



PhD Supervision Lifecycle Series

A Series of **Professional Development Opportunities** for PhD Supervisors at University of Limerick



UNIVERSITY OF
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OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Doctoral
College





Table of Contents

1	Introduction: UL Research Supervisor 'Lifecycle' Programme	3
2	Core Modules, 1-3	6
2.1	Workshop #1: Recruitment, Preparation and Career Planning	6
2.2	Desired Learning Outcomes	7
2.3	Workshop #2: Ongoing Communication	8
2.4	Desired Learning Outcomes	9
2.5	Workshop #3: Preparing For Phd Submission	10
2.6	Desired Learning Outcomes	11
3	Elective Modules	13
3.1	Workshop #4: Supervising Postgraduate Researchers (Pgrs) with Different Learning Needs	13
3.2	Desired Learning Outcomes	15
4	International PhD Candidates	16
4.1	Workshop #5: Attracting and Supervising International PhD Candidates	16
4.2	Desired Learning Outcomes	17
5	Quality in Research Degrees	18
5.1	Workshop #6: Ensuring and Enhancing Quality in Research Degrees	18
5.2	Desired Learning Outcomes	19
6	Online Workshops	20
6.1	Supporting PhD Writing with Dr Dan Soule, Grammatology	20
6.2	PhD Supervision: Giving Effective Feedback	21
6.3	Turbocharge Your Writing	21
7	Programme Schedule	22
7.1	PhD Supervisor Lifecycle Programme Schedule	22

Quick Navigation

Table of Contents

1 Introduction: UL Research Supervisor
'Lifecycle' Programme

2 Core Modules, 1-3

3 Elective Modules

4 International PhD Candidates

5 Quality in Research Degrees

6 Online Workshops

7 Programme Schedule

Previous Page

Next Page



1. Introduction

UL Research Supervisor 'Lifecycle' Programme

Welcome to the UL Doctoral College PhD Supervision Lifecycle Programme! This series of workshops is designed to equip you with the essential knowledge, skills, and strategies you need to navigate the complex and rewarding journey of supervising postgraduate researchers (PGRs).

Quick Navigation

Table of Contents

1 Introduction: UL Research Supervisor 'Lifecycle' Programme

2 Core Modules, 1-3

3 Elective Modules

4 International PhD Candidates

5 Quality in Research Degrees

6 Online Workshops

7 Programme Schedule

Previous Page

Next Page

In your role as a research supervisor, you are instrumental in guiding and supporting the next generation of scholars through their doctoral studies; this programme has been created to enhance your effectiveness and impact.

Effective PhD supervision is a collaborative process that significantly influences the academic and professional trajectories of both PhD candidates and supervisors. For PhD candidates, effective supervision offers critical guidance, support, and feedback, all of which are vital for developing research skills and successfully completing projects. A strong supervisory relationship supports academic growth, motivation, and overall satisfaction with the doctoral journey. Recent studies highlight the importance of clear communication, well-managed expectations, and constructive feedback in fostering a positive supervisory environment.^{1,2}

For supervisors, effective PhD supervision is equally impactful. It allows them to mentor emerging researchers, directly contributing to the advancement of their field. Effective supervision enhances a supervisor's professional reputation and career satisfaction as they witness their researchers' achievements and contributions to both academia and society.³ In addition, effective supervision cultivates a collaborative and productive research environment, benefiting the supervisor and the wider academic institution.⁴

Throughout this PhD supervision series, you will explore a diverse range of topics, including: empowering PGRs with varying learning needs; adapting supervisory styles; navigating funding opportunities; and preparing for PhD submission. Each workshop is specifically designed to address distinct aspects of the supervision lifecycle, equipping you with practical insights, tools, and resources to help you excel in your supervisory role.

With a focus on best practices, ethical considerations, and the development of an inclusive and supportive supervisory environment, this programme will help you meet the diverse needs of your PGRs while facilitating their academic and professional growth. Whether you are a seasoned supervisor or new to the role, we are confident that each workshop will offer valuable insights.

¹ Bastalich, W. (2017). Effective doctoral supervision: A two-way process. *Frontiers in Education*.

² Wichmann-Hansen, G. (2021). Supervisory relationships with doctoral candidates. *SpringerLink*.

³ Kálmán, C. et al. (2022). Choosing the right PhD supervisors: A make-or-break decision. *ScienceLink*.

