

Situating Supervision in the Research Environment: Re-situating Supervision in a Peer-Learning Context

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Introduction

The aims of this contribution to the *Advancing Supervision for Artistic Research Doctorates* (ASARD) are to ‘explore the nature of the research community (or communities), the potential for identifying new discipline-specific and interdisciplinary areas of research, and the nature of (and possibilities for) rethinking supervision within this context’ (ASARD, 2021). The discussion focuses on the need for a ‘rich research environment’, on training for

supervisors and students, and on the shifting boundaries in supervisory relationships that may take place when peer learning comes to the fore. The usual demarcations may become blurred, and whilst this can be problematic, it may also foster new ways of thinking about the specificity of the supervisor-student relationship, the dynamics of the multifaceted nature of the roles inhabited (by the supervisor and by the student), and the concept of ‘peer-ness’. Whilst reflecting upon what might lead to a new pedagogic discourse (Boud and Lee, 2005) the concern with peer learning clearly spills over and into a concern with wellbeing – raised by supervisors and students alike in their responses to the interviews and the survey carried out at The Glasgow School of Art (GSA) – which simultaneously leads to an examination of the potential role of mindfulness practice within the doctoral experience.

Situating supervision in relation to peer learning, pedagogy, learning and teaching, and situating its implications for artistic research is complex, particularly with regards to ethics. The ethical dimension demands trust, empathy, and compassion, especially within the context of supervision and peer learning for both supervisors and students. Therefore, the initial questions that have motivated this review include:

- To what extent is the development of a broad research environment across disciplines important for the development of an artistic research community?
- How important is it to create a critical mass of research staff and students as a community of peers?
- What is the benefit of creating specific discipline or inter-disciplinary supervisory teams?
- And, to what extent does ‘peer learning’ impact upon or enhance the situating of supervision in the research environment and what role does ‘mindfulness’ play?

These questions relate to how institutions build research environments and inculcate good practice in supervisory contexts. Of course, this comes with its own matters of institutional funding for research activities and of financial support for students in order to sustain such environments – be it internally, and/or externally from national (or international) research councils, independent arts funding bodies, professional partners, or other independent benefactors (for example, some countries such as the USA have a longstanding tradition of philanthropy). Where institutions are expected to develop research environments, most are dependent on a mixed economy of funding sources, not only those noted above, but also local government support and sponsorship for projects in communities via social enterprise and public health initiatives.

Over time the demand within the sector for artistic research to be taken seriously has been a difficult journey that, some would argue, requires a wholesale rethinking of the traditional relationships encountered in academia between the sciences and the arts (Wilson, 2018). This has been a longstanding discussion within the arts sector especially across Europe, for many independent arts institutions must forge links with universities to facilitate the enhancement of doctoral research: such links are productive in expanding the expertise available to prospective doctoral candidates. However, they limit the potential for independent arts institutions to access significant research funding streams whilst

maintaining their independent status, their commitment to art as research, and their potential as the site where such research is practiced.

Here, it is worth recalling the Australian experience since the early 2000s. It throws some light on the issue artistic researchers have encountered through locating artistic research within the university setting, and the subsequent amalgamation discussed in much of the literature where the repeated restructuring of faculties, schools or departments have in some instances diminished the status of the arts (Wilson, 2018). The location of creative arts disciplines within the organisational structure is important: for example, *as* faculties, divisions or colleges (regarded as first level) or *as* schools (regarded as second level); and relatedly, whether they are predominantly composed of artistic disciplines or multi-disciplinary in nature. Such things determine the extent to which those conducting research can make a positive contribution to the wider institutional research agenda and influence the decision-making process and budget allocations. Furthermore, it is clear that the way in which art(s) disciplines are understood, valued, and located within the organisational hierarchy of an institution is important, both ‘symbolically and practically’ (Wilson, 2018: 45). Such determines the extent to which staff feel valued, regardless of whether or not ‘art or music schools are identified as a “stand-alone” arts faculty or one where art forms a component of a multi-disciplinary school’ (Wilson, 2018: 45). Such things affect how staff perceives the position of their disciplines within these settings.

Several staff and students at GSA contributed to this project. On par with literature review, we engaged on interviews with staff with supervisory experience and run a student survey (of doctoral researchers at various stages in their doctoral journey and beyond) to grasp students’ experiences of their learning context. The scope of the questions asked is comprehensive and includes reflections upon supervision, peer learning and well-being. Whilst the 11 survey responses show a variety of experiences, it is important to note the size of the sample: its emerging themes cannot be taken as an accurate representation of the larger student body. Nevertheless, the responses provide us with a glimpse of current practices and issues at play. The student survey and staff interviews inform the reconsideration of the supervisor–student relationship, and the power relations such designations entail. With this in mind and with a focus on peer learning, we take David Boud and Alison Lee’s article, ‘*Peer learning*’ as pedagogic discourse for research education (2005), as our point of departure to examine their claim that a new pedagogic discourse is needed in which peer learning – and we might expand this to ideas of wellbeing and mindfulness – becomes much more significant within the learning experience. Significant to such an extent that we must reconsider notions of community as they may be understood within the context of research. Furthermore, this is not only a matter of research within the context of a research community, for the word ‘community’ is also understood in the wider societal, cultural, and professional sense in which research partnerships may develop.

Here, it is relevant to turn our attention to the artistic research PhD, which has been developing and establishing in distinct research cultures since it first appeared in the 1970s in the UK and in Japan (Elkins, 2013). The anxiety and disputes (real or imagined) in some

quarters of the academy that refuse the ‘claim to truth’ of (and for) art in the context of research, indeed art *as* research (McLeod & Holdridge, 2016) was followed by a prolonged discussion about practice-led-based-as research and so on, that led to the consensus acceptance of the term ‘artistic research’ in response to the term ‘scientific research’ (Biggs & Karlsson: 2011). Despite this, the debate that ensued has been one of the most productive in terms of generating a multi-disciplinary and multi-dimensional field of study true to its own protocols, processes, and manifestations. It is worth recounting the definition of artistic research articulated by Henk Borgdorff (2009: 21):

that domain of research and development in which the practice of art – that is, the making and the playing, the creation and the performance, and the works of art that result – play a constitutive role in a methodological sense.

Furthermore, as Jenny Wilson discusses, this ‘positions artistic disciplines firmly in the research and development arena’ (2018: 3). Whilst attentive to the ‘relationship of artistic research and academia in an institutional sense’ (Wilson, 2018: 3), it is interesting to note that Borgdorff’s views sit ‘on a tightrope between lobbying for the institutionalization of artistic research and critically assessing the impact of this academicization’ (Solleveld, cited in Wilson, 2018: 3–4).

Artistic research’s relatively short history in the academic environment, allied to the challenges of arts education as well as recent institutional pressures have contributed to the emergence of a wide range of supervisory practices. Whilst the relationship between student and supervisor (we will refer to the student herein as ‘research scholar’) is often considered to be at the core of the doctoral experience and crucial to the candidate’s progression, research has shown that the communities of practice and its allied peer learning inter-actions have a strong and often overlooked role in scholar development (Batty, 2016; Hanson et al., 2016; Stracke, 2010; Flores-Scott and Nerad, 2012; Gray et al. 2005; Hamilton and Carson, 2015a), particularly in the process of ‘becoming a peer’ (Boud and Lee, 2005).

It is difficult not to think about this through the prism of Covid-19, given the increased pressure that people (in this instance, scholars and supervisors) have been experiencing across the world. Support for a better understanding of mental health has come to the fore, and in recent years, mindfulness has become increasingly important within many institutions’ systems of pastoral support. In the UK, for instance, the *Mindfulness Initiative* was founded in 2013 to support British politicians in forming an All-Party Parliamentary Group on mindfulness. In March 2020, the first *Strategy for Mindfulness and Education* was published: it lays out the potential for positive impact on education at all levels and outlines how mindfulness may shape people’s lives beyond their educational experience.

Relatedly, particularly within the context of artistic research, ethical questions will undoubtedly arise, and we must be mindful of how deeply ethical our practices have become. It is within this context that pedagogic discourse may be rethought. Indeed, whilst exploring the potential of mindfulness approaches in education and whilst focused on inclusivity, we will do well to heed Audre Lorde’s acute 1978 observation that *the master’s tools will never*

dismantle the master's house, when challenging our own habitual whitewashing and exoticizing of curricula, regardless of recent attempts in many institutions that have focused on the de-colonisation of the canon to augment what is taught. This highlights the real need to foster a research environment that has inclusiveness as a strategic priority in research, central to each institution's regional, national, and international agendas. Agenda's that are less about exporting any given institution's world view and more about creating shared research-driven educational environments in which cultural exchange can flourish: in which encounters with 'difference', with different people from different cultures and socio-economic backgrounds, leads to a reimagining of institutions. This is an opportunity for art schools to lead the way in so many ways.

With these things in mind, we begin with a reflection on the development of research environments, a discussion on supervision in artistic research, and a commentary on training programmes for scholars and for supervisors, followed by an exploration of peer learning and divergent models of supervisory practice in order to establish good practice. We then turn our attention to student wellbeing and examine the potential of mindfulness to positively impact upon the doctoral experience, for pursuing a doctoral degree in artistic research is a complex and at times challenging endeavour. We also acknowledge that doctoral degrees are increasingly undertaken as lifelong learning experiences and explorations of artistic practice. The lack of academic jobs and the current ratio of doctoral completions per job openings raises the question of what the purpose of the doctoral degree is, and whether a disservice is being made to doctoral researchers who increasingly face a volatile job market on completion and uncertain employment prospects.

Establishing Research Environments

The *Florence Principles* outline a supportive research environment for the doctorate in the arts. Published by the European League of Institutes of the Arts (ELIA, 2016), the paper builds upon previous policy papers (such as *The Salzburg Principles*, 2005; *The Salzburg II Recommendations*, 2010; and others) to advocate for better support in funding, infrastructure, and policy for the academic arts sector. Aiming towards recognition on par with the scientific domains of teaching and learning, the *Florence Principles* recognise the doctorate in the arts and position artistic research as an area of practice in academic research. The paper raises questions around best practices, doctoral training, internationalisation, employability and career outcomes, inquiring how PhD graduates become embedded in the research environment of universities. It notes how distinct organisational structures – such as art universities, academies, and faculties part of wider institutions – affect the implementation of artistic research doctoral programmes, which results in a myriad of regulatory approaches across Europe (ELIA, 2016). The paper defines a supportive research environment as 'a critical mass of faculty and doctoral researchers, an active artistic research profile and an effective infrastructure which includes an international dimension (co-operations, partnerships, networks)' (ELIA, 2016: 11). This raises questions around how distinct research environments might contribute to the success of doctoral programmes.

