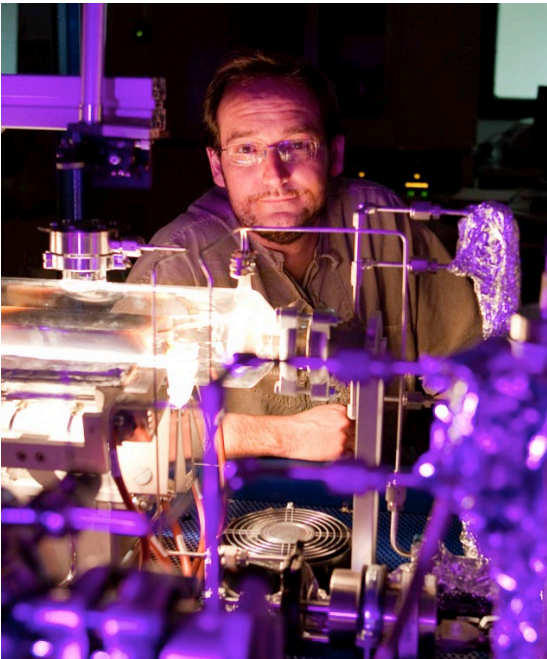# Learning Enhancement

UCC University College Cork, Ireland · Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning

Supervising & working with PhD students

Dr Catherine O'Mahony
Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning, University College Cork

17/01/2025

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

UCC — Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh, University College Cork, Ireland

Learning Enhancement — UCC

1: PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Year-long, fully-online courses for all staff who teach. From entry level to advanced.

Postgrad. Certificate, Postgrad. Diploma & Masters in Teaching & Learning (HE)

Certificate in Digital Education — THREE MONTH, SUBJECT-SPECIFIC QUALIFICATION. OPENS EACH SEMESTER
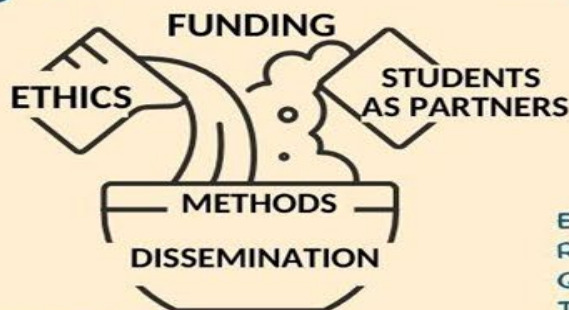
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PG Cert in Professional Practice and Leadership in Higher Education

NOV — REGISTRATION OPENS IN NOVEMBER FOR ALL YEAR-LONG PROGRAMMES

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Register for CIRTL Series: weekly sessions on T&L topics

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LINK WITH US TO DEVELOP RESEARCH PROPOSALS

FUNDING

ETHICS

STUDENTS AS PARTNERS

METHODS

DISSEMINATION

EXPLORE RESEARCH QUESTIONS ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

www.ucc.ie/en/cirtl/

TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Workshop Overview

- Experience of Supervision
- Roles and responsibilities
- Concepts of supervision
- Development opportunities

Digital Tool

Mentimeter

WORKSHOP ETIQUETTE

Keep microphone muted when you are not speaking.

Start your comment or question by stating your name.

SUPERVISOR – STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

- Formal
- Informal
- Teacher
- Advisor
- Critic
- Collaborator
- Examiner
- Supporter
- Mentor
- Colleague
- Counsellor
- Friend?

