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A community-engaged approach to supervisor training

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Abstract:

With some recent changes at the University of the West of Scotland (UWS), Postgraduate Researcher (PGR) Supervisor training and development is now the responsibility of the UWS Academy - the academic practice development team at UWS. This has provided an opportunity to review current training and development opportunities, as well as the processes and procedures related to PGR supervisor training and development at UWS. We decided to engage the PGR supervisor community to ensure buy-in for newly designed and developed training by first reaching out to all PGR supervisors by surveying their experiences of supervision. This was then followed up with focus groups to explore emerging themes and to co-design future supervisor training and development at UWS. We believe that this approach is particularly useful to engage more experienced supervisors who are less likely to engage with training or development opportunities otherwise (McCulloch and Loeser 2016).   The outcomes of this community-engaged activity combined with a review of training and development offered at other institutions shows the need for a two-pathway approach. The first pathway focuses on training around procedures, processes, admin and related software. The second pathway provides long-term development through facilitated peer-communities to regularly exchange ideas, discuss challenges and stay up to date with regard to supervision practice.   This paper will summarise the findings from the supervisor community-engaged research phase of the project and will outline our planned two-pathway approach to training and development.