As outlined in the Hanover report, *Building a Culture of Research: Recommended Practices*, it is ‘difficult to recognize a uniformly satisfying definition of a “culture of research”’ (Evans, cited in Hanover Research, 2014: 5). In fact, in attempting to define research culture, the authors draw on Teresa Marchant’s work in which she describes culture as a ‘system of widely shared and strongly held values’ (cited in Hanover Research, 2014: 5). In relation to this, Andrew Cheetham describes research culture as ‘the structure that gives [research behaviour] significance and that allows us to understand and evaluate the research activity’ (cited in Hanover Research, 2014: 5). Whilst ‘faculty at major research institutions have traditionally been expected to maintain scholarly activities, including conducting research and publishing scholarly works’ (Hanover Research, 2014: 5), over time, it has become essential for faculty in other higher education institutional settings to follow suite, to cultivate and to develop vibrant and active research environments, no less so in the arts. The development of a research culture has for many become central to the institution’s ethos. This is because it actively encourages the pursuit of new knowledge through funding grants which, when secured, can facilitate the enhancement of research and curricula development, as well as continuing professional development that can support the needs of graduates as post-doctoral scholars. It has therefore become important to consider the most effective ways of initiating and maintaining a research culture, especially in arts’ institutions that have not necessarily been afforded dedicated financial support to independently engage in research. The development of a research culture contributes to the enhancement of an institution’s reputation, which in turn enhances its ability to recruit high calibre faculty members with high quality research.

With these things in mind, our intention is to consider the importance of establishing a strong research culture, what makes it both viable and sustainable, and therefore highly productive within the institutional setting and beyond, for the societal and cultural impact is regarded as significant. In some instances, creating a healthy research environment from the ground up can take time, up to 10 years (Marchant, 2009). Therefore, when planning for such a large institutional shift in focus, it is important to develop a strategic plan that acknowledges the unique history of each institution, to define shared goals and a strategic mid-to-long term plan, of say 3-5 years, that recognises not only the research interests of the faculty but also the potential for the development of networks that enable the situating of doctoral study within a diverse contemporary arts and cultural context.

A research environment cannot be developed ad hoc. In many arts institutions, however, it appears to have developed in this way, for example, when faculty members are expected to maintain their own arts practice, and through their engagement with it, enhance the learning experience of the students they work with. This continues to be an accepted grass-roots pattern of engagement, one in which cultural producers working alongside each other develop shared concerns or interests. However, to establish a coherent research environment, institutions must set clear goals and staff must be responsive to them, establishing themes and areas of specific concern. Overarching goals must be open enough for the whole faculty to invest in and be clearly communicable, especially when financial support is sought; and given that funds are always limited, a well-defined process of evaluation and accountability

is required. Peer-review, common within academic publishing, artistic research publishing (e.g. the *Journal for Artistic Research*), and governmental frameworks (such as the *Research Excellence Framework* in the UK and the *Excellence in Research for Australia*) is perceived as an important means by which achievement is measured and value ascribed. Measuring success is still a challenge particularly when artistic research-related projects are competing for funding against humanities subjects which follow conventional peer review criteria, with reviewers often not familiar with alternative review models. Nevertheless, artistic research projects are increasingly being funded by research councils, and perhaps a shift is needed in enhancing transparency and awareness around artistic research peer review procedures and policies on par with conventional peer review models. Several funding awards for artistic research projects have been developing in Europe, such as the *Programme for Arts-based Research* (PEEK, Austrian Science Funds), the *Norwegian Artistic Research Programme* (discussed further in this text), and the Swedish Research Council funded programme for artistic research. The advent of these programmes and funding strands for artistic research also raise questions on how we define, measure, and evaluate the success of a research environment at an international scale, in both how applicants evidence the quality of their proposals and how funding is assessed and attributed. This feeds into the cycle of research quality and contributes to the development of research environments.

Sustainable Research Structures

The ideal structure of a research environment is one in which all members of academic staff in any given faculty, division, college, or school are recognised as having a responsibility for engaging in research and for generating new knowledge. Drawing links between overarching institutional research themes and each individual researcher's priorities in research, whilst identifying shared interests and common ground amongst faculty members, enables the development of research clusters with identifiable objectives that can lead to the positive development of new curricula. It is important that each researcher has the freedom to conduct research in whatever arena interests them, and that this is respected within the institution, although in some instances research areas (such as sexuality studies) have been at odds with the views of those in leadership roles. In Merchant's *Developing research culture: overcoming regional and historical obstacles*, 'the "ideal" structure and culture for research is that it permeates academic work' (2009: 56). In support of this assertion, she draws on the work of Pratt, Margaritis and Coy when they assert the importance of,

[a]cademics who are researching at the leading edge of their disciplines and are able to draw on this knowledge in their teaching. Graduate teaching programmes become a driving force for the development of the departments and the graduate students themselves help in developing new knowledge and exploring the frontiers of the discipline alongside their supervisors. Graduate students, a thriving research programme, and publications in the recognised academic and professional journals and conferences are hallmarks of successful university faculties (Pratt et al., cited in Merchant, 2009: 56–57).

Here, within the context of the arts, we will do well to include exhibitions, performances, events, and a whole range of socially engaged activities as comparable markers of success. However, whilst heeding Pratt et al.'s observations, Merchant argues that in her experience this ideal structure is rarely how research is conducted or how researchers operate. She identifies five distinct models:

Independent researchers – there is no central research core in the unit and research is carried out by a few individuals, usually operating alone with little or no budgetary support.

Stars – most or all research is carried out by a very small number of 'star' performers. In this model research is limited to the scope and range of the stars' interests.

Independent centralised model – a core group of academics carry out most of the research with other staff on the periphery and still others acting independently, but still no majority of research active staff.

Collaborative centralised – a core group of skilled academics promote research activity and gather others into the process, creating a critical mass at the central core.

Multi-core – several collaborative centralised groups can be found across the university (Shamai and Kfir 2002). (Merchant, 2009: 57, italics in original)

Such situations can emerge if there is a degree of inequity between staff and research scholars, or if there is an imbalance between teaching workloads and time dedicated to research. If issues arise with regards to working with, say, undergraduate students and student needs, most staff automatically focus on the resolution of issues rather than adhering to the time allocated to research. It is relevant to note though how research culture is often linked to individual approaches to research of particular staff members: whether they are inclined to work collaboratively, are 'star' performers, or operate alone as independent researchers. It may thus fall on the leadership to promote the kind of research culture they want to encourage, potentially by carefully managing access to research time, exploring potential research clusters with staff, and/or encouraging collaborations. Additionally, we might experience distinct models operating simultaneously in different departments within the same institution, in distinct groups, as well as at different times of an institution's history.

Sufficient funding is necessary to enhance training for staff as well as for doctoral researchers, not only with regards to supervision but also to writing grant applications, project management, facilitating the dissemination and impact of research, and the potential augmentation of research time allocation, all of which is dealt with centrally in small institutional settings. Training and support for staff is essential and a range of strategies can be employed. For example, identifying staff skills needs through needs assessment; mentoring towards building research capacity; continuing professional development within academia through the provision of formal educational courses; support for grant-writing; allocation of research funding in the initial phases of project development; and support for

doctoral degree completions. Therefore, the development of a research environment is closely linked to an institution's capacity to establish a clear agenda supported by adequate funding to enhance staff and student capacity through training, building their research expertise, which in turn contributes to the overall goals of the department or institution.

Effective Leadership

Leadership is a key factor in identifying the potential for motivating staff especially through career review processes that may identify new research initiatives to be cultivated. Working collegiately, even within the arts where research is often seen as a solitary activity, is central to enhancing and developing a productive research environment in which knowledge is shared. Recognising potential and providing appropriate support (remuneration) for a researcher's engagement with research is essential and those institutions that take research seriously support their staff in a range of ways, through (Hanover Research, 2014):

- 'Effective Leadership and Clear Goals;
- Faculty Training and Support Programs;
- Research Centres;
- Recognition of Research Production;
- Encouragement of Faculty Collaboration;
- Balanced Teaching and Research Responsibilities; and
- Pay that is Commensurate with Expectations' (2014: 11).

Very often, a key appointment will be the Director of Research or the Research Coordinator, depending on the institution's internal structure and size. Such roles can help to identify and focus key agendas within research environments and are often responsible for local funding panels that distribute funding to staff initiatives. The role is highly operational and strategic. However, such high profile appointments need to be considered carefully for they can be contentious: directors of institutions and faculty can be seduced by the charismatic high flyer whilst dismissing the diligent and conscientious bureaucrat. This may seem trite but there is a serious point to be made, for the appointment of the apparently *charismatic leader* over a period of time can be revealed as ineffective – they can become highly disruptive when under pressure – until they eventually fail through their own exhaustion or move on to another unwitting institution.

Leaders are indeed fallible, but they have to be seen to be supportive and trustworthy, collegiate and fair and above all, visionary. The visionary or rather 'transformational' research leader understands the zeitgeist (if we hold on to our own artistic heritage) and sees the potential within the faculty they have been employed to support and enables the faculty to grow and to develop their own research and academic interests. As Merchant comments,

Borrowing from the transformational theory of leadership (Burns in Dubrin, Dalglish & Miller 2006), creating or reinforcing a research culture requires leaders who can influence academics towards the goal of creating and disseminating new knowledge. Transformational leaders demonstrate four specific behaviours: *idealised influence* by being role models of

successful research. They develop, collegially in the case of universities, a shared vision about what a successful research school, faculty or university looks like and make sure they and others can articulate this vision to create *inspirational motivation*. Transformational research leaders also provide *intellectual stimulation* which allows and encourages questioning of the status quo. Finally, they provide *individualised consideration* which meets each academic ‘where they are at’ vis-à-vis research and provide tailored understanding, support or autonomy depending on that individual’s particular needs and attitudes (2009: 60, italics in original).

Furthermore, it is interesting to observe how normative approaches to leadership development have been challenged, particularly within the arts. It feels right in the context of this paper to direct the reader’s attention to the work of the *European Arts-Based Development of Distributed Leadership and Innovation in Schools (ENABLES)* Erasmus+ project led by the University of Hertfordshire (UK) in partnership with five institutions across Europe exploring leadership in schools: University of Jyväskylä (Finland); Institute of Lifelong Learning and Culture; «VITAE» (Latvia); University of Innsbruck (Austria); and Alexandru Ioan Cuza University (Romania). The ENABLES project ‘examined 50 publications which reported research into the use of arts-based and embodied (ABE) methods of leadership development and offered knowledge concerning whether and how such methods contribute to leadership development’ (Woods et al., 2020: 3). The analysis discusses a diverse range of leadership constructions ‘from notions of the heroic leader through to a more holistic understanding of leadership as a complex, emotional, relational, embodied concept’ (Woods et al., 2020: 3). The report is intriguing in its deliberation on ABE methods and their potential for enhancing the experience of ‘leaders in development’. The partners developed a *Knowledge Platform*, described in the report as ‘a state-of-the-art systematic review of existing research literature on ABE methods of leadership development’ (Woods et al., 2020: 8). Although ENABLES is focused on schools, it is useful to note the value of the distributed leadership model – which we expand on further in this text in relation to peer learning in academic contexts – and its applicability within the higher education (HE) sector.