No two student-supervisor relationships are the same

But

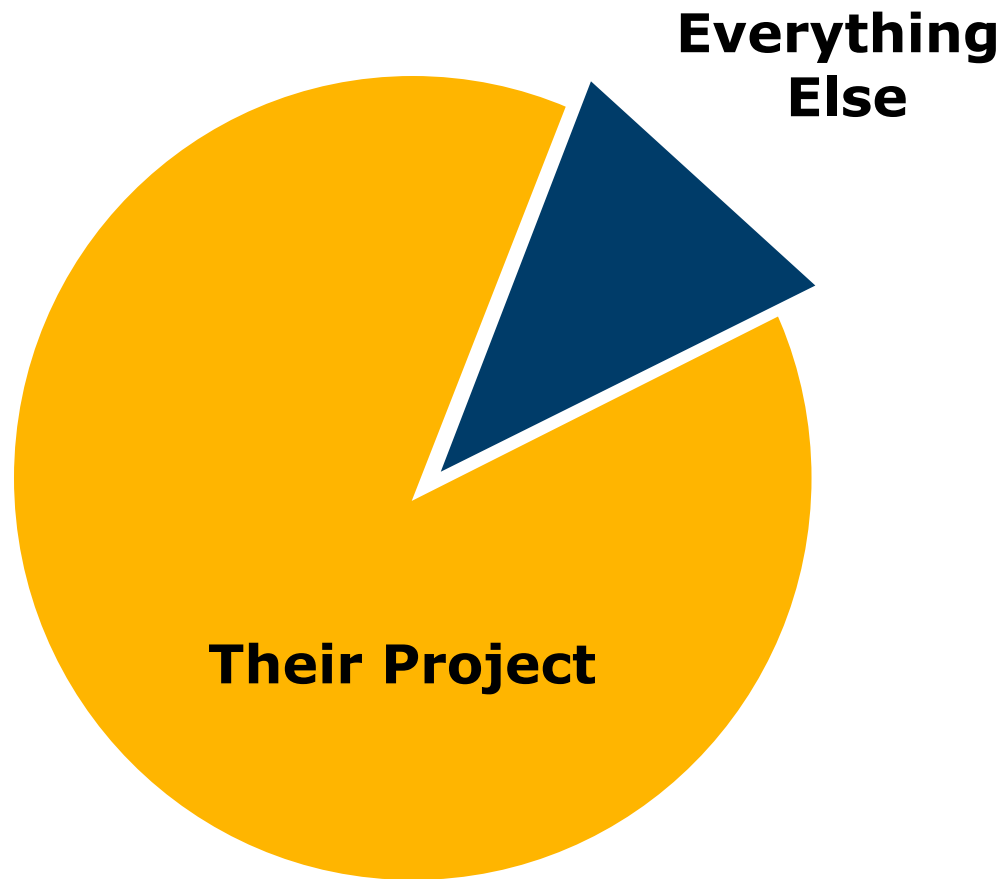**All must be professional, productive, and mutually satisfactory**

EXERCISE

What is your experience of supervision to date?

Type in Chat area

✓ No experience yet
✓ Undergraduate/ Masters/ PhD
✓ Number of students:
  <5, 5-7, 7-10, >10

