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### Using an online peer-assisted learning scheme to support the supervision and professional development of doctoral researchers

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Title: Using an online peer-assisted learning scheme to support the supervision and professional development of doctoral researchers

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Record presentation: Yes

Abstract:

This study reports on the evaluation of an online peer-assisted learning (PAL) scheme set up to support the supervision of postgraduate research students at the University of the West of Scotland during Covid-19. Peer-assisted learning is a reciprocal learning relationship among peers (i.e. people with a similar level of expertise) for their mutual benefit (Meschitti, 2018). This form of learning is now commonly used at undergraduate level within Higher Education in the UK and elsewhere. However, less is known about how PAL can support effective researcher development. Initial evidence suggests that peers can help build a 'researcher' identity through social interactions where perspectives and experiences are shared and, by doing so, support the work of supervisors in facilitating effective researcher role development (Cusick et al., 2015). This study adds to these initial findings by evaluating the benefits of an online PAL scheme for postgraduate research students and supervisors at the University of the West of Scotland during Covid-19. Interviews and focus groups were carried out with the students who participated in the online PAL sessions and their supervisors. Students came from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds. Drawing on the evaluation findings, this presentation will discuss the outcomes that were achieved including how the online PAL scheme supported the work of supervisors during this period of enforced remote working.