Exploring Critical Mass

As doctoral studies in small institutions attract low numbers of students each year, often spread across different departments, achieving critical mass is a delicate endeavour. The question of how many students is enough or too many is closely linked to an institutions’ capacity to provide adequate resources and robust supervision without depleting and stretching staff members. Here, another issue is the distribution of doctoral candidates by staff members. Often, some academics attract more students than others, with new supervisors taking responsibility for a smaller number of students as they develop their practice. The development of critical mass is therefore closely related to an institutions’ supervisory capacity, as well as its ability to develop research ecologies where peer learning can take place in a sustained and regular fashion. Providing opportunities for peer encounters

through institution-wide research events and groups, supports staff and students to feel that they are part of their environment's research culture. Further, reaching out outside the institution towards trans-national / international networks or training programmes – such as the summer schools – provides a strategy to counteract the lack of critical mass within doctoral programmes.

The development of a research culture takes time, investment, goodwill amongst the staff and the potential research community if it is to take root. If it is well structured, both staff and students benefit. The establishment of research centres/clusters usually emerges from internal discussions between staff identifying themes and common interests, perhaps in line with overarching institutional priorities such as social justice, climate change and sustainability. There are numerous vibrant research clusters across Europe which explore a diverse range of themes in the arts, such as:

- Arts-based Research, Citizen Science/Participatory Research, Memory Studies, Postcolonialism, Transcultural Learning/Education (Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Austria);
- Cultural Sciences, Intermediality, Space Strategies (University of Art and Industrial Design Linz, Austria);
- Advanced 3D Technologies, Game Studies, New Media Art, Performance, Photography, Visual Arts (Brno University of Technology, Czech Republic);
- Art Infrastructures & Collectivity in Art, Media and Material Research, The Body & More Than Human (Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Denmark);
- Contemporary Art and Image Research (University of the art Arts Hensinki, Finland);
- Invention of Forms, New Ways of Publishing, Transmission and Memory, Visual Arts (Paris Sciences et Lettres, France);
- Art & Psychoanalysis, Gender in Art, Performative Art Practices & Theory (Athens School of Fine Arts, Greece);
- Artificial Intelligence, New Materials, The City (Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Netherlands);
- Architecture Urbanism & the Public Sphere, Contemporary Art & Curating, Design Innovation, Digital Visualisation, Education in Art Design & Architecture, Health & Well-being (The Glasgow School of Art, Scotland).

These distinct research ecologies distributed across European contexts are embedded into larger networks. ELIA, the European League of Institutes of the Arts, is a global network set in 1990 representing 260 institutions across 48 countries in several arts disciplines. It advocates for the development of education in higher education institutions (HEIs) by creating opportunities and by developing good practice (ELIA, 2021). Through events, research, networks, and policy papers, it facilitates wider access to provision on topical concerns. ELIA is also invested in exploring the questions, problematics, and concerns of artistic research as a field of studies through research events which bring artist-researchers across disciplines together to discuss and enquire into the workings of the disciplines

themselves. In so doing, ELIA also provides a context where practitioners from distinct European research clusters connect and interchange ideas.

The development of a research environment may be considered both within departmental cultures and across the wider institutional setting. Different strategies may therefore be adopted. This may bring challenges as each department adopts shared values and views on what constitutes research, which might differ from another department in the same institution. This may create a sense of isolation, particularly for doctoral researchers in the process of developing their ‘researcher identities’ (Guerin, Kerr and Green, 2015), who may feel they are not being ‘taken seriously’ (survey respondent, 2021). As the Hanover report states, a ‘culture of research provides a supportive context in which research is uniformly expected, discussed, produced, and valued’ (2014: 5). In practice, this takes shape in different ways in how each institution develops a context for the production, discussion, and communication of research endeavours, both within institutional contexts and through international partnerships. For example, the *Centre for Artistic Research* at Uniarts Helsinki functions as a hub for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers, and provides a platform for the dissemination, discussion, and collaboration, also open internationally. Uniarts was established in 2013 and brings together the Academy of Fine Arts, Sibelius Academy and Theatre Academy with a research strategy of exploring and enhancing interactions between the academies. At the Norway Academy of Music, doctoral research fellowships contribute to knowledge development in key priority areas as part of the wider research strategy. The Malmo Faculty of Fine & Performing Arts (Sweden) focuses specifically on developing interdisciplinary and social collaborations accompanied by internationalisation, with doctoral candidates embedded in the institution’s research areas. In Gothenburg, the Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts focuses on close links with international networks such as ELIA, SAR and EARN, as well as membership of discipline-related organisations, and partnerships with foundations and research councils. Following a scientific model, the Institute for Artistic Research in Berlin frames artistic practice within a professional framework, with doctoral and postdoctoral researchers embedded in specific projects where they work within a team. These brief examples highlight numerous approaches to the development of a research environment, often linked to an institution’s agenda, strategy, history, and context.

Internationalisation of Research Environments

Considering the internationalisation of research environments, it is relevant to note the current European programme of *Cotutelle Européenne* (‘European co-supervision’), bi-national PhDs initiated in France where doctoral students enrol in two universities in different countries and follow a co-supervision model with a principal supervisor in each institution. Swissuniversities defines the Cotutelle de l’Hesce as a ‘cooperation between two higher education institutions that have the authority to confer a PhD’ (2021). Research is carried out in both countries, and on the award of the degree, students receive a dual doctoral qualification from both institutions. This approach promotes the internationalisation of doctoral training, as candidates are required to spend periods of time in both institutions. Bi-

national PhDs also promote mobility, international cooperation, the development of an international dimension, and the visibility of the institutions involved. For doctoral researchers, the appeal of these programmes lies in the building of an international and cross-cultural profile through a European doctorate. On scientific disciplines, job prospects are enhanced, as graduates are knowledgeable of two research environments with qualifications in two countries, widening their pool of career opportunities (Université franco-allemande Deutsch-Französische Hochschule, n.d.). *Cotutelle Européenne* has been successfully implemented in central Europe and funding can be sought for Franco-German, Franco-Swiss, and Franco-Italian cotutelles from the Université franco-allemande Deutsch-Französische Hochschule (who funds all disciplines), Swiss universities, and Université Franco Italienne respectively. The *Cotutelle Européennes* as a model for strengthening doctoral programmes and for developing international partnerships brings out the specificities, expertise, and knowledge of the distinct research environments that the doctoral researcher engages with, pooling resources for building tailored doctoral experiences appropriate for a specific project. It also highlights the current scope, willingness and need for internationalisation and cooperation across distinct research environments, fostering a context where doctoral researchers can learn from best practices across research cultures. The same can be said for supervisors involved in the joint-supervisory process who engage in an exchange of practices across international research environments.

Within an arts context, for instance, there is an opportunity to consider how a European Doctoral College or a bi-national doctoral programme might function. As a staff member at GSA stated, ‘getting on the front foot in terms of internationalizing PhDs needs to be prioritized and the opportunities from that will impact on supervision in the future’ (staff interview, 2021). Considering the advantages of developing international structures, frameworks, and doctoral programmes, it is clear that for mobile candidates – and here there are issues of accessibility, inclusivity, and student circumstances which might prevent highly qualified candidates from accessing these type of programmes – there is much to gain from international doctoral provision. However, there are a number of added challenges, particularly, considering the realm of artistic research practice in terms of resources, equipment, studio, materials, storage and logistics, which are not necessarily easily mobile. A second challenge is the wide variety of views and models on what *is* artistic research, from the highly regulated doctorate in the UK to the emphasis on practice in Nordic countries, and the conversations around academization of art in central Europe. This would make for an exciting and rich cross-fertilisation and sharing of ideas and international best practices for candidates and institutions alike.

Developing a national trans-institutional research culture

A research environment can also be fostered and developed from the ground up on a trans-institutional level by building capacity to offer training and support for doctoral researchers, particularly, in small institutions where critical mass is harder to build. A key example of this is the *Norwegian Artistic Research Programme* (NARP), funded by Diku (2021), the Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education in

Norway. In Norway, artistic research has had the same status as scientific research since 1995. This enabled the development of the *Artistic Research Fellowship Programme* in 2003, a funded alternative to scientific doctoral programmes, introduced as a strategy to develop critical mass (Malterud, 2013). Currently, NARP funds and promotes artistic research in Norway bringing several institutions together (such as the Arctic University of Norway; Norwegian Academy of Music; Oslo National Academy of Arts; Faculty of Fine Art, Music and Design; University of Bergen; and Norwegian University of Science and Technology). It also provides compulsory research training: the *Norwegian Artistic Research School*, where students come together from all doctoral programmes in the country. Training includes ethics, literature review, artistic research methods and methodologies, theoretical foundations of artistic research, dissemination, conferences and presentations, and writing research questions (Diku, 2021). NARP is also associated with the Summer Academy of Artistic Research (SAAR, 2021) providing further opportunities for international engagement with doctoral peers. As one SAAR participant relayed, ‘it was important to meet peers from other universities and countries and to understand and feel more the different tones of artistic research in different institutions, it gives perspective and new ideas’ (SAAR participant, 2019). Another participant noted how their programme in a ‘small institution’ with ‘seldom exchange with other research fellows’ about their projects meant that the summer school was highly beneficial, due to the ‘possibility for exchange with other peers’ (SAAR participant, 2019). This development of critical mass through creating trans-institutional research cultures contributes positively to enhancing current understanding of distinct modes and ways of doing artistic research, as well as exposing doctoral researchers to new ways of looking, thinking, and approaching their research projects. The summer school also provides numerous opportunities for productive peer learning, discussed further in this text.