DIFFERENT PRIORITIES

DIFFERENT PRIORITIES

Everything Else

Their Project

THE STUDENT

Student's Project

Everything Else
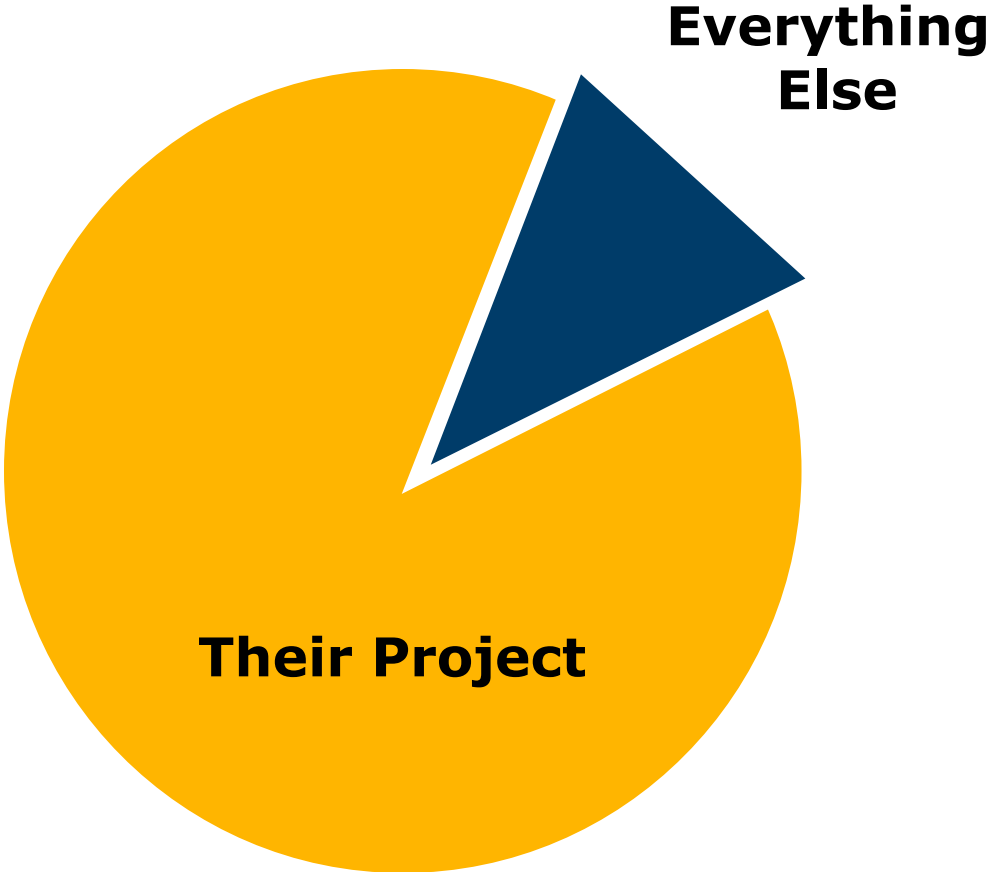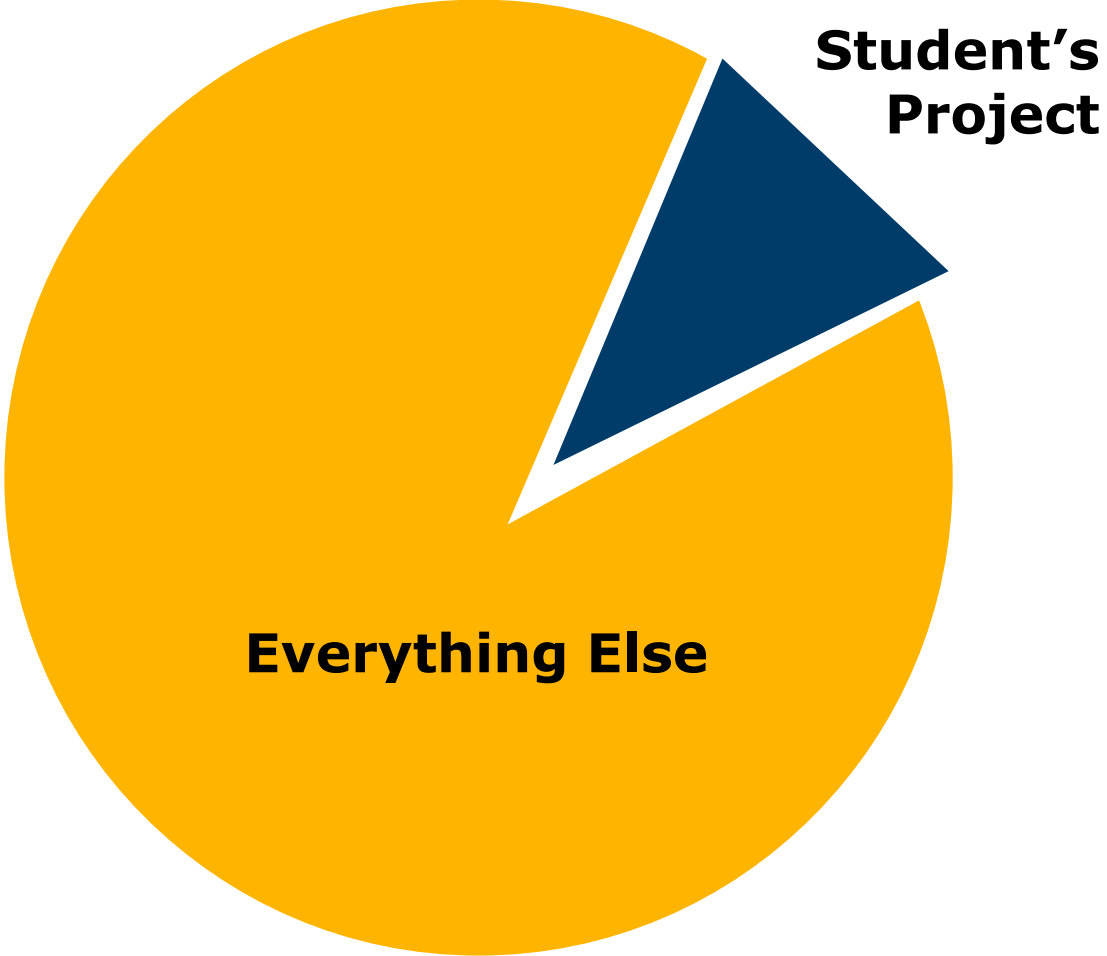
THE SUPERVISOR

