

## Proposals for Action: Reflection on Supervision

*Can the supervisory process itself be somatic, improvisation, or a witnessing practice? Can we think of supervision as a choreographic process? Can feedback and discussion processes be a creative activity? Considering supervision as a process of creative knowing, as a witnessing practice and embedding ourselves in the experience of it, we offer strategies for ways to activate embodied processes in the supervisory experience. (Vida Midgelow, Looking Forward: Artistic Doctorates in Dance and Movement Practices, Visioning the Future Seminar, 2020)*

- **Supervision as a collective effort rather than a hierarchical relationship.** Consider how the relationship between supervisor and supervisee can benefit from a more horizontal approach – where both parties work together as a collective – rather than a hierarchical one. This is one of the alternative modes for thinking about supervision that Vida Midgelow proposes in Artistic Doctorates in Europe (ADiE), which she discussed in her [Visioning the Future seminar](#).
- **Supervision as a creative process.** Midgelow, as you can see from the quote above, invites us to think of supervision as a creative process in itself. How might you embed choreographic, somatic, or other creative approaches into the supervision process? Would this suit your candidate, and how might you propose a beneficial format? This [lecture excerpt](#) offers more detail on exploring this approach.
- **Shifting the emphasis from theory to practice.** [This example](#) of a research training activity shifts the emphasis from theory to practice and places practice at the core.
- **Working with the student to structure their PhD.** Check the resources [Road Mapping](#) (for students) and [Developing Course Milestones](#) (for staff) for support on how to work with students to devise the overall structure and road map of their PhD.
- **Implementing a Supervision Agreement.** See [Supervision Agreement](#) for more on defining expectations and modes of working with your candidate. You can adapt / implementing this template for use in your institution.

- **Developing a peer-supervision student group empowered by the institution.** Michaela Glanz proposes setting up a framework supported by the institution where PhD candidates present aspects of their practice that they are working with. Free from the contingencies of the supervisory process, the group operates as a catalyst of the artistic practice under the lead of an invited critical friend external to the students' research. This process can be integrated in the doctoral degree, developed across schools, departments, or within the same school, and supported by the institution (which provides the resources and funds the critical facilitator). Glanz discusses this further in the following excerpt of her Visioning the Future seminar: [Michaela Glanz excerpt: Supervising Artistic Research PhDs, Slot Machine example](#)

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*Thinking of supervision as witnessing process, mindful process, transdisciplinary modes, or other modes can make a real difference to the kinds of exchanges, and experiences of supervisors and students. (Vida Midgelow, Looking Forward: Artistic Doctorates in Dance and Movement Practices, Visioning the Future Seminar, 2020)*

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- **Nurturing the researchers of the future.**

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*There is something important here about the agency of candidates. Even the most experienced artist/scholar is new to the PhD framework and activities and structures that enable agency is [sic] super important – peer settings and the candidate being able [to] playfully engage with how supervisions are held. (seminar participant, 2020)*

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This exercise aims to focus on what you value and how you might pass this on to your students. Considering supervision as a process of providing training for someone to become a researcher in the arts ([Biggs and Büchler, 2009](#)), what kinds of professional attributes should your student develop? Think about the characteristics of artistic practice in your field, and of artist-scholars you admire for example, and list 5–10. The following non-exhaustive list offers some examples which you can expand on:

- Developing independent critical thinking

- Ability to situate own work in the literature and defend its value
- Technical / artistic skill of professional industry standard
- Ability to articulate ideas, clearly communicating complex relationships between different themes
- Ability to develop, produce and present a piece of work autonomously with appropriate audiences
- Developing an argument in writing
- Imagining new ways of presenting outputs, disseminating work, involving the community.

Looking into the course criteria also may offer some learning outcomes to work towards. Select four or five characteristics/attributes that you consider most important for a successful career. For each one, brainstorm how you are going to support your students to develop it. Alternatively, do this part of the exercise with your student at the start of their project: are there specific attributes the student feels they need more support with, or that they want to develop? They may be confident in some areas but not others. Use this exercise as a basis for a conversation on the attributes /skills / areas that the student needs to expand on.