⁴ Bastalich, W. (2017). Effective supervisor-PhD interaction. University of Utrecht.

Quick Navigation

Table of Contents

1 Introduction: UL Research Supervisor 'Lifecycle' Programme

2 Core Modules, 1-3

3 Elective Modules

4 International PhD Candidates

5 Quality in Research Degrees

6 Online Workshops

7 Programme Schedule

Previous Page

Next Page



The Doctoral College remains dedicated to upholding the revised **National Framework for Doctoral Education** (2023), which commits key participants in Irish graduate education and research, including postgraduate researchers (PGRs) and supervisors, to the highest standards in the provision of doctoral education and research, endorsed through nine guiding principles. One of these principles refers to the quality of learning environment and states that:

Doctoral education is conducted in a research environment with a high degree of research integrity, academic quality, and infrastructure and where it is consistent with institutional strategies. Academic quality includes quality supervision by expert and committed supervisors and training for supervisors.

Another principle in the Framework requires institutions to ensure high-quality supervision and examination of PhD candidates, with support from established structures that monitor progress to completion according to published criteria.

We look forward to working alongside you as we delve into the complexities of PhD supervision, fostering a community of engaged, effective supervisors **dedicated to excellence in doctoral education** at the University of Limerick.

Quick Navigation

Table of Contents

- 1 Introduction: UL Research Supervisor 'Lifecycle' Programme
- 2 Core Modules, 1-3
- 3 Elective Modules
- 4 International PhD Candidates
- 5 Quality in Research Degrees
- 6 Online Workshops
- 7 Programme Schedule

Previous Page

Next Page

2 Core Modules, 1-3

2.1 Workshop #1: Recruitment, Preparation and Career Planning

KEY ISSUE	TOPIC(S) COVERED
Effective postgraduate research recruitment	Strategies to attract high-quality candidates. Ethical considerations in the recruitment process.
Preparation for supervising PhD candidates	Essential skills and knowledge for effective supervision. Establishing expectations and boundaries with new PhD candidates.
Alignment with UL's institutional policies and guidelines	Understanding and adhering to UL's institutional policies and guidelines. Navigating specific supervision requirements or procedures.
Mentoring and communication skills	Developing effective mentoring relationships with PhD candidates. Enhancing communication skills for constructive feedback and guidance.

Quick Navigation

Table of Contents

1 Introduction: UL Research Supervisor 'Lifecycle' Programme

2 Core Modules, 1-3

3 Elective Modules

4 International PhD Candidates

5 Quality in Research Degrees

6 Online Workshops

7 Programme Schedule

Previous Page

Next Page

2.2 Desired Learning Outcomes

1 Effective postgraduate research recruitment

PhD supervisors will identify strategies to attract high-quality doctoral candidates.

Supervisors will enhance their understanding of ethical considerations in PhD recruitment and apply ethical principles to recruitment activities.

2 Preparation for supervising PhD candidates

Participants will acquire essential skills and knowledge for effective PhD supervision.

Doctoral supervisors will establish clear expectations and boundaries with new PhD candidates, fostering a productive working relationship from the outset.

3 Alignment with UL's institutional policies and guidelines

Supervisors will demonstrate a greater understanding of UL's institutional policies and guidelines related to PhD supervision.

Supervisors will navigate and apply specific supervision requirements or procedures as outlined by the UL Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures.

4 Mentoring and communication skills

Participants will develop the ability to cultivate effective mentoring relationships with PhD candidates, supporting their academic and personal development.

Supervisors will further develop communication skills, enabling them to provide constructive feedback and guidance in a supportive manner.

Quick Navigation

Table of Contents

1 Introduction: UL Research Supervisor 'Lifecycle' Programme

2 Core Modules, 1-3

3 Elective Modules

4 International PhD Candidates

5 Quality in Research Degrees

6 Online Workshops

7 Programme Schedule

Previous Page

Next Page

2.3 Workshop #2: Ongoing Communication

KEY ISSUE	TOPIC(S) COVERED
Peer observation for supervisors	Assessment of different PhD supervisory styles and their impact. Adapting supervisory style based on individual candidate needs and preferences.
Effective communication and feedback in PhD supervision	Communication strategies to promote a positive supervisor–PhD candidate relationship. Addressing communication challenges and conflicts.
Building a supportive PhD supervisory environment	Creating a positive and inclusive research environment. Addressing challenges and conflicts within the supervisory relationship.
Promoting inclusivity and diversity in PhD supervision	Understanding and addressing issues related to diversity and inclusion. Implementing inclusive practices in supervisory methods.
Quality assurance and continuous improvement	Implementing quality assurance measures in supervision. Strategies for continuous improvement in supervisory practices.

