomes reflect both their commitment and the guidance they receive. Kyra insists that students publish their thesis work during their candidature so that their work is discoverable, can be built on by other researchers, and starts a

research track record early which is necessary for competitive grants. She co-authors with her students, and in the process, teaches them how scientific knowledge is produced and circulates through peer review and academic publication. Kyra is passionate about coaching and mentorship and is known for fostering strong, supportive relationships with, and between, her students. She keeps good records of her students' progress and notes where they are stuck and the strategies she has suggested. Kyra has tonnes of informal feedback from her research students that recognise and appreciate her supervision efforts too. Her expertise is also recognised more widely: she is routinely invited to serve as a PhD examiner (11 completed examinations) and her contributions to HDR student development in the discipline are often acknowledged in feedback from students and colleagues who express appreciation for her clarity, guidance and encouragement. While she knows her students and colleagues value her efforts, the feedback she receives is often in casual conversations, emails, or discussion rather than formalised reports, making it difficult to present a comprehensive picture of the educational rationale for her supervision approach that draws on multiple sources.

### 2. The Evidence

To strengthen her case, Kyra uses Brookfield's (1995) four lenses to organise her evidence. She considers the missing elements that could help her develop a coherent narrative for her HDR supervision.

Evidence Lens	1. Educator/Self (intention, strategy and materials)	2. Students (co-inquiry, engagement, feedback, outcomes, artefacts, improvement)	3. Peers (co-design, feedback, observation, review, recognition, adoption)	4. Scholarship (research-informed, engage in research, outputs, practice sharing)
What Kyra already has	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflective notes about supervisory meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcomes (e.g. full-time students, completions etc.)</li> <li>• Informal feedback (from students)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invitations to examine</li> <li>• Examination completions</li> <li>• Feedback from co-supervisors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publications with students</li> </ul>
What Kyra may need to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional Learning (e.g., evidence of engaging with modules on developing your supervisory practice).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress reports with formal student feedback</li> <li>• Student work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examiners' reports from her own students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational rationale (scholarship)</li> <li>• Sharing approach with others</li> </ul>

### 3. Integrating Evidence into a Claim: an example

I am deeply committed to supporting HDR students to develop as independent, scholarly and skilled researchers. Mentorship - individual and collective - is central to my approach to supervision as research education. I aim to build relationships with my students that are grounded in trust, respect, open communication, and scholarly challenge which then allows me to provide tailored guidance on research design, scholarly writing, and professional development. I regularly reflect on our supervisory interactions, drawing on meeting notes, progress reports, and feedback from co-supervisors to refine my practice. Not only that, I aim to extend my approach to mentoring so that my HDR students and co-supervisors all see each other as sources of peer support and nourishment. My approach to mentoring is not just about 1:1 guidance, it aims to be collective and collegial where we are a community of scholars all supporting each other to produce the best research possible. Our Lab is the hub of this activity.

Over 8 years, I have supervised 7 full-time HDR candidates, all have completed their degrees on time and 3 have gone on to international postdocs and 4 in industry. My 4 current students are at various stages of candidature - 2 have just begun, 1 is the middle, and the final student's thesis is out for examination. There are 74 peer reviewed publications from our Lab. One of my student's thesis won an Australian Biology prize, and the examiners' reports regularly praise how well written the theses under my supervision are which has been an important focus - to ensure the science has integrity, is communicated well and understood. While I am proud of these scientific and career outcomes, I am most proud of the kind of

people my HDR students have become: generous, kind and collaborative scholars who are rigorous and enthusiastic about the future of the discipline and aim to pay it forward.

Drawing on informal feedback from my HDR students, the following themes are consistently highlighted: clarity, encouragement, and confidence they gain through our work together. I use these insights to enhance the Lab environment and to support each student's researcher development. One student noted, *"I lucked out being mentored by you. Your supervision made my PhD experience far more enjoyable than I originally anticipated, particularly because of your guidance and collaborative approach. I had a clear sense of direction throughout my candidature and I have made colleagues for life."*

My approach is reflected in feedback from co-supervisors too. One noted: *"Kyra's supervision is highly organised and student-focused. She communicates clearly with both students and co-supervisors, and her structured approach ensures expectations are aligned and students remain on track"*.

While the outcomes of my supervision include timely completions, co-authored publications and conference presentations, my supervision practice reflects a sustained care and commitment for HDR students, their research development, and professional engagement. I support students develop the skills, confidence, and independence they need to contribute meaningfully to, and lead debates in the discipline.