STUDENT EXPERIENCE VS. PHD TIMELINE

6 months:
out of
control

**drop
out**

Final stage

Early stage:
naïve, anxiety,
excitement

Mid thesis blues
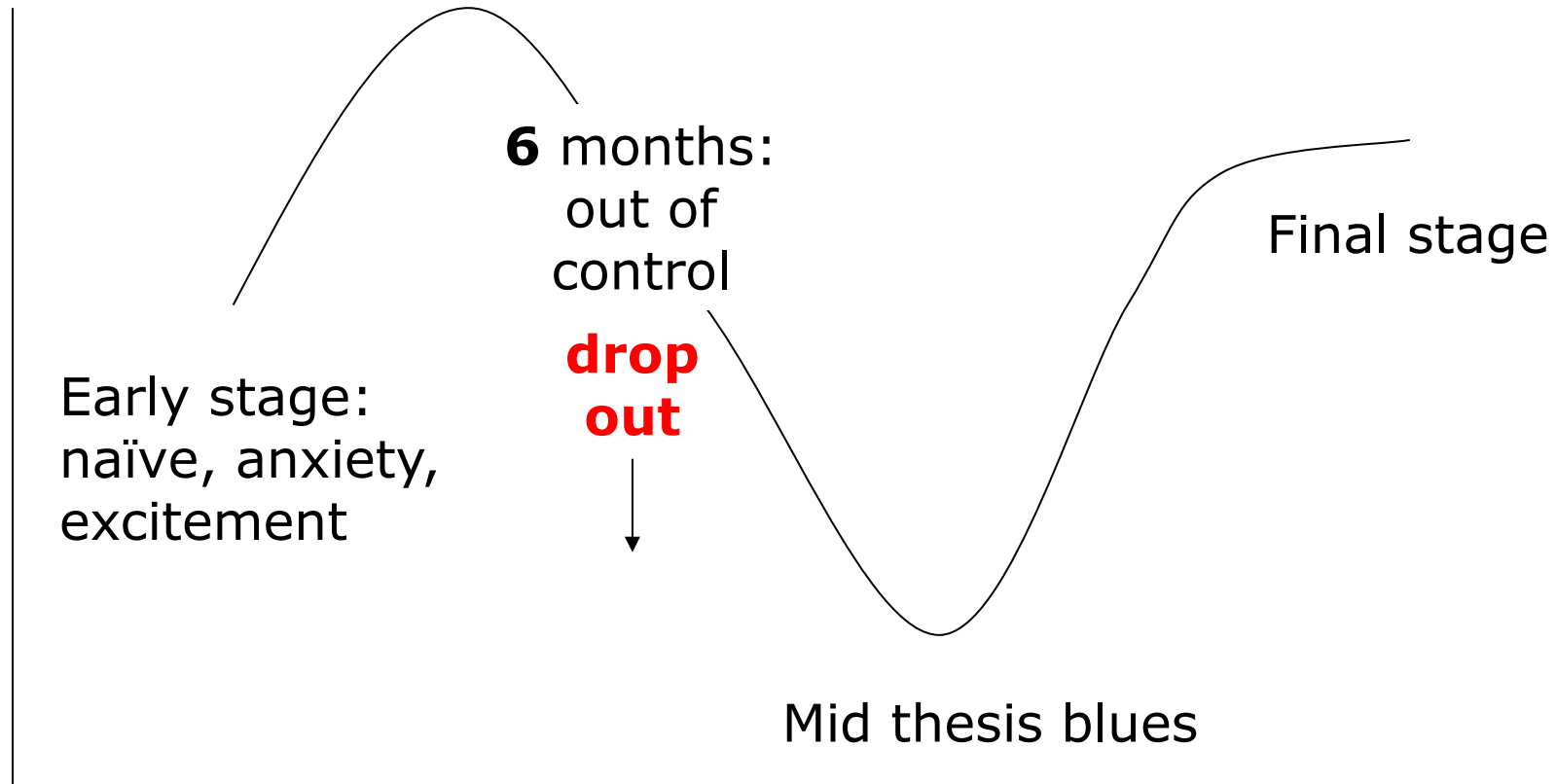
Adapted from 'Seven secrets of highly successful supervisors', Hugh Kearns

