

Creativity and Innovation in Postgraduate Supervision

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Abstract : The paper aims to address two aspects of postgraduate studies: interdisciplinary research and creative models of supervision. Interdisciplinary research can be viewed as a key imperative to solve complex problems. While excellent research requires a context of disciplinary strength, the cutting edge is often found at the intersection between disciplines. Interdisciplinary research foregrounds a team approach and information, methodologies, designs, and theories from different disciplines are integrated to advance fundamental understanding or to solve problems whose solutions are beyond the scope of a single discipline. Our aim should also be to generate research that transcends the original disciplines i.e. transdisciplinary research. Complexity is characteristic of the knowledge economy, hence, postgraduate research and engaged scholarship should be viewed by universities as primary vehicles through which knowledge can be generated to have a meaningful impact on society. There are far too many 'ordinary' studies that fall into the realm of credentialism and certification as opposed to significant studies that generate new knowledge and provide a trajectory for further academic discourse. Secondly, the paper will look at models of supervision that are different to the dominant 'apprentice' or individual approach. A reflective practitioner approach would be used to discuss a range of supervision models that resonate well with the principles of interdisciplinarity, growth in the postgraduate sector and a commitment to engaged scholarship. The global demand for postgraduate education has resulted in increased intake and new demands to limited supervision capacity at institutions. Team supervision lodged within large-scale research projects, working with a cohort of students within a research theme, the journal article route of doctoral studies and the professional PhD are some of the models that provide an alternative to the traditional approach. International cooperation should be encouraged in the production of high-impact research and institutions should be committed to stimulating international linkages which would result in co-supervision and mobility of postgraduate students and global significance of postgraduate research. International linkages are also valuable in increasing the capacity for supervision at new and developing universities. Innovative co-supervision and joint-degree options with global partners should be explored within strategic planning for innovative postgraduate programmes. Co-supervision of PhD students is probably the strongest driver (besides funding) for collaborative research as it provides the glue of shared interest, advantage and commitment between supervisors. The students' field serves and informs the co-supervisors own research agendas and helps to shape over-arching research themes through shared research findings.

Keywords : interdisciplinarity, internationalisation, postgraduate, supervision

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