Quick Navigation

Table of Contents

1 Introduction: UL Research Supervisor 'Lifecycle' Programme

2 Core Modules, 1-3

3 Elective Modules

4 International PhD Candidates

5 Quality in Research Degrees

6 Online Workshops

7 Programme Schedule

Previous Page

Next Page

2.4 Desired Learning Outcomes

1 Peer observation for supervisors

Supervisors will be able to assess different PhD supervisory styles and understand their impact on candidate development and outcomes.

Participants will learn to adapt their supervisory style based on the individual needs, preferences, and working styles of each PhD candidate.

2 Effective communication and feedback in PhD supervision

Attendees will acquire communication strategies to enhance a positive and productive relationship between supervisors and PhD candidates.

3 Building a supportive PhD supervisory environment:

Supervisors will learn strategies to address and resolve challenges or conflicts that may arise within the supervisory relationship, promoting a harmonious working environment.

4 Promoting inclusivity and diversity in PhD supervision:

Participants will learn practical strategies to address issues related to diversity and implement inclusive practices in their supervisory approaches to ensure equal opportunities for all candidates.

5 Quality assurance and continuous improvement:

Supervisors will develop strategies for continuous improvement in supervisory practices, reflecting on feedback and adapting their approach to enhance the quality of supervision over time.

Participants will learn how to implement quality assurance measures in supervision to ensure adherence to institutional regulations and policies.

Quick Navigation

Table of Contents

1 Introduction: UL Research Supervisor 'Lifecycle' Programme

2 Core Modules, 1-3

3 Elective Modules

4 International PhD Candidates

5 Quality in Research Degrees

6 Online Workshops

7 Programme Schedule

[Previous Page](#)

[Next Page](#)

2.5 Workshop #3: Preparing For Phd Submission

KEY ISSUE	TOPIC(S) COVERED
Mastering the <i>viva voce</i> process	Preparation strategies for the viva voce examination. Guidance for effectively defending and discussing research. Different thesis types: Monograph, Article-Based PhD etc.
Choosing examiners	Expertise and experience of examiners. Avoiding conflicts of interest. Standing of external examiner in chosen field.
Role of the viva Chair	Independence of the Chair. Awareness of relevant PhD regulations and procedures. Arbiter to ensure fairness to candidate.
Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for PhD supervisors	Opportunities and strategies for ongoing professional development. Staying on track with developments in doctoral education and research.
Enhancing career opportunities for PGRs	Strategies for preparing PhD candidates for diverse career paths.
Effective communication of research impact	Strategies for public engagement and dissemination of 'new' knowledge.

Quick Navigation

Table of Contents

1 Introduction: UL Research Supervisor
'Lifecycle' Programme

2 Core Modules, 1-3

3 Elective Modules

4 International PhD Candidates

5 Quality in Research Degrees

6 Online Workshops

7 Programme Schedule

Previous Page

Next Page

2.6 Desired Learning Outcomes

1 Mastering the viva voce process:

Understand preparation strategies for the viva voce, including effective defence and discussion of research.

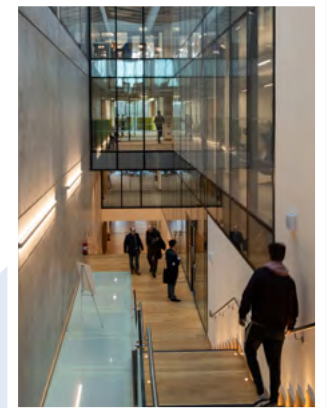
Differentiate between various thesis types, such as monograph and article-based PhD, and understand their respective requirements and expectations.

2 Choosing examiners:

Evaluate the expertise and experience of potential examiners.

Demonstrate awareness of conflicts of interest and methods to avoid them in the selection process.

Understand the importance of the external examiner's standing in a chosen field and its impact on the examination process.