EXERCISE: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the supervisor's responsibility to select a research topic	1 2 3 4 5	The student is responsible for selecting his/her own topic
The supervisor decides which theoretical framework or methodology is most appropriate	1 2 3 4 5	The student should decide which methodology or theoretical framework they wish to use
The supervisor should develop an appropriate programme and timetable of research and study for the student	1 2 3 4 5	The supervisor should leave the development of the programme of study to the student
Supervisors should only accept students when they have specific knowledge of the student's chosen topic	1 2 3 4 5	Supervisors should feel free to accept students, even if they do not have specific knowledge of the student's topic
The supervisor is responsible for decisions regarding the standard of the thesis	1 2 3 4 5	The student is responsible for decisions concerning the standard of the thesis

EXERCISE

Roles and responsibilities

**Click on Mentimeter link in the Chat area.
The code is**

1536 3725

www.menti.com/74t2djjk2y
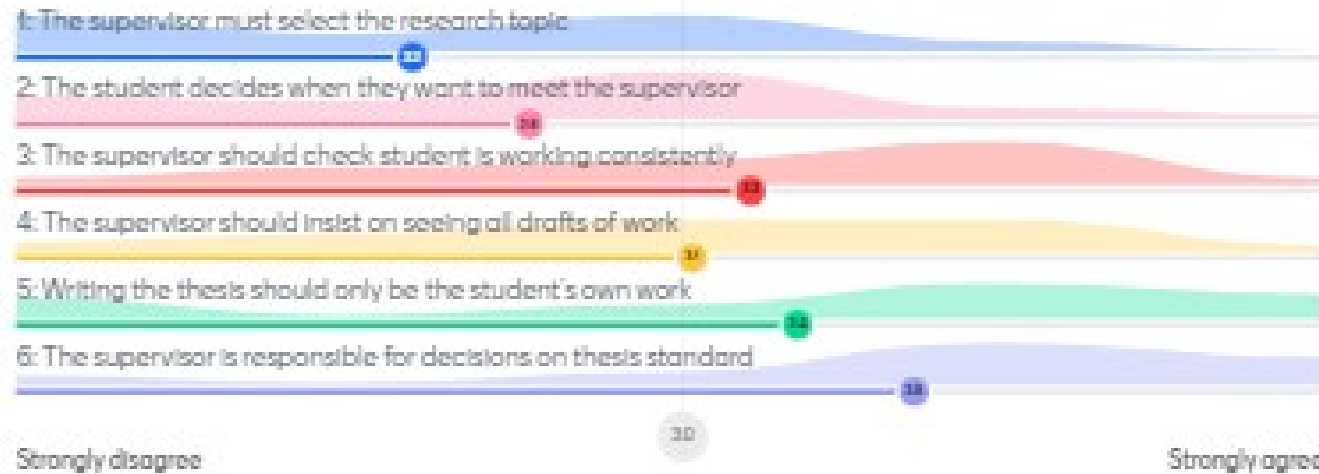
Mentimeter for PowerPoint
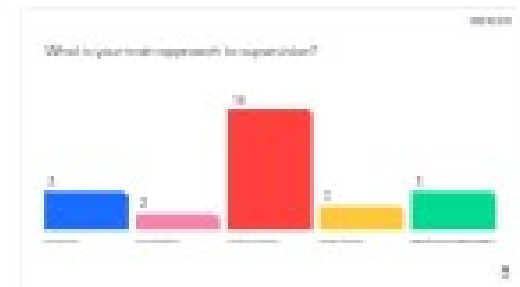
DISCUSSION: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Any comment on the results of the Mentimeter poll?

Would these responses change depending on what discipline you are coming from?

UCC Policy on the Supervision of Research Students

Guiding Principles

1. UCC follows a team supervision model.

2. All "Research Students" at UCC will have a "Supervisory Team" consisting of a minimum of two members, one of whom is the designated "Lead Supervisor'".

3. In addition to the "Lead Supervisor", the "Supervisory Team" will include "Co-supervisor(s)" and/or "Advisor(s)".

4. All research students at UCC will have a "Research Learning Plan" and "Research Progress Reviews".

Definitions and Roles

5. The **Research Student,** henceforth Student, is a UCC postgraduate student registered for a Research Masters or Doctoral programme.

6. The **Lead Supervisor** is a member of academic or research staff of UCC who is responsible for the overall direction of the Student's research. This includes managing administrative issues relating to the Student's registration and progression and supporting the student in preparation for examination of their thesis.

7. **Co-supervisors** are members of academic or research staff of UCC or may be external to UCC (e.g., in another university, industry or a research organization). A co-supervisor provides significant specialist advice as necessary for the progress of the research. A co-supervisor (whether internal or external) must be an active participant in the supervision of the project.