Another example of trans-institutional research training is the *Scottish Graduate School of Arts and Humanities*, the first national graduate school in Arts and Humanities which brings together sixteen Scottish HEIs across Scotland (SGSAH, 2021a). The Graduate School offers bespoke training for doctoral researchers through several events, funded opportunities and research training activities, such as the Summer School, artistic residencies, and paid research internships with creative industry partners (including BBC Scotland, National Trust for Scotland, the Victoria & Albert Museum, and the Scottish Cultural Heritage Consortium to name a few). Operating across academia, the heritage sector, the creative industries, and the wider cultural context, the SGSAH provides a platform for students to engage with and rethink their work within the wider social-cultural scale. It provides opportunities for not only framing their practice outside academia, but also for developing local, regional, and wider networks, whether with their peers, with staff in other institutions, and/or with local communities. In providing sustained opportunities for research development outside one’s institutional context, the SGSAH offers a framework for research ecologies to form and to grow, within and across institutional contexts, according to emergent trans-institutional interests, and in dialogue with the wider cultural sector.

Through regular research-related events which bring together doctoral candidates across HEIs in Scotland, the SGSAH also establishes and encourages networks between doctoral scholars and staff: inter-institutional research networks develop (such as *Modernist Methodologies: Beyond Fine Art*), and students find external supervisors to join their supervisory team. This happens in a serendipitous and informal manner as research interests converge and conversations expand into research activity. Nonetheless, it adds substantial value in building opportunities for researchers at distinct stages to network and find common areas of interest, strengthening research connections across institutions. In parallel, SGSAH has also in recent years began running formal disciplinary and thematic events, the *Discipline Plus Catalysts*, which ‘brings together cross institutional cohorts of students working on similar research areas’ (staff interview, 2021) leading to the development of inter-institutional peer groups. Further, the SGSAH also contributes to the development of a broader sense of community outside of the institution, through self-initiated student engagement with external events and research communities (student survey, 2021). Most students surveyed (85%) felt they had the opportunity to be part of a research community across different institutions:

I feel more part of my wider... research community due to the many research training events programmed in my first year (external to GSA) and the [SGSAH] funding that we were encouraged to apply for in groups across different institutions to programme student-led events with fellow researchers in that community (survey respondent, 2021).

Students identified the SGSAH as a key opportunity for community development outside their academic setting. In this context, the SGSAH operates not only as a structure but also as a catalyst for peers to develop their own research cultures and micro ecologies, which might expand into wider networks. As Alias Masek and Maizan Alias state, ‘supervisors and students do not exist in a vacuum; they exist in an environment which could be conducive or detrimental to research endeavours’ (2020: 2496). The SGSAH provides a supportive environment for both staff and students to engage in, explore, and develop their research within a trans-institutional setting, expanding research ecologies whilst providing peer learning opportunities, particularly relevant for doctoral scholars in departments with low numbers of candidates.

Earlier in 2016, the pioneering project *Scottish Practice Research Network* (SPRN) founded by artistic research doctoral candidates across seven HEIs in Scotland piloted the development of a national artistic research community. The initiative was led by Professor Deirdre Heddon and supported by the SGSAH. It aimed to be a platform for knowledge exchange and showcasing work; to connect artistic research students across Scotland building local and national networks; and to provide support with resources, research skills, and career development for artistic research doctorates (SPRN, 2016). The launch event brought together doctoral candidates and speakers in a full day of workshops to explore the remit of the network and modes of doing artistic research. SPRN also organised a full day dedicated to artistic research in the SGSAH Summer School in 2017 attended by over 50 doctoral researchers, exploring the relations between the written thesis and creative practice and how practice might be presented, experienced, published, and documented. Building and

sustaining an inter-institutional doctoral network, with its immense benefits for developing community and wider research ecologies, brings several challenges nonetheless: funding, dedicated time, the geographical spread, and differing views on the network's focus and areas for growth. The sustainability of a network requires allocated funding to support its activities and plans: with numerous unfunded doctoral students, a funded research assistantship to run an inter-institutional network would be appealing: a form of research training with impact on career development.

An example of a cross-disciplinary SGSAH activity is the *Practice Research Assembly* (PRA) led by Prof. Maria Fusco. Covering a wide range of fields from fine arts, architecture, performance and music, the PRA comprises presentations and workshops with a focus on the various strands and demands of artistic research (SGSAH, 2021b). The sessions, aimed at prospective and current students as well as independent researchers, comprise a mixture of keynotes on artistic practice and methodologies as well as open spaces for prospective doctoral students to enquire about artistic research in their field (SGSAH, 2021b). Fusco devised the sessions to examine the PhD journey from application to completion as, in her words, the 'peculiarities and demands of practice research' required an 'extra space for debate and advice' (Fusco, 2021). She is interested in experimenting in public 'as a creative process', using the public frame of the sessions to discuss and explore recurrent questions and 'demystify the process' of engaging in artistic research doctorates (Fusco, 2021). She writes, 'part of our responsibility as supervisors and completed doctoral students is to show *what's possible*' (Fusco, 2021, original emphasis). This generosity highlights the distinct possibilities that artistic research doctorates may offer in fields where their new-ness (or as so they are perceived) are a source of anxiety for incoming and current students who do not know what an artistic research PhD looks like. Opening a public space for practitioners from distinct disciplines to come together creates a broader artistic research community and highlights how practitioners are operating in their fields, potentially leading to a cross-fertilisation of ideas, methods, and processes. In supporting initiatives such as the *Practice Research Assembly*, the SGSAH has a key role in contributing to the development of a broad research environment across disciplines.

The development of research environments has taken place slowly over the years as institutions build partnerships, develop staff, and refine areas of enquiry. Nonetheless, current social and cultural concerns are evident in many institutions: thinking around ecology and sustainability; development of strategies to foster inclusion, diversity and equality; and recent discussions around the 'me too' movement. The #MeTooPhD Twitter hashtag for example, exposes unwelcome advances in the work environment in academia, which can be further intensified by the power and hierarchical context of the student-supervisory relationship. Moving forward, the latter point contributes to the argument for co-supervision as the standard supervision model.

The impact of the development of research ecologies can also be seen in learning and teaching. In institutions where research has become well-established, it is clear that it has had a positive impact on the development of curricula at undergraduate and postgraduate

level. For example, at both BA and MA level, students are encouraged to develop an understanding of research methods and methodologies. Consequently, the development of the research environment impacts positively in an organic curriculum that changes with time, contributing to the decolonisation of teaching approaches, materials, and sources, in core teaching or elective subjects. Thus, research circulates through all levels of academic practice: teaching, mentoring, and supervising.

Artistic Research Supervision

The artistic research PhD developed across Europe in the last thirty years. Its relatively short history, allied to the challenges of art studio education and to recent institutional pressures, contributes to the emergence of a wide range of supervisory practices. Whilst the relationship between student and supervisor is often considered to be at the core of the doctoral experience and crucial to candidate progression, recent research highlights the value of peer learning in student development (Batty, 2016; Hanson et al., 2016; Stracke, 2010; Flores-Scott and Nerad, 2012; Gray et al. 2005; Hamilton and Carson, 2015a). Next, we offer an overview of supervision in artistic research, followed by a discussion of supervisor training and of doctoral research training programmes.

Contextual Review

Recent changes in the higher education sector brought new challenges to supervision and a need to enhance supervisory practices in the UK, Europe, USA and Australasia (Hamilton and Carson, 2015a). In the UK, early higher educational reports on the doctorate shed doubt on the validity of creative practice as a research activity (UK Council for Graduate Education, 1997). In the mid-2000s, the lack of experienced supervisors and of examples of doctoral research, methodologies, and practices in the field led to challenges in the implementation of the artistic research PhD (Hockey, 2007), exacerbated by the lack of experience in implementing well-rounded research training in the arts (Gray et al., 2005). Most recently, networks such as ELIA and SHARE have been examining the complexities and potentialities of artistic doctorates, advocating for its recognition in the *Florence Principles* (ELIA, 2016) and for support in the form of appropriate funding and legislation in the *Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research* (ELIA, 2020). Simultaneously, funding pressures in HE to improve completion times / rates allied to the implementation of new policies (such as the Quality Code for Higher Education in the UK) brought new pressures for supervisors (Hamilton and Carson, 2015a). Doctoral schools increased student numbers and expanded in scope and across disciplines, creating a gap in supervisory capacity and expertise (Hamilton and Carson, 2015a). To respond to this context, HEIs in Australia, for example, increased the number of candidates per supervisor and jumpstarted staff members into primary supervision, whilst some supervisors undertook doctoral projects in adjacent disciplines to respond to student needs (Hamilton and Carson, 2015a). A wide range of practices and projects as well as of supervisory approaches emerged, bringing with it new challenges in supervision (Hamilton and Carson, 2015a). These institutional pressures (Hamilton and Carson, 2015a) combined with the distinctive approaches of artistic practice

(Bento-Coelho and Gilson, 2021) and the lack of transferability of established doctoral protocols to the art school context (Hamilton and Carson, 2015a) contribute to the complexity of artistic research supervision. Consequently, more attention has been paid to the supervision of artistic research doctorates in the last decade, with an emergent need to develop clear protocols (Baker and Buckley, 2009).

Several projects addressing research supervision in creative arts disciplines were funded by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching (Hamilton and Carson, 2015a and 2015b; Baker and Buckley, 2009). A special issue in the *TEXT* journal (Brien and Williamson, 2009) addresses best practice in supervision, particularly exploring ways of strengthening the student-supervisory relationship. Of note is a proposition to shift the supervision paradigm towards a process of training future researchers in artistic fields (Biggs and Büchler, 2009). Another publication offers a detailed framework for supervisors to think about their practice as pedagogy: considering supervisory roles as directive, collaborative, and/or responsive, and supervisory approaches as scaffolding, direction setting, and/or relationship based (Bruce and Stoodley, 2009). These may be combined and adopted in distinct ways as needed throughout the degree (2009). The framework offers supervisors clarity in the distinct ways they may approach supervision, the roles they may take, and how they may be articulated in different situations. In another study, Jillian Hamilton and Sue Carson (2013a) propose 12 principles for effective supervision (particularly relevant for new supervisors), providing clear guidance for supervisory practice (Table 1). The principles reflect some of the challenges of supervision in artistic research. The last principle – sharing supervisory practice with colleagues – reflects the critical value of peer learning for the development of supervisory capacity, as we discuss further on.

1. Adopt a student-centred approach *student focused, student led*
2. Embrace diverse projects, practices and working methods *all projects are different*
3. Ensure your students believe in the validity of creative practice research and its experimental nature *we need rigorous research degrees that explore art*
4. The theory and practice need to speak to each other *together the theory and practice make the thesis*
5. The theory and practice might not be done simultaneously, despite the need to work together in the completed work *some things can't be expressed in words*
6. Balance the big picture and attention to the detail *zoom in and zoom out*
7. Provide frequent, constructive feedback *climb inside their drafts*
8. A supervisor should also attend to the practice in the studio *sit with the work*
9. Provide support while managing interpersonal relationships *a strategically guided journey*

10. Milestones are time consuming, but ultimately rewarding components of the journey *it helps get into the academic space*
11. Don't feel limited by boundaries as a supervisor, but be aware of regulations *be tolerant of ambiguity*
12. Reflect, discuss and share your practices with colleagues *the best academic development is talking things through*

Table 1: The 12 Principles for the Effective Supervision of Creative Practice Higher Research Degrees, by Hamilton and Carson (2013a).