Quick Navigation

Table of Contents

1 Introduction: UL Research Supervisor 'Lifecycle' Programme

2 Core Modules, 1-3

3 Elective Modules

4 International PhD Candidates

5 Quality in Research Degrees

6 Online Workshops

7 Programme Schedule

Previous Page

Next Page

3 Role of the viva Chair:

Recognise the importance of the independence of the viva Chair in overseeing the examination process.

Demonstrate familiarity with PhD regulations and procedures to ensure compliance and fairness to the candidate.

Understand the viva Chair's role as an arbiter to maintain fairness and integrity throughout the examination.

4 Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for PhD supervisors:

Identify opportunities and strategies for ongoing professional development as a PhD supervisor.

Stay abreast of developments in doctoral education and research to enhance supervisory effectiveness and relevance.

5 Enhancing career opportunities for PGRs:

Develop strategies to prepare PhD candidates for diverse career paths beyond academia.

Provide guidance and support to PGRs in exploring and pursuing career opportunities aligned with their skills and interests.

6 Effective communication of research impact:

Explore strategies for engaging with the public and sharing research findings with broader audiences.

Understand the importance of communicating the impact of research in generating interest and support for research among non-specialist audiences.

Quick Navigation

Table of Contents

1 Introduction: UL Research Supervisor
'Lifecycle' Programme

2 Core Modules, 1-3

3 Elective Modules

4 International PhD Candidates

5 Quality in Research Degrees

6 Online Workshops

7 Programme Schedule

Previous Page

Next Page



3 Elective Modules

3.1 Workshop #4:

Supervising Postgraduate Researchers (Pgrs) with Different Learning Needs

In this workshop, we will address the unique challenges faced by PGRs with diverse learning needs, recognising the importance of inclusivity and providing tailored support to ensure their success and fulfilment in their academic pursuits. As PhD supervisors, it is crucial to understand and address the unique challenges and opportunities that PGRs with different learning needs present.

Quick Navigation

Table of Contents

- 1 Introduction: UL Research Supervisor 'Lifecycle' Programme
- 2 Core Modules, 1-3
- 3 Elective Modules
- 4 International PhD Candidates
- 5 Quality in Research Degrees
- 6 Online Workshops
- 7 Programme Schedule

Previous Page

Next Page

KEY ISSUE	TOPIC(S) COVERED
Helping researchers with diverse learning needs "find their voice" as PhD candidates.	Strategies to empower PGRs with different learning needs to foster a stronger sense of researcher identity and contribute effectively to their research communities.
Collaboration with the Access Office and assistive technology experts.	UL has a range of dedicated resources to support PGRs with diverse learning needs. This workshop will highlight how these resources, including assistive technologies, provide essential accommodations to help PGRs succeed.
Creating a supportive environment	Practical guidance on adapting supervisory approaches to meet the specific needs of PGRs with different learning requirements.
Funding opportunities for PGRs with different learning needs	Exploring funding options and scholarships specifically designed to support PGRs with diverse learning needs. This will enable participants to access resources that alleviate financial barriers and promote inclusivity.
Recognising the diversity within different learning needs	<p>This section will cover the varied needs of PGRs, highlighting the distinctions between cognitive and physical learning requirements. By understanding these differences, supervisors can adapt their support and foster an inclusive research environment.</p> <p>By understanding these differences, supervisors can adapt their support and foster an inclusive research environment.</p>

Quick Navigation

Table of Contents

1 Introduction: UL Research Supervisor
'Lifecycle' Programme

2 Core Modules, 1-3

3 Elective Modules

4 International PhD Candidates

5 Quality in Research Degrees

6 Online Workshops

7 Programme Schedule

Previous Page

Next Page

3.2 Desired Learning Outcomes

- 1 Understand strategies that empower PGRs with diverse learning needs to develop a strong researcher identity.
- 2 Identify the range of assistive technologies available and understand how they facilitate the research journey of PGRs with diverse learning needs.
- 3 Appreciate the significance of providing reasonable accommodations throughout the doctoral journey for PGRs with diverse learning needs.
- 4 Develop skills to guide PGRs in accessing and securing appropriate funding opportunities.
- 5 Gain awareness of the varied needs and challenges faced by PGRs with cognitive versus physical learning requirements.



