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Exploring and transforming the supervisory practice of staff working with students undertaking a PhD by Published Work programme

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ABSTRACT: The growing diversity of doctoral programmes within a globalised higher education environment contributes to knowledge and enhances innovation (Halse and Malfoy, 2010; Lee, 2011). This poster focuses on exploring the ways that academic supervisors of new PhD by Published Work (PhD by PW) have modified and transformed their existing supervisory practice skills and behaviour in response to the role demands.

At Leeds Beckett University (LBU) a PhD by PW route has been established. The aim is to i) develop a culture of research informed teaching, ii) catalyse research into learning and teaching pedagogy, iii) foster the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) and iv) generate more publishable outputs.

Supporting the candidates (usually internal academic staff) to reach an appropriate standard for publication in the public domain and for writing the synthesis to the PhD threshold standard is vitally important (O'Sullivan and Cleary, 2014; Smith, 2015) and is the responsibility of the academic supervisor.

A broadly interpretive approach was adopted for this project with a focus on qualitative inquiry (Cresswell, 2007). Focus groups of existing PhD by PW candidates (n=8) and an online survey of 20 UK and international candidates and PhD by PW supervisors concentrated on exploring their lived experiences. A thematic content analysis (Willig, 2003) of the qualitative data was undertaken.

Findings about the supervisory role for the PhD by PW route revealed an approach which is more collegial and less hierarchical than traditional supervisory relationships. The findings also revealed issues about i) supervisory role clarity, ii) supporting PhD by PW students in strengthening the coherence, originality and impact of their collated work iii) the scholarliness and number of publications.

This poster focuses specifically on how LBU used the findings to devise a development programme (now used at other Universities) to support new communities of PhD by PW supervisors to enable them to adapt their routine practice. It explores the key themes and content of the supervisors' development programme citing examples of how supervisors perceived their changing role and practice.

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