Another Australian publication offers personal perspectives from authors based in the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology on an array of areas, ranging from ethics, writing, sound practices, exhibition, and examination (Allpress et al., 2012). Lesley Duxbury, for example, describes how her supervision approach oscillates between several roles: ‘director, facilitator, advisor, teacher, critic, supporter, collaborator, friend or mentor’ (2012: 17). Duxbury reflects on how adopting a ‘hands on’ supervisory approach (Sinclair, 2004) enables her to structure the work and support the candidate. Mark Sinclair’s (2004) conception of supervision as a spectrum between ‘hands on’ – where the supervisor takes an interventionist approach to supervision – and ‘hand off’ – where the candidate works more independently – provides a useful context to consider supervision in relation to peer learning. He argues that a ‘hands on’ approach – associated with higher completion rates – is most successful, as it demystifies doctoral processes and provides a clear structure at the start of the degree (2004). Further, a ‘hands on’ pedagogy adopts, amongst other approaches, a teamwork *modus operandi*, encouraging students to get involved in professional development activities (such as joining networks, research groups or co-authoring) and fostering collaborations between doctoral candidates (2004). These situations are conducive to peer learning as we explore further in this paper.

Most recently, European projects investigated new approaches to supervision in creative practice providing a realm of resources which can be adopted and adapted for other artistic disciplines. In *Artistic Doctorates in Europe*, Jane Bacon and Vida Midgelow explore alternative modes of supervision with a focus on dance and performing arts. In *Reconsidering Research and Supervision as Creative Embodied Practice* (2019), they propose studio strategies to bring the artistic practice forward, and to engage in forms of knowledge production and exchange beyond the potentiality of spoken and written discourse. These strategies could be adapted to other creative fields, and it would be worth exploring distinct ways in which the supervisory context might incorporate the practice more fully. Bacon and Midgelow’s proposition for how to be a supervisor in artistic research (Table 2) can be read in tandem with the 12 principles discussed earlier. Seeing both in parallel shows how thinking about supervision has evolved towards developing a clear connection with artistic practice, considering more closely how supervisors might approach the practice realm. Some of the suggestions overlap – working between micro and macro, tracking progress, and managing institutional regulations for example – which highlights

how the ability to successfully attend to these issues is crucial to support students in their doctoral processes.

What it takes to be an Artistic Research supervisor:

- A willingness to reconsider and approach your supervisor/mentor/facilitator practice – perhaps, changing and challenging your own expectations of candidates;
- An ability to apply and be self-reflexive in relation to artistic practice;
- Knowledge of your own strengths and weaknesses;
- Interest and commitment to embracing criticality;
- Willingness to both challenge and champion;
- An understanding of the different time requirements and inherent tensions between artistic practices and university regulations;
- An understanding of embodied [or other artistic] practices and commitment to the logics of practice;
- A capacity to hold rigour and clarity of purpose as potentials in the candidate rather than imposing them;
- An interest in the practice of the candidate and the candidate themselves;
- Embodied [or field-specific] knowledges and specialist insights;
- An ability to stay attuned to wider contexts, working together with micro and macro, zooming in and out.
- An ability to track progress while allowing an openness and trust in the process
- An awareness of, and ability to challenge if needed, the institutional regulations.

Table 2: *What it takes to be an Artistic Research supervisor*, by Bacon and Middelow (2019: 11). Adapted by Bento-Coelho and Gilson (2021) to reflect wider artistic practices. This version is the original with adaptations in brackets.

Inspired by *Artistic Doctorates in Europe*, the research project *Visioning the Future: Artistic Doctorates in Ireland* (Gilson and Bento-Coelho, 2020) addressed several concerns in artistic research PhDs with a focus on the disciplines of Film and Screen Media, Music, and Theatre. The project involved an online Seminar Series with international experts, examination of doctoral regulations across Irish HEIs, and several interviews with doctoral students and staff. The resulting open access materials, *Artistic Doctorate Resources* (Bento-Coelho and Gilson, 2021), encompasses pedagogies and policy recommendations for supervisors, examiners, doctoral students, and PhD coordinators. It highlights common challenges in doctoral supervision in artistic contexts, and proposes ways for supervisors to hold space for and to enable the candidate's agency and their work to thrive in the process. The resource also offers students strategies to take the most out of supervision, providing guidance on how to prepare, document, reflect and act upon supervisory meetings. Whilst developed for film and performance practices, the resources are widely transferable to other artistic fields such as visual arts, design, and architecture.

These distinct approaches to supervisory practice highlight how the supervisor role can substantially differ in terms of outlooks, learning situations, and attitudes towards supervision. Differences in the student body – from those who went from BA to PhD to mature artists with established careers – also require alternative supervisory strategies, rendering a one-size-fits-all approach unsuitable (Duxbury, 2012). Whilst we do not wish to attempt to define what supervision *is* in the art school context – this has been successfully discussed elsewhere (Allpress, 2012; Nelson, 2013) – some approaches explored in the literature deserve further attention in relation to peer learning and student wellbeing: the focus on encouraging reflexivity (Nelson, 2013; Duxbury, 2012), and the dynamic quality of the role (Hamilton and Carson, 2015a).

Creating learning situations which foster reflexivity may offer a potential umbrella framework for supervision in artistic research. In *Practice as Research in the Arts*, Robin Nelson discusses how his supervisory practice is grounded on encouraging students to reflect on ‘doing thinking’ and to find resonance with the readings (2013). In providing timely guidance through enquiry, the supervisor can support the student to make ‘the tacit explicit by gently but persistently ensuring profound reflexivity’ and guide the candidate ‘towards establishing the resonances between the praxis at the heart of the PhD and its other dimensions’ (Nelson, 2013: 105). The role of the supervisor can be described as one of supporting discovery (Duxbury, 2012) by creating learning situations where students develop clarity around the distinct elements of their project. This focus on nurturing reflexivity can also be taken to peer learning situations.

Considering supervision as a dynamic process which responds to shifting students’ needs requires flexibility and adaptability on the supervisors’ part: ‘[s]upervisors must continually adapt their approach during different stages of candidature and modify their relationship with each student as they gain research capacity and independence’ (Hamilton and Carson, 2015a: 1243). This view is echoed by a staff member at GSA as they describe how supervision unfolds through time as project needs change:

The unfolding is quite open at the beginning, because it’s about the student understanding how they want to progress their research without putting up too many blocks or too many kinds of doorways to have to get through (...). When you move towards the end of a three-year PhD, it would become much more about a student submitting the written parts of their PhD, that being reviewed, and really going into the supervision with quite substantial suggestions. (...) At times it can be quite fluid. And other times it’s quite direct and more about completion.

They further reflect that,

In following through a PhD project you’ve probably got at least three or four different supervisory styles. At the start you’ve got a pre-submission proposal, and in the UK, you work with the student and look at the proposal before they’ve submitted it and offer advice. (...) You’ve then got the year one work, which is more open and fluid, it’s defined through the research and how you are undertaking that research. Then finally, you are

delivering that research to the audience. (...) I would say there's at least three forms or methods to be employed as a supervisor as you work through the project (staff interview, 2021).

An awareness of supervision as a dynamic activity which requires distinct strategies, enables a new supervisor to embrace various and changing approaches as part of an evolving process of supporting a student to develop their capacity as an independent researcher. Whilst this is also true for science and humanities, artistic practice raises additional challenges. In reflecting on her approach, and in resonance with the quote above, Duxbury suggests that supervision is more intense at the start of the degree as the student is defining their research topic and scope, less directed in the middle of the programme as the candidate delves into their practice, and again more directed in the later stages where support with writing is required (2012). Her view highlights how different strands of work – theoretical and practical – might require adjustments in the supervisory strategies adopted. For example, a discussion in the studio may take a peer dialogue form (artist-to-artist), versus a mentoring relationship (student-teacher) in relation to critical writing (2012). Further, the wide scope of artistic practice, the lack of supervisory expertise in specific areas (Nelson, 2013), and the low numbers of supervisors (Hamilton and Carson, 2015b) suggests that staff is more likely to supervise students operating in distinct mediums, outside one's research interests, or following distinct methodological perspectives (Hamilton and Carson, 2013b). Interestingly, the interviews with supervisors conducted at GSA revealed that this was the case for several new supervisors, normally attracting students exploring realms closer to their research interests by the fourth or fifth student supervised. The increase in applicants aligned with the supervisor's research interests was suggested to be due to 'reputational gain' and to the 'building up of cohorts' (staff interview, 2021). This need for a flexible and dynamic approach to supervision enables distinct forms of supervisory practice to develop, co-exist, and inform one another.

Supervisor Training Programmes

Across the sector, training for supervisors differs from institution to institution: it encompasses both formal and informal approaches, including peer learning and peer mentoring. Peer mentoring – where more experienced supervisors support colleagues who wish to take on supervisory roles – although potentially less formal, enhances supervisory teams within a collegiate environment. In many institutions, a series of induction events appraises those wishing to take on supervisory responsibilities of the nature of the role and its potential issues: for example, how to support a student if they feel they hit an impasse in their work, how to deal with difficulties in the supervisor/student relationship, and how to deal with anxiety and student's feelings of inadequacy which are all too familiar in doctoral scenarios. In addition, supervisors from external organisations or professional environments often join a supervisory team as a second or third supervisor, or as an advisor to the project. Support in their new role should include both induction and mentoring, the latter clearly essential throughout the duration of the project. It is important then for institutions to develop a robust induction process for new supervisors to engage with various aspects of doctoral study, necessary for the successful completion of projects within an academic context. This

may include an introduction to the institution's codes of practice and regulations, knowledge and understanding of the intended learning outcomes, and ethics and assessment protocols.