Quick Navigation

Table of Contents

1 Introduction: UL Research Supervisor 'Lifecycle' Programme

2 Core Modules, 1-3

3 Elective Modules

4 International PhD Candidates

5 Quality in Research Degrees

6 Online Workshops

7 Programme Schedule

Previous Page

Next Page

4 International PhD Candidates

4.1 Workshop #5:

Attracting and Supervising International PhD Candidates

This workshop will focus on the unique aspects of supervising international PhD candidates.

KEY ISSUE	TOPIC(S) COVERED
Empowering international PGRs to "find their voice"	We will emphasise the importance of supporting international PGRs in developing unique perspectives and research identities. This includes building confidence in expressing themselves effectively in English, which plays a crucial role in academic communication.
Collaboration with the International Office/UL Global	The role of UL Global in supporting international PGRs will be highlighted. We will discuss the resources and services available to help navigate cultural differences and highlight the guidance on visa, immigration, and integration matters that is available to international PGRs
Addressing taboos and cultural misunderstandings	Supervisors of international PGRs need to be aware of potential taboos and cultural misunderstandings that could hinder effective supervision. This workshop will provide insights into common challenges and strategies to avoid miscommunication, with the aim of fostering more productive relationships.
Developing the "voice" of international PGRs in writing	Academic writing skills are essential for international PGRs to express their ideas effectively. We will explore techniques to help PGRs build confidence and proficiency in written academic English, enabling them to articulate their research findings with greater clarity and impact.
Distance-based supervision	With the rise of remote supervision, we will discuss its impact on the PGR-supervisor relationship. Strategies for maintaining effective communication, managing expectations, and supporting remote PGRs will be shared.

Quick Navigation

Table of Contents

1 Introduction: UL Research Supervisor 'Lifecycle' Programme

2 Core Modules, 1-3

3 Elective Modules

4 International PhD Candidates

5 Quality in Research Degrees

6 Online Workshops

7 Programme Schedule

Previous Page

Next Page



4.2 Desired Learning Outcomes

- 1 Empower international PGRs to develop their academic "voice" and understand the importance of academic confidence and expression.
- 2 Learn strategies to mentor and support international PGRs in articulating their ideas, opinions, and scholarly perspectives.
- 3 Become familiar with the resources and services offered by UL Global to navigate cultural differences and integration challenges.
- 4 Recognise potential taboos and cultural misunderstandings that may arise in supervising international PGRs.
- 5 Provide guidance and support to international PGRs in clearly expressing their ideas in written form.
- 6 Identify techniques to support remote PGRs, ensuring their progress and success in doctoral studies, such as helping international PGRs build peer networks with other doctoral candidates.

Quick Navigation

Table of Contents

1 Introduction: UL Research Supervisor 'Lifecycle' Programme

2 Core Modules, 1-3

3 Elective Modules

4 International PhD Candidates

5 Quality in Research Degrees

6 Online Workshops

7 Programme Schedule

Previous Page

Next Page

5 Quality in Research Degrees

5.1 Workshop #6:

Ensuring and Enhancing Quality in Research Degrees

KEY ISSUE	TOPIC(S) COVERED
Understanding national and international doctoral education policy	<p>Overview of national and international policies that impact doctoral education.</p> <p>Comparative analysis of various countries' approaches to doctoral education.</p>
Ensuring the quality of research degrees	<p>In-depth exploration of UL's specific research degree regulations and guidelines.</p> <p>Clarification of recent updates or changes to UL's regulations.</p> <p>Practical guidance on integrating UL's Academic Regulations and Procedures into everyday supervisory practices.</p>
Ethical considerations in PhD supervision	<p>Strategies to enhance the quality of PhD research outputs.</p> <p>Evaluation methods and criteria for assessing research degree quality.</p>
Mentoring and communication skills	<p>Developing strategies to address ethical challenges in PhD supervision, including conflicts of interest and issues related to authorship and intellectual property.</p>

Quick Navigation

Table of Contents

1 Introduction: UL Research Supervisor 'Lifecycle' Programme

2 Core Modules, 1-3

3 Elective Modules

4 International PhD Candidates

5 Quality in Research Degrees

6 Online Workshops

7 Programme Schedule

Previous Page

Next Page

5.2 Desired Learning Outcomes

- 1 Identify strategies to attract high-quality doctoral candidates.
- 2 Apply ethical principles in the PhD recruitment process.
- 3 Establish clear expectations and boundaries with new PhD candidates.
- 4 Acquire essential skills and knowledge for effective supervision.
- 5 Demonstrate understanding of UL's institutional policies and guidelines.
- 6 Cultivate effective mentoring relationships with PhD candidates.
- 7 Develop communication skills to provide constructive feedback and guidance.



