Ensuring Success: Supportive Processes for Students and Supervisors

Throughout the *Visioning the Future* research, staff and students mentioned helpful approaches in doctoral programmes. The following structures emerged as supportive foundations of doctoral success:

- **Right fit: initial investment in student and supervisory team.** Ensure that the project has the right supervisory team, and that the institution can offer adequate support facilities for its completion. See Recommendations for Enhancement.

    But the main one is finding the right supervisory team. Our effort is to invest in it before the candidate is registered so that we know it's the right fit, the right project, the right supervisory team. And that's why I think we like to do the informal discussions and the meetings and working on the proposal as a collective. (staff member, 2020)

- **Monitoring progress**. The Annual Review follows distinctive formats in different institutions, but it comprises a form of the following elements: submission of project plans and schedule, report of progress to date, showing of practice, a piece of writing, a presentation and often a discussion with the supervisory team followed by feedback. From a staff perspective, a rigorous Review ensures projects progress satisfactorily and that steps can be taken to resolve difficulties.

    To monitor safely so that nobody is left towards the end in a difficult situation. We have that inbuilt in the programme – the annual evaluations so that we can intervene quickly if we need to bring in another supervisory element – we act upon that – that's built into the structure of the doctorate. (staff member, 2020)

 For students, it helps them focus, develop public speaking skills, and structure their work.

> *It [Annual Review] pushes you to be as good and clear as possible in presenting your project. I can see if I am clear in what I'm saying - does it work? Will people understand what I'm studying, what I'm trying to prove here? That's a good exercise for public speaking, for the deliverables, for the feedback you get. It forces you to put in writing some ideal schedules on how to structure your work. (...) It's good because in normal times it gives you some self-discipline. (PhD student, 2020)*

- **Student presentations**. Presenting research – which might include examples of practice – allows students to take stock, argue ideas and develop skills in public speaking, learning to communicate to an audience outside of their remit of expertise and to explore different communication approaches. It is an opportunity for students to receive direct feedback from peers, and to expand their understanding of Artistic Research as they attend their colleagues' presentations. It also contributes to building an Artistic Research community to share research and processes.

> *So that's why I was able to get my experience presenting my work. It was great because I was presenting to people who were in my fields or loosely in my fields so that was probably the most helpful thing in my degree. (...) I have been able to do that at least once a year. And I can get feedback from my peers. (PhD student, 2020)*

- **Seminars on academic processes.** The academic culture often involves processes that students are not familiar with: peer-review publications, research dissemination, and conference participation amongst others. Learning to navigate these contexts and begin thinking about a career beyond the degree helps students build their future.

> *You don't even know how to go about doing that. Do you wait for a call or do you email the editor? I was unfamiliar with academic etiquette. And having a guide like [tutor name] who is very aware of and strategic about that, about*

training, academic etiquette. It was amazing - that was very very useful for me. (PhD student, 2020)

The parallels between staff and student views shows that programmes' supportive processes for progression – such as monitoring progress and the Annual Review – as well as ways of sharing work and presenting research appear to be well received by students as they progress throughout the degree.