Formally structured supervisor training for academic staff often takes the form of an accredited *Postgraduate Certificate in Supervision*, a common means by which institutions support staff members with responsibility for higher degree supervision. Members of staff may choose to further enhance and expand their knowledge and skill set by completing the full *Masters in Education*. Such formal programmes of study must enable staff development and address the principles and practices of supervising students at doctoral level. In the UK, a great deal of emphasis is placed upon the *critically reflective practitioner* and the principles of student-centred learning. The intention is not only to inform staff of appropriate approaches to supervision, but also to explore the potential for new ways of working in this role. Staff are often encouraged to develop and reflect upon their own distinctive approach to educational research and supervisory practice. The programme structure varies from institution to institution, but whilst drawing on the provision at GSA any accredited one may include courses such as:

- Pedagogies and practices in supervision
- Educational enquiry and research methods
- Practitioner enquiry: supervisory practices (group and individual supervision)

Within this structure, common considerations may include:

- The pedagogical underpinnings of research supervision
- Exploring the relationship between learning and teaching and supervision
- Reflective practice and supervisor development
- The research degree lifecycle and the application of this knowledge to the management of a PhD project
- The development of a PhD student
- Research degrees higher educational context: governance frameworks, policy, practice and research – European and International Perspectives
- Digital learning
- External reference points: Researcher Development framework e.g. the Vitae Researcher Development Framework
- The context of and approaches to educational research
- The principles and application of action research, practitioner enquiry and other arts based educational research approaches
- Practice as research
- Research design and conceptualising a research question
- Research methods in educational research
- Developing and managing a research project
- Managing information and data collection and analysis
- Disseminating research outcomes
- Research ethics and ethical practices in research

- Research evaluation

To facilitate the needs of staff who continue to support the student body through teaching, such programmes are often delivered as blended learning allowing students to engage flexibly with key content, learning activities, and participatory workshops alongside their daily academic duties.

In parallel with formal supervisory training, many new supervisors engage in peer learning to learn how to supervise as they face new challenges in their role (Hamilton and Carson, 2015b; Malterud 2013; Jara 2020). In *Effective supervision of creative practice higher research degrees*, Hamilton and Carson interviewed several first-generation supervisors to explore successful supervisory practices (2015a and 2015b). They concluded that supervisory practice and capacity developed best through informal sharing of knowledge across institutional levels. The authors propose fostering dialogical situations encouraging ‘talking things through’ to share practices with peers as the best approach to support new supervisors (2015b: 1357). The study argues that local leadership – where knowledge sharing takes place informally across several institutional levels – contributes to the development of supervisory capacity of emerging supervisors (Hamilton and Carson, 2015b). Many new supervisors are reticent of standardised supervisory models or institutional training in favour of open creative approaches and draw upon their own networks for advice, intuitively adopting the successful strategies of their experienced peers (Hamilton and Carson, 2015b). Whilst the authors make the argument for a dialogical approach to developing supervisory expertise by encouraging a distributed leadership model, their findings can be read through a peer learning lens. Peer learning provides a space to *talk things through* in a horizontal way (Hamilton and Carson, 2015b: 1357). The importance of peer learning in developing supervisory capacity cannot be underestimated:

Through dialogue, we can gain insights into other ways of ‘doing supervision’, and of ‘being a supervisor’. Moreover, as supervisors within an emergent field, through dialogue and the negotiation of meaning that it entails, we can begin to develop a common language and shared understanding of what the field is, its practices, its language and definitions, and its impact (Hamilton and Carson, 2015b: 1358).

A dialogical approach in a peer learning setting allows an experienced supervisor to reflect and voice their experience, and enables new supervisors to tap into their tacit knowledge and successful modes of supervision (Hamilton and Carson, 2015b). To build supervisory capacity in artistic research, institutions should ‘recognise this inherent “expertise” and nurture dialogic relationships and networks’ which can be achieved through mentoring, ‘peer-to-peer dialogues’ and sharing of case studies (Hamilton and Carson, 2015b: 1363). This may be implemented in parallel with existing supervisor training programmes. A more recent study on supervisor development concluded that peer learning, particularly with experienced supervisors, combined with discussion of case studies and reflection on one’s practice, are successful learning strategies to develop supervisory expertise (Jara, 2020). A distinct approach is the *Supervisors’ Seminar*, implemented in Norway to address the lack of supervisory experience coupled with differing incoming international practices (Malterud,

2013). The seminar functions as a space to address and discuss key issues in artistic research supervision. Small groups with ‘focused agendas’ contribute to the success of this format (Malterud, 2013: 65), fostering peer learning situations to explore emerging concerns. As we see from these examples, most approaches – mentoring, small group seminar, and case studies – adopt peer learning in developing supervisory capacity and expertise in distinct ways. Mentoring creates a reflective space which brings forth tacit approaches to supervision, and thus is recommended to complement generic supervisory training (Hamilton and Carson, 2015b).

Student Research Training Programme

The nature, scope and protocols around research training vary widely across Europe (Creator Doctus, 2021), with a mixture between accredited/non-accredited training programmes and a spectrum of formal/informal approaches. It is relevant to note the diversity in what each institution considers as relevant topics to address in research training. Accredited programmes vary between 20–60 ECTS. In Norway, the *Norwegian Artistic Research Programme* provides accredited training with compulsory training in methods and ethics (20 ECTS) for all doctoral programmes in artistic research. Doctoral candidates in the Norwegian Film School, for example, engage in 6 courses (2-4 days), and 6 forums, including conferences and presentations. At the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo, students fulfil an additional 5 credits in *Artistic Research in Music* and in a ‘project specific topic’ (Creator Doctus, 2019). The Academy of Fine Arts, University of the Arts Helsinki (Finland) provides training in methodologies (8 ECTS) and ethics (2 ECTS) in the first year of studies combined with group research seminars, symposia, collaborative projects, and group supervision. In Lithuania, the Vilnius Academy of Arts’ training programme in *Studies* comprises three research methodologies seminars and electives based on critical and cultural theory (40 ECTS). The Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts in Gothenburg (Sweden) requires students to engage in 30 ECTS equally distributed between the courses *Reflexive Writing*, *On Research Methods and Research Design*, *Knowledge production in Artistic Research*, and *Operating and communicating in a cross-disciplinary research milieu*. Other institutions offer informal training opportunities in lieu of formal or accredited courses such as group research seminars, symposia, exhibition curating, and public engagement. This is the case in the Faculty of Fine Arts in the Brno University of Technology (Czech Republic), the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam, and the Institute for Artistic Research in Berlin for example.

At The Glasgow School of Art, students attend mandatory non-accredited research skills training one day a week for 12 weeks at the start of their degree. The training brings together incoming students from all schools – Fine Art, Architecture, Innovation Design, Design, and Simulation and Visualisation – and is delivered by staff across GSA. It aims to provide core research skills and methods within the fields of art, design, architecture, and material culture, and it culminates with a student-led doctoral symposium where students present their research, methodologies, and approaches. Topics include research training such as literature review, practice-led methodologies, and contextualising research; and institutional processes

such as ethics, annual review, and viva. The training enables candidates to develop their research skills and to meet and connect with other PhD researchers, with 7 in 12 survey respondents indicating that it was timely, constructive and effective. One student stated, ‘it was for sure one of the best stages of the PhD, as at that moment we all really had a sense of community by meeting regularly to discuss our projects’ (survey respondent, 2021). The research training programme was useful to ‘initiate peer contacts’ (survey respondent, 2021) and to understand the PhD journey including milestones and expectations.

Often, after the programme, some cohorts ‘stay together, form peer groups (...) and stay in contact for the duration of the PhD’ (staff interview, 2021). However, this is not always the case, as the lack of physical space (such as a studio or a research room) and of supported peer learning structures creates challenges in continuing to engage in peer learning activities. Another challenge to consider – potentially common across research training programmes – is how one might provide training relevant across differing research interests and methodological approaches: training offers ‘an overview of the research practice in higher education’, however, for a candidate, it was ‘not the most useful course for practice-led’ researchers (2021). Nonetheless, the importance of providing a context to see ‘what others were doing and being in touch across Schools’ was noted by another student, who found it helpful in developing their research approach (survey respondent, 2021). At GSA, students also have access to external training opportunities provided by Glasgow University (who awards the degree) and the Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities. Research training programmes are a crucial part of student development and of doctoral education.

In parallel to the mandatory training programme, GSA also offers *PhD/PG Pop Up Training Sessions* across departments. Students can attend as appropriate, and the sessions are developed in response to students’ suggestions. Led or chaired by guests and not part of the curriculum, the sessions can be wide or discipline specific, and cover a broad range of areas such as object-based research, handling objects, visual analysis, writing research articles, impact, working beyond academia, and research data management. Beyond that, student-led events, such as self-organising writing retreats, tend to appear and disappear as some cohorts are more or less united. Students also have access to a research training grant to which they can apply to, to get specific training outsourced elsewhere. For example, a student attended an oral history training session at Strathclyde University, and another took a film editing course. The *Pop Up* sessions and the *Training Fund* aim to broaden student training beyond the mandatory training programme and as relevant for each student throughout their degrees.

Peer Learning in Artistic Research Doctorates

A form of learning in doctoral education which has not received adequate attention in artistic research literature is peer learning. The importance given to the supervisory relationship in doctoral education overshadows the wider educational communities and its contribution to student development (Flores-Scott and Nerad, 2012). Peer learning has been examined in HE from the late eighties to the mid noughties (Boud and Lee, 2005; Flores-Scott and Nerad, 2012), with recent studies investigating its value in the doctoral context (Jara, 2020; Batty,

2016; Hanson et al., 2016; Stracke, 2010). David Boud and Alison Lee (1999) suggest that the development of academic identity of staff takes place through peer learning in a situated practice, whether that is the department, the library, or the supervisory relationship. They define peer learning as ‘a *two-way*, reciprocal learning activity’ (2001: 9) which ‘involves participants learning from and with each other in both formal and informal ways’ (1999: 6). Reciprocal peer learning is beneficial in i) developing collaborative skills through working together fostering planning and teamwork, ii) providing scope for reflection and creativity, iii) training in knowledge articulation and engagement in peer critique, and iv) taking responsibility in learning-how-to-learn through identifying learning needs (Boud and Lee, 1999).

Distributed Learning Scenarios

Boud and Lee’s later study (2005) raises important issues regarding peer learning in research degrees. They propose that the research environment needs to be considered as a pedagogical space where multiple communities of practice take place, which students navigate through peer learning. Most importantly, their research highlighted how the students’ conception of their positioning within the academic environment – as a student or as a ‘becoming a peer’ – affects their engagement with learning situations (Boud and Lee, 2005). Hierarchies have a role to play; candidates see their fellow students as ‘peers’, but do not consider their supervisors as such, due to the distinct dynamics of *student* versus *teacher* (Boud and Lee, 2005). Thus, ‘becoming a peer’ is a process of changing status, which takes place through reciprocal and horizontal peer learning approaches, where the student learns how to become a researcher by expanding their ‘conceptual resources’ through their engagement with distinct communities of practice (Boud and Lee, 2005: 514). In this context, involving PhD scholars in supervisors’ projects can play a role in the development of peer-ness: ‘I do try to encourage them [students] to consider themselves (...) *to be a peer*, and to be involved in things that I would be involved in, so that they are understanding their role as contributing to a field, which is a criteria for the PhD’ (staff interview, 2021, emphasis added). For doctoral candidates, developing a sense of peer-ness takes place in a delicate balance of managing a hierarchical relationship with supervisors/staff members whilst working side-by-side in various configurations – where the hierarchical relationship may be felt more strongly at some times (in the supervision context for example) than others (such as organising a panel together). The latter peer learning scenario changes the dynamic of the student–supervisor relationship, ‘level[ing] that off’, as the supervisor ‘become[s] a peer of the PhD student, but just in a slightly different place, [as a] fellow researcher’ (staff interview, 2021). This delicate dance is also felt as an important one by supervisors, who note, ‘I like to try and generate the sense that they are *moving towards being a peer* rather than a student, and they are contributing to a research community’ (staff interview, 2021, emphasis added). The doctoral experience is therefore a process of becoming a peer through various forms of learning and of engagement not only with the research, but also, the research environment, and the community of staff and students.