Quick Navigation

Table of Contents

1 Introduction: UL Research Supervisor 'Lifecycle' Programme

2 Core Modules, 1-3

3 Elective Modules

4 International PhD Candidates

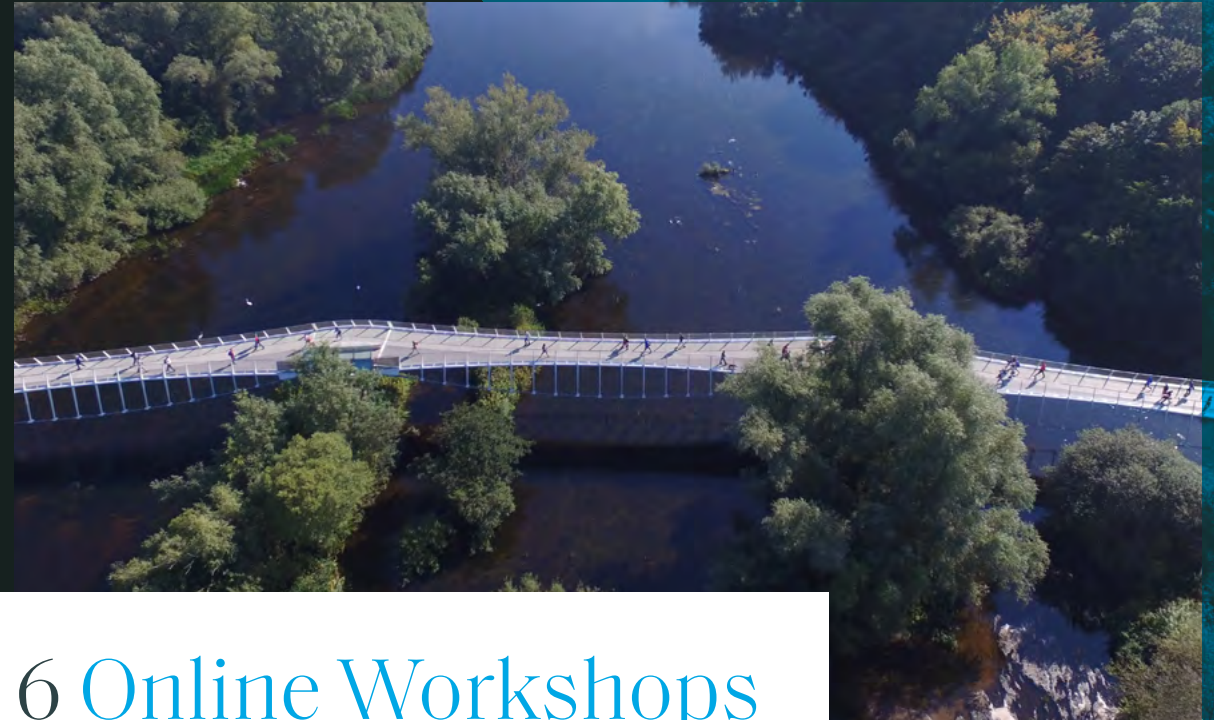
5 Quality in Research Degrees

6 Online Workshops

7 Programme Schedule

Previous Page

Next Page



6 Online Workshops

6.1 Supporting PhD Writing with Dr Dan Soule, Grammatology

A half-day workshop to discuss potential ways to develop the writing skills of doctoral candidates during supervision. Tips, tasks, and resources are provided for use with PGRs. The session is also an opportunity to share ideas with fellow supervisors. The Supporting PhD Writing session is led by Dr Daniel Soule from Grammatology, who has run a research writing training business for more than 12 years across the UK, Ireland, and Norway.

