

## A Literature Review about Responsible Third Cycle Supervision

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**Abstract :** Third cycle supervision is a multifaceted and complex task for supervisors in higher education. It progresses over several years and is affected by several proximal and distal factors. It can result in positive learning outcomes for doctoral students and high-quality publications. However, not all doctoral students thrive during their doctoral studies; nor do they all complete their studies. This is problematic for both the individuals themselves as well as society at large: doctoral students are valuable and important in current research, future research and higher education. The aim of this literature review is to elucidate what responsible third cycle supervision can include and be in practice. The question posed is as follows: according to recent literature, what is it that characterises responsible third cycle supervision in which doctoral students can thrive and develop their research knowledge and skills? A literature review was conducted, and the data gathered from the literature regarding responsible third cycle supervision was analysed by means of a thematic analysis. The analysis was inspired by the notion of responsible inclusion outlined by David Mitchell. In this study, the term literature refers to research articles and regulations. The results (preliminary) show that responsible third cycle supervision is associated with a number of interplaying factors (themes). These are as follows: committed supervisors and doctoral students; a clear vision and research problem; an individual study plan; adequate resources; interaction processes and constructive feedback; creativity; cultural awareness; respect and research ethics; systematic quality work and improvement efforts; focus on overall third cycle learning goals; and focus on research presentations and publications. Thus, responsible third cycle supervision can occur if these factors are realized in practice. This literature review is of relevance to evaluators, researchers, and management in higher education, as well as third cycle supervisors.

**Keywords :** doctoral student, higher education, third cycle supervisors, third cycle programmes

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