The process of becoming a peer can take place through multiple formal and/or informal strategies. Formal structured peer learning includes the student cohort and peer mentoring: the cohort encourages each other throughout the degree, and in peer-mentoring programmes, a more advanced student supports an entry one to navigate the perils of the process (Flores-Scott and Nerad, 2012). Often, this takes place informally as students develop peer relationships and reach out to advanced students for advice. Informal peer pedagogies include *shared space* as Emma M. Flores-Scott and Maresi Nerad write:

In those disciplines that are organized around laboratories, there are even more opportunities for informal interactions between students. In laboratories, students are often working side by side, and they can easily turn to one another for questions and assistance. Although students can learn from more advanced peers in the lab, students may also have a particular expertise such as knowing how to use a specific instrument. As a result, students regularly gain knowledge from one another in their day-to-day interactions in the lab (2012: 77).

In the art school, sharing a studio where students work next to each other enables informal peer learning to emerge through regular interactions. Students learn not only within their supervisory relationship but also across multiple relationships with other faculty, students, postdocs, and researchers in short- or long-term interactions (Flores-Scott and Nerad, 2012). A student with studio access highlighted how there were ‘several conversations going in the studios about how to go about making, publishing, writing, etc’ (survey respondent, 2021). Whilst studio provision is not the default offer at GSA, it is welcomed by students, who note that informal discussions ‘in a studio setting would be extremely beneficial from previous experience’ (survey respondent, 2021). The studio space or research room plays a relevant and often overlooked role in fostering regular peer learning situations, and supports an important aspect of the doctoral education community:

Being in the building supports access to technical support and supports the ability to be able to have conversations with postgraduate students. It supports the growth of the community. And I think the community of researchers is fundamental. Otherwise, it’s too easy to feel set adrift and isolated as a research student (staff interview, 2021).

Of note here, is the importance of shared space for the development of community and how that positively impacts student wellbeing and isolation (isolation can have a detrimental effect in student productivity and progression, as we discuss further on). Supervision and peer-to-peer learning are complementary: faculty, student peers and the whole academic context contribute to the doctoral education dynamic (Flores-Scott and Nerad, 2012).

Boud and Lee’s conception of distributed learning (2005) can be seen in practice in several examples of educational approaches. The *research student exposition* and the *Summer School*, put forward by artist-researcher Carole Gray et al. (2005), are some of the innovative practices which support the development of ‘researcher identities’ (Guerin, Kerr and Green, 2015) through dialogue and peer exchange. These approaches, implemented in parallel with others, enhance and support the development of communities of practice. They were also

adopted by trans-institutional entities which integrate peer learning strategies at the core. The *research student exposition*, for example, where students display their research in progress with an opportunity to discuss with peers, focuses on the research process and aims to bring forth students' research questions, methodologies, and outputs, rendering the thinking behind the research explicit and transparent (Gray et al., 2005). The exposition 'encourages interaction, critical exchange, understanding and learning for all concerned' and provides an opportunity to encounter other doctoral projects (2005: para. 14). The SGSAH annual Doctoral Research Showcase creates a similar context to encourage peer dialogue and exchange between students from distinct arts and humanities disciplines. Michael Schwab and Henk Borgdorff later use the term *exposition* as an 'operator *between* art and writing' (2014: 15), a key strategy of the Journal for Artistic Research, an online platform which adopts expository as a form of developing artistic research outputs.

Another example of good practice is the annual residential *Summer School*, also adopted by the SGSAH for their funded students. The one-week *Summer School* at Gray's School of Art focuses on student training needs. The programme includes research training such as literature review and methodologies, transferable skills sessions such as publication and presentation, and 'student expositions' (Gray et al., 2005). This intensive peer learning strategy is at the core of the doctoral programme at Transart Institute (2021), an independent organisation founded and operated by artists, which offers programmes of study at MA and doctoral level (validated by Liverpool John Moores University, UK). Described as a low-residency Creative Research PhD, its emphasis is on international exchange for individual and collaborative practitioners. The structure enables doctoral candidates to live and work in their home countries without relocating full time to a host institution elsewhere. The emphasis is on an intensive experience in which students are focused solely on their projects, through group discussions, research cafes, and collaborative shared experiences. The programme includes monthly meetings and annual 'intensives' (residencies) in different cities each year which all doctoral students are expected to attend. The intensives help sustain each student's practice by offering a comprehensive experience where students focus on their projects and on group discussion through a mixture of research training workshops, thematic seminars, supervision and peer presentations.

The Nordic Summer Academy for Artistic Research (SAAR, 2021) takes an alternative approach. Rather than focusing on research training, the structure is designed around bringing forth participants' interests and concerns. Coordinated by Uniarts Helsinki, SAAR is a joint project between Sweden, Norway and Finland, a one-week intensive summer school where selected doctoral researchers and their supervisors meet. Administration falls to the host country university each year, with other institutions organising the selection and travel of their participants. Key features of SAAR are the focus on deep discussion of participants' projects, collaboration, dialogical approaches to presentations, and small group work (SAAR, 2021). For example, in the edition *Problems? Soak and Surrender*, students presented one challenge in their research in pairs for an audience, with nominated *dialogue partners* (SAAR, 2021). The dialogue-presentation format brings out the partner's responses to each other's challenges. The 'buddy' partner was introduced in 2019 due to the SAAR

location in the Utoia island where the 2011 attacks took place (Norway). Partners walked together at the start of the residency and introduced themselves and their research to one another. As a strategy to look out for each other, the partner was available throughout the week for conversations on any topic (Bränn, 2021). In another activity, participants bring a specific question or concern they want to explore with a small group: following a short 10-15minutes presentation, the group engages in 1h30min exploratory conversation on the topic brought forth. SAAR's focus on resolving, exploring, and enquiring into the challenges of the research of each participant rather than on research training skills provides each student with space, peer group, and a supportive context to make progress through critical challenges, rendering the Summer Academy as a catalyst for research progression through peer learning. As one participant outlined:

I got the opportunity to test some of the things and questions I had in my mind. (...) In the institutional context there isn't enough space and time to do it in the way we did. (...) And – not less important – there was much to learn by observing others' collaboration and interaction, and methods to negotiate a common (or not so common) ground (SAAR participant, 2007).

The focus on agency, where doctoral candidates bring their own questions and use this space as a testing ground is very well received by participants. Although some may be nervous in presenting or in putting their work forward in distinct formats, they develop the confidence to engage in discussions and to lead them. What is more, the small group work allows one to 'properly listen to one another and discuss things in detail' (SAAR participant, 2019). The trust built through working together for several days in small groups is highlighted by participants as an essential factor in creating a supportive context for the work.

On a wider scale, the participation of peers from three different countries exposes students to distinct research ecologies and modes of doing (Bränn, 2021), which provides fruitful ground for moving the research forward. Another important feature of SAAR is the one-to-one tutorials with supervisors from different countries and fields, which students highlight as extremely beneficial: 'I got a lot of valuable input from supervisors totally outside of my own field' (SAAR participant, 2017). Of course, a project of this scale comes with challenges. Most often, participating supervisors have never met. They might meet online before the residential week, but bringing them 'onboard with the SAAR curriculum' and defining their role is still a challenge (Bränn, 2021). As the curriculum is fluid and open, supervisors find their feet and refine the activities/aims for the week as the days progress. Their participation, although crucial and integrated in the activities, also creates hierarchies which can be a challenge to manage. All in all, SAAR's approach to creating a peer learning context where students and supervisors engage with the challenges and needs of the research for each candidate at that moment in time expands the traditional understanding of research training or of summer schools as focused on the *how to do research*, towards *how to be a researcher*, working collaboratively through research concerns, providing a space for each participant to *be*. The excellent student feedback shows the success of this model in, as one participant describes, 'blow[ing] up the project from within and try[ing] out new approaches

and routes' (SAAR participant, 2019). The three different approaches to the doctoral summer school format reviewed here highlight how distinct areas can be explored through creating and implementing opportunities for peer learning and for developing peer networks. They respond to distinct needs and come with their own benefits and challenges, and expand our understanding of the learnings, propositions, and ideas of what a Summer School can be, offering distinct ways to develop peer learning, doctoral communities, and inter-institutional frames of practice.

Several institutions implemented peer learning groups facilitated by a supervisor or a staff member. These offer positive experiences for doctoral students (Batty, 2016; Stracke, 2010): traditionally, a peer group entails a small group of students who meet without a supervisor (Stracke, 2010), nonetheless, most examples in the literature explore peer learning groups facilitated by a supervisor (Batty, 2016; Stracke, 2010). One example is Craig Batty's creative writing group in Australia (2016). In this highly structured group (a three-hour monthly meeting where four texts of 2000–2500 words are discussed) the supervisor assumes the role of peer as the group engages in a peer review situation. Another example is Prof. Johnny Golding's PhD Research Methods Seminars, initiated at Birmingham School of Art (2012–2016) and currently at Royal College of Art (International Centre for Contemporary Art Research, 2015). The seminars take place regularly and all Fine Art doctoral students are invited. In the three-hour long sessions, PhD candidates across different areas engage in a peer learning situation facilitated by Golding, collectively exploring the same subject matter through distinct lenses. In the summer of 2015, Golding, Rogers, Astfalck and their PhD students held a three-day symposium titled *Twice Upon a Time: Magic, Alchemy and the Transubstantiation of the Senses* in the workshops of the art school. The intention was to conduct the proceedings in the sites of making, to smell the research as it unfolded and the alchemy of art production (Golding et al, 2017). These examples appear to follow Boud and Lee's view of peer learning as referring to 'networks of learning relationships, among students and significant others' (2005: 503). The strengths of these approaches are evident: Batty's group, for example, offers a forum for developing a community, for training in becoming an academic peer through engaging in critique, fostering timely completion rates as well as dissemination (2016). Nonetheless, further attention is due to exploring how a more horizontal relationship between students and supervisor can be fostered in this setting (Stracke, 2010).