8. The **Advisor** is a member of academic or research staff of UCC who provides a point of contact on pastoral, procedural and student support issues.

9. Ultimate approval of the Supervisory Team lies with the respective **Head of Unit** (normally the Head of School/Department or appropriate nominee), henceforth Head of Unit, of the staff involved.

10. The Unit of the Lead Supervisor will be deemed, for administrative purposes, to be the Unit of the Student. Ordinarily, the Student will be assigned to the **Graduate Studies Committee** of

https://www.ucc.ie/en/academicgov/policies/gs-policies/supervision_research-students/

UCC POLICY ON SUPERVISION OF RES. STUDENTS

All Research Students at UCC will have:
Supervisory Team = two members

→ Lead Supervisor and Co-supervisor(s) and/or Advisor(s).

All research students at UCC will have:
- Research Learning Plan
- Research Progress Reviews.

UCC POLICY ON SUPERVISION OF RES. STUDENTS

STUDENT

- Work as a professional, independent researcher, accountable for the development and responsible conduct of their own research

- Maintain regular communications

- Record plans of work

- Familiarise themselves with and fulfil all academic or training requirements

SUPERVISOR

- provide intellectual and pedagogical support of the student's research.

- Maintain a respectful, professional and constructive relationship.

- Maintain regular communication and respond to requests promptly.

- Advise student on conduct of responsible research.

CHALLENGES IN SUPERVISION

UNDERGRAD STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

- Lack of clarity
- Inconsistencies in supervision
- perceived power imbalances between students & supervisors
- perceived inequities in the amount of supervision provided across students

(Roberts & Seaman, 2018)

SUPERVISOR PERSPECTIVE?

CONCEPTS OF RESEARCH SUPERVISION

Detailed interviews with exemplar supervisors and students from a range of disciplines in a research intensive universities in the UK and US.

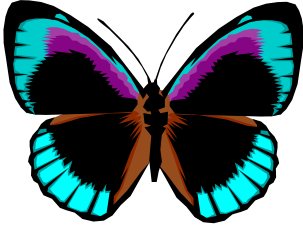Supervisors ranged from those with >20 years experience to those supervising their first students.

> **"** Two key influences on a supervisors' approach to supervision: concept of research supervision and own experience as a doctoral student... **"**

CONCEPTS OF RESEARCH SUPERVISION

	Functional	Enculturation	Critical Thinking	Emancipation	Relationship Development
Supervisors Activity	Rational progression through tasks Negotiated order	Gatekeeping Master to apprentice	Evaluation Challenge	Mentoring, supporting constructivism	Supervising by experience, developing a relationship
Supervisor's knowledge & skills	Directing, Project management	Diagnosis of deficiencies, coaching	Argument, analysis	Facilitation, Reflection	Managing conflict Emotional intelligence
Possible student reaction	Organised Obedience Negotiation skills	Role modelling, Apprentice-ship	Constant inquiry, fight or flight	Personal growth, reframing	A good team member. Emotional intelligence

Adapted from 'Concepts of Research Supervision', by Anne Lee, UK

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

	Functional	Enculturation	Critical Thinking	Emancipation	Relationship Development
Advantages	Clarity Consistency Progress can be monitored Records are available	Encourages standards, participation, identity, community formation	Rational inquiry, fallacy exposed	Personal growth, ability to cope with change	Lifelong working partnerships Enhanced self esteem
Disadvantages	Rigidity when confronted with the creation of original knowledge	Low tolerance of internal difference, sexist, ethnicised regulation	Denial of creativity, can belittle or depersonalise student	Toxic mentoring where tutor abuses power	Potential for harassment, abandonment or rejection

EXERCISE

What is your approach to research supervision?

Click on Mentimeter link in the Chat area.
The code is 1536 3725

Mentimeter

www.menti.com/74t2djjk2y
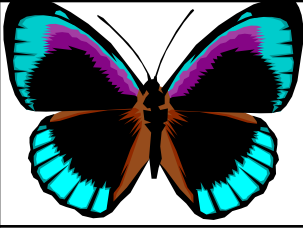
Mentimeter for PowerPoint

STUDENT NEEDS

	Functional	Enculturation	Critical Thinking	Emancipation	Relationship Development
What students might be seeking	Certainty Clear signposts Evidence of progress	Belonging Direction Career opportunities Role models	Ability to think in new ways Ability to analyse, to recognise flaws in arguments	Self awareness Autonomy Self actualisation	Friendship Nurturing Equality