Quick Navigation

Table of Contents

1 Introduction: UL Research Supervisor 'Lifecycle' Programme

2 Core Modules, 1-3

3 Elective Modules

4 International PhD Candidates

5 Quality in Research Degrees

6 Online Workshops

7 Programme Schedule

[Previous Page](#)

[Next Page](#)

6.2 PhD Supervision: Giving Effective Feedback

A one-hour session focused on the art of giving effective supervisor feedback to PhD candidates. This workshop is suitable for any research supervisor and will cover the following:

- The benefits of positive feedback
- Different types of feedback
- Varying your feedback approach based on the candidate's stage
- Formats: hard copy, tracked changes, audio, and face-to-face feedback
- How to provide criticism without crushing the recipient
- Turnaround time: What constitutes a reasonable response time?
- A few pages or an entire chapter?
- When the writing/grammar/expression is bad
- When they don't listen to your feedback

6.3 Turbocharge Your Writing

The Turbocharge Your Writing workshop is open to both PhD candidates and supervisors. It's ideal for PhD candidates at any stage in their doctoral studies, as well as academic/research staff wishing to increase their writing output.

This workshop explores the secrets to high-output, low-stress scholarly writing. In academia it is often assumed that writing comes naturally. However, an overwhelming body of research shows that there are clear and practical strategies that can increase writing productivity.

This workshop will help participants to understand:

- Why it's hard to get started
- How we deliberately use distractions to slow down writing
- The principles of quick starting
- How to manage destructive internal beliefs
- How to set and follow a structured writing plan
- How to set achievable goals by writing in a silo
- How to increase the number of actual words produced
- How to clarify thinking, and improve work quality

Quick Navigation

Table of Contents

1 Introduction: UL Research Supervisor 'Lifecycle' Programme

2 Core Modules, 1-3

3 Elective Modules

4 International PhD Candidates

5 Quality in Research Degrees

6 Online Workshops

7 Programme Schedule

Previous Page

Next Page

7 Programme Schedule

7.1 PhD Supervisor Lifecycle Programme Schedule

Workshop 1: Recruitment, Preparation, and Career Planning

Date: Wednesday, January 15, 2025 and Thursday, January 23, 2025

Time: 09:00–13:00

Location: KBG-10

Agenda: 09:00–09:15: *Registration and welcome coffee*
 09:15–10:00: **Introduction to PhD Supervision: Roles and Responsibilities**
 10:00–10:45: **Effective Recruitment Strategies for PhD Candidates**
 10:45–11:00: *Break*
 11:00–11:45: **Preparing for Supervision: Setting Expectations and Goals**
 11:45–12:30: **Career Planning for PhD Candidates: Short-term and Long-term Goals**
 12:30–13:00: **Q&A and closing remarks**

Workshop 2: Ongoing Communication and Feedback with Prof. Pirjo Nikander (Tampere University, Finland)

Date: Tuesday, April 15, 2025

Time: 09:00–13:00

Location: The Pavilion, North Campus

Agenda: 09:00–09:15: *Registration and welcome coffee*
 09:15–10:00: **Establishing Effective Communication Channels**
 10:00–10:45: **Providing Constructive Feedback: Techniques and Approaches**
 10:45–11:00: *Break*
 11:00–11:45: **Managing Conflicts and Challenges in Supervision**
 11:45–12:30: **Enhancing Supervisory Relationships through Communication**
 12:30–13:00: **Q&A and closing remarks**

Quick Navigation

Table of Contents

1 Introduction: UL Research Supervisor 'Lifecycle' Programme

2 Core Modules, 1-3

3 Elective Modules

4 International PhD Candidates

5 Quality in Research Degrees

6 Online Workshops

7 Programme Schedule

Previous Page

Next Page



Workshop 3: Preparing for Thesis Submission and Career Post-PhD with Dr Anna Salzano (University of Groningen)

Date: Wednesday, June 11, 2025

Time: 09:00–13:00

Location: The Pavilion, North Campus

Agenda: 09:00–09:15: *Registration and welcome coffee*

09:15–10:00: **Preparing for Thesis Submission: Guidelines and Requirements**

10:00–10:45: **Reviewing and Providing Feedback on Thesis Drafts**

10:45–11:00: *Break*

11:00–11:45: **Supporting PhD Candidates through the Final Stages**

11:45–12:30: **Career Planning Post-PhD: Academic and Non-Academic Paths**

12:30–13:00: **Q&A and closing remarks**



Quick Navigation

Table of Contents

1 Introduction: UL Research Supervisor
'Lifecycle' Programme

2 Core Modules, 1-3

3 Elective Modules

4 International PhD Candidates

5 Quality in Research Degrees

6 Online Workshops

7 Programme Schedule

[Previous Page](#)

[Next Page](#)

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