

Generic doctoral support and its assessment: Can we secure the central?

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Doctoral pedagogy has new dimensions, taking place in classrooms as well as in the ‘secret garden’ of supervision: increasingly doctoral supervision is complemented by generic doctoral support. New places of teaching signal new kinds of focus and perspective: **for example, in their classes, learning advisors take a meta-view of the whole process, considering the generic requirements of the thesis, the dimensions of examination and academic identity development.** It’s a healthy complement to discipline-specific advice. Yet, although the provision of generic doctoral skills is a flourishing new practice, its future depends on its own sustainability. It’s vulnerable when universities seek to cut costs. Generic doctoral support remains difficult to assess because it is hard to prove causality (Kelly, Brailsford, & Carter, 2011). So, how might practitioners, usually learning advisors, assess their doctoral teaching work in relation to good practice? Here, with acknowledgement of extensive UK assessment discussion, qualitative data from practitioner evaluation (N33) of what makes for good generic doctoral support builds a framework that could be used to assess specific generic doctoral sessions and/or courses. Themes identified in the data are discussed and then summarised as a benchmarking model.