PLANNING FIRST MEETING

Functional	Enculturation	Critical Thinking	Emancipation	Relationship Development
• Go through codes of practice • Agree a timetable for future meetings • Create a project plan with milestones and make sure are written in both diaries • Clarify the roles • Explain the 'rules of engagement' • Discuss a publication policy	• Introduce student to the team • Invite student to team meetings/seminars • Introduce student to key authors/texts • Set tasks where student will learn 'how we do it here'	• Ascertain subject knowledge and identify any gaps • Encourage student to begun to identify/create their own 'critical toolkit'	• Encourage student to present their own plans • Explore their inner motivation for wanting to do this research • Encourage student to identify outsiders who might provide support/illumination	• Discuss the relationship, how it might go • Discuss what the student can do if they are unhappy at any point • Establish mutual expectations

CONNECTED CURRICULUM

Research Based Teaching

Civic and Community Engagement

Employability

Connected Curriculum

Global Reach

Sustainability

Inter- and transdisciplinarity

www.ucc.ie/en/registrar/ccdb/

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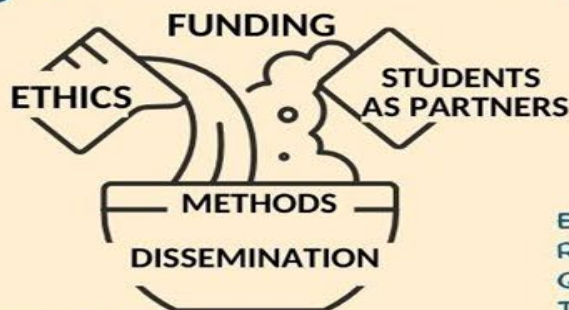
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TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

CKB02: PG CERTIFICATE IN TEACHING & LEARNING (ONLINE)

Academic staff

Researchers

Library staff

Language teachers

Central Admin

Research support staff

Clinical staff

Centre Managers

Legend: PG Certificate | PG Diploma | Masters
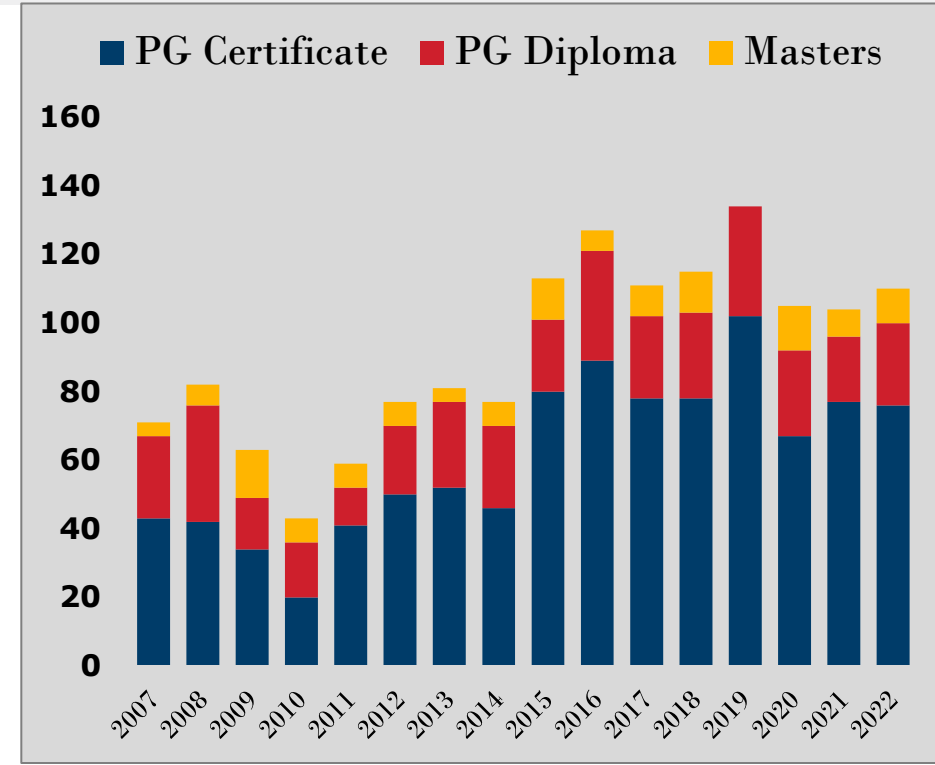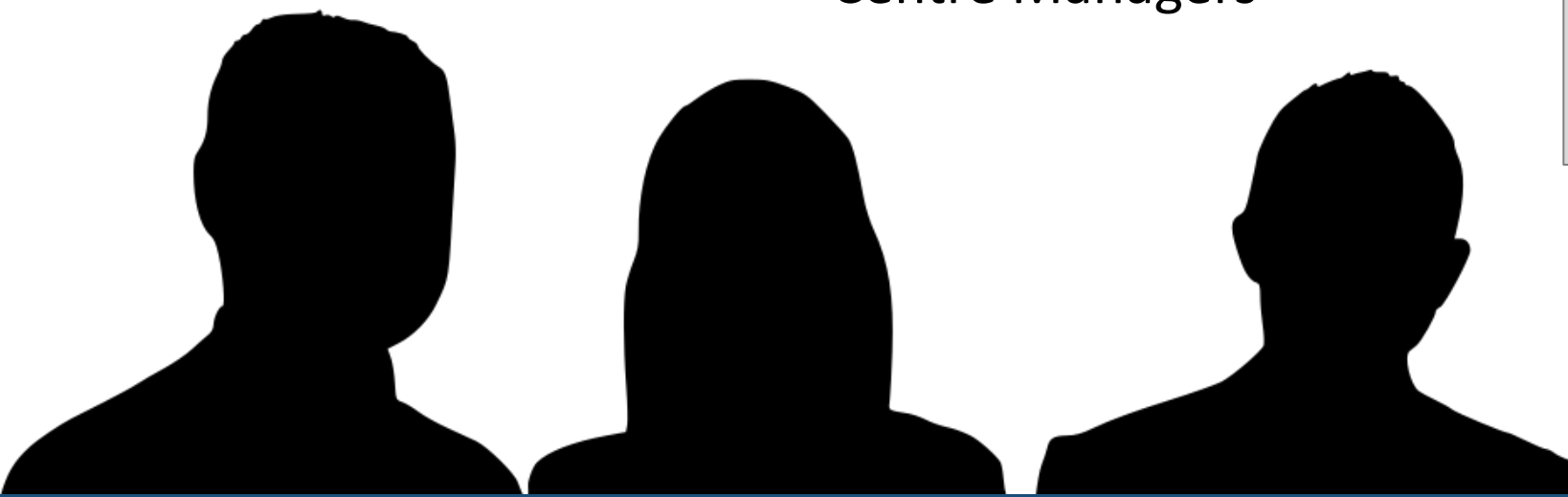
Number of registered participants in CIRTL's credit bearing courses.

Elective module: Inclusive Research Supervision

60% of Academic Staff in UCC have a Level 9 qualification in Teaching and Learning

www.ucc.ie/en/ckb02/

www.ucc.ie/en/cirtl/

WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CPD?

UCC MICROCREDS COURSES

TL6010: Inclusive Academic Practice for Research Supervision

5 ECTS Micro-credential on Inclusive Research Supervision
Offered November 2025
Directed by Dr Katy Dineen, Lecturer in Learning and Teaching Enhancement with CIRTL and adjunct Lecturer in Philosophy Department

www.ucc.ie/en/tl6010/

WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CPD?

PaPOR TraIL: Principles & Practices of Open Research - 003CPD

https://open.ucc.ie/browse/all/cpd/courses/papor-trail-principles-and-practices-of-open-research-003cpd

Connected Curriculum digital badge

https://ucc.instructure.com/enroll/9GNP4B

WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CPD?

Fostering Academic Integrity in Learning and Teaching

Academic Integrity digital badge

INCLUSIVE UCC

Teaching for All

#InclusiveUCC

Teaching for All: introduction to digital inclusion and accessibility at UCC.

https://ucc.instructure.com/enroll/XL3F9R

https://ucc.instructure.com/enroll/DNGC6D

www.ucc.ie/en/sdg-toolkit/

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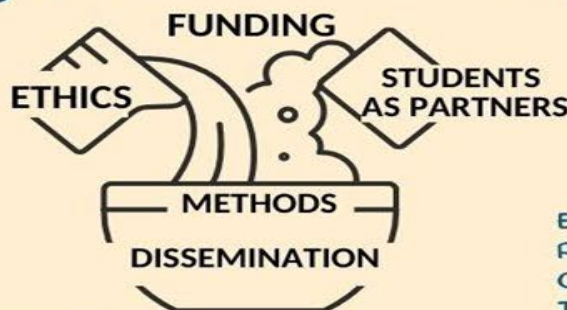
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