Another example is the *FOCUS: Forum on Film and Screen Media Theories*, led by Prof. Laura Rascaroli and chaired by a student in the School of Film, Music and Theatre (University College Cork, 2020). The group meets monthly for a couple of hours to discuss two pre-chosen and pre-read Film Studies texts, briefly introduced, summarised, and contextualised by a member of the group. The group creates a platform for community building, provides a space for students to engage in critical exchange, and gives students momentum and a sense of progress (O'Connell, 2021). Rascaroli highlights how students become more comfortable discussing theory, discover new readings and become exposed to the wider theoretical context of film studies, all while developing collegiality (2021, personal communication, 21 April). There are challenges: involving a wider number of students,

finding readings suitable for differing research interests, and the need for a facilitator to take the lead (Rascaroli, 2021). FOCUS theory-based nature fosters the development of critical thinking; it is ‘almost a training module’ (O’Connell, 2021). These examples of staff facilitated peer groups create a situation where doctoral students engage *in the zone* of doctoral work, encouraging regular and supported engagement with academic and/or artistic research practice. As we discuss further on, being in the flow of work is a key strategy for keeping progress and for supporting student wellbeing (Tandamrong and Ford, 2019).

Considering learning through peers as part of the doctoral ecology highlights the role of the academic environment in doctoral education (Flores-Scott and Nerad, 2012). These examples show how distinct approaches to setting peer learning situations with differing aims have a positive impact in the doctoral experience. The importance of peer learning is outlined very clearly by this supervisor:

I think that what peer learning does is build *confidence* and you have to be confident and be confident quite early on. (...) I think that confidence is built up by explaining what you are doing, how you are doing it, and even if that changes, you still have a sense of how you are going to get there. *And the conversations you have across peer groups helps establish that confidence* (staff interview, 2021, emphasis added).

Building confidence helps to support the candidate to make the journey from ‘student’ to ‘academic peer’. Whilst in supervision students focus on developing, expanding, and critically engaging with their research, it is in peer learning situations that they gain the ability to communicate confidently and to test their ideas with supportive audiences. This enables them to develop other academic capacities which are as necessary as the ones developed in the supervisory setting. A peer group has the potential to improve ‘the quality of candidate’s work’ and to train the ‘future research leaders of a discipline’ (Batty, 2016: 75). To help achieve this, the group should be specific and targeted, with ‘clear aims and ambitions for what the group is trying to achieve’ (Batty, 2016: 71). In creative writing, for example, the space to review written and creative practice enables students to understand how the two strands relate, and enhances and fosters reflexivity (Batty, 2016). This is particularly relevant in artistic research where the doctorate is relatively recent, and students are exploring what it means to do a research degree in the arts. Nonetheless, implementing a peer group in arts is a challenging endeavour, as ‘one of the problems for the arts is that there’s such a wide range of subjects that you’re unlikely to fit all PhD students into a useful cluster’ (staff interview, 2021). The focus, content, scope, and remit of the peer group needs to be considered carefully in order to be of the maximum benefit for the candidates involved. In the art school, the critique group is the most widely facilitated peer group in taught programmes (Budge, Beale and Lynas, 2013: 147). It would be relevant thus to consider how the group critique can be productively applied in the doctoral context to support and develop learning amongst peers, and to consider other formats in response to student needs. The *Triadic Model*, which we expand on later on, might be one of such formats: a structured peer setting that sits in between the supervisory format and facilitated peer learning.

Supervisory Practices

Different models of supervision are adopted in distinct institutions and may vary throughout the degree as students' needs change. Common approaches in the art school context are single supervision, where the student works with one supervisor; and co-supervision. In some supervision teams, the candidate may meet supervisors mostly individually, with 2 or 3 team meetings throughout the year; alternatively, some supervisors prefer to always meet as a group. Often, supervisors from distinct areas of expertise focus on their arena of practice, and commonly, one supervisor is the principal/primary/lead supervisor with the final responsibility for the candidate's completion. Other approaches are seen in differing contexts, such as group supervision, where a supervisor works with a group of students (Guerin, Kerr and Green, 2015).

Single supervision requires supervisors to effectively support the student in several matters ranging from knowledge and skills to pastoral care, as opposed to co-supervision where each supervisor has distinct roles (Masek and Alias, 2020). Further, single supervision relies heavily on the student-supervisor relationship to ensure doctoral progress (Masek and Alias, 2020). This poses challenges if the relationship breaks down in some form, as students lack an alternative guidance point, contributing to student isolation. Supervisory teams provide 'two other people they can speak to' avoiding the pitfall of the student becoming 'locked in some kind of toxic relationship with only one person' (staff interview, 2021). They also offer students a range of views, particularly, in interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary projects, and are often preferred by staff:

I prefer co-supervision because most of the projects I'm involved with supervising, they definitely need two supervisors who are contributing different but complementary perspectives. And in a way, supervision itself can be very lonely and also it can make you feel quite exposed when it starts to go wrong (staff interview, 2021).

Nonetheless, co-supervision and team supervision also entail challenges. Whilst often described as a rich process, tensions may arise from distinct understandings of the scope, value and possibilities that artistic research can bring, particularly when involving theory-focused supervisors without a creative practice background (Bento-Coelho and Gilson, 2021).

Group supervision, on the other hand, often used for efficiency, can bring increasing benefits for students due to the peer learning space that the group setting enables (Guerin, Kerr and Green, 2015). With a disparate number of projects in different artistic areas it is likely that implementing such an approach would entail challenges in the art school environment. Nonetheless, it may be appropriate to use this structure occasionally with certain groups of doctoral researchers, as this supervisor notes: 'with my current supervisees, I can engage in things like group supervision from time to time, because there are so many overlaps in the research' (staff interview, 2021). In this example, all supervisees were interested in feminism from distinct perspectives, such as 'art practice, curatorial practice, feminist printmaking,

feminist theory, feminist archival work' (staff interview, 2021). A common research interest creates a ground for the group to explore ideas relevant for all.

Whilst all students surveyed at GSA indicated that the supervision received had been supportive, the approach to meeting format, frequency, feedback, and peer learning experiences were varied. The format of the meeting offers different learning experiences for both student and supervisor. In co-supervision, two approaches appear to prevail: one-to-one and team meeting, adopted according to the supervisor's preferences and views. On the one hand, 'I think I derive a huge amount of intellectual satisfaction, and the positive effect that comes from that, from having a one-to-one relationship and building knowledge together' (staff interview, 2021). The value of holding discussions individually as a space for deeper reflection on the work is also noted by students, with one highlighting that,

I would prefer to meet individual supervisors one-to-one more regularly as it is generally in these situations where conversation has gone to a deeper level in relation to the research. However, my primary supervisor prefers that we all meet as a team where possible (survey respondent, 2021).

On the other hand, meeting as a team brings several benefits, one of them being allowing the team to reach a consensus together when differing views emerge:

I have experienced it before where the student has not known how to navigate different voices, where one voice appears dominant to another, and whose advice they should be following, especially when supervisors meet the student individually. This is why I'm an advocate for group supervision and supervision teams meeting as often as possible. (...) But I also think it's beneficial for the students because it's much more of a discussion. I think it shares the workload a little bit, it allows people to play to their strengths (staff interview, 2021).

As we can see from the student and staff perspectives, both one-to-one and team supervision offer a positive learning experience. The one-to-one dialogical discussion allows for a depth in critical reflection in one subject, whilst the team supervision enables the group to work out potentially wider themes and refining directions, as well as resolving conflicting issues in the research together as a group. Complementing both forms of working in a balanced way may be the most successful approach:

I think it's quite nice to get a balance of both. And there's definitely something very useful about all working together in the same space regularly. But at the same time, particularly if you're working in a kind of cross discipline mode, there might be more value to certain conversations that you or your co-supervisor would have on a one-to-one basis with the candidate. So I think a healthy combination of both is ideal (staff interview, 2021).

It is relevant to return here to the point introduced earlier on the importance of flexibility and adaptability of supervisory approaches according to the distinct needs of the project as it evolves through time. A certain sensibility is also necessary to gauge as the project develops

when to meet individually, as a group, and with whom. This conversation may take place at the end of each meeting, as in, planning what would be useful for the candidate in the next supervisory step. Whilst there is no perfect model of supervision (Guerin, Kerr and Green, 2015), research has shown that effective supervisors

employ a broad range of approaches informed by their own experiences of being supervised; they place great importance on their relationships with students; and they reveal a strong awareness of their own responsibilities in actively developing the emerging researcher identities of their doctoral candidates (Guerin, Kerr and Green, 2015: 107).

These potential key principles of best practices in supervision can be adopted across the board in differing supervisory models. It is important thus that supervisors are aware of the potential and limitations of the model their institution follows and encourage students to take advantage of other learning situations to complement their learning experience.

The student survey showed a breadth of student experiences and approaches in relation to supervision. The frequency of supervisory meetings, whilst mostly monthly, can vary up to twice a year, depending on the stage of the project and the availability of student and supervisor. A supervision team composed of three supervisors from distinct fields appears to be the most common (seven respondents) followed by teams comprised of two supervisors (four respondents). Most students had at least one external supervisor – GSA provides cross-institutional supervision through the SGSAH. This allows GSA to offer supervision in a range of subjects which complement its offer, providing a context where interdisciplinary and innovative projects are well supported through expertise drawn from outside the school. Engaging with team members from other universities and fields can also bring in – to the student and the co-supervisors – distinct ways of working, which inform not only the research practice, but also complementary supervisory approaches:

I actually find working with colleagues from elsewhere, or from other disciplines really rewarding. I find it really useful to have a completely different perspective on the project, and different ways of doing things. I think for me, that's the most useful and enriching space to be in supervisory teams (staff interview, 2021).

To note as well, that in the context of artistic research, students highlighted the inclusion and the value of a practitioner in the team as crucial: ‘it does feel essential that I have a practitioner as part of my team, otherwise I think that the written element would be given too much emphasis’ (survey respondent, 2021).

Students’ responsibility for the success of the supervisory process is also acknowledged. SGSAH funded students are advised to prepare a detailed tutorial report prior to the meeting which ‘gives a solid basis for the conversation(s)’ (survey respondent, 2021). Students are also responsible for writing and sharing supervisory meeting records. The preferred method of feedback also varies according to context. In practice-based research,

Verbal feedback during supervision can be very helpful (...). This provides space for back and forth around complex topics and the discussion can often lead to unexpected areas that are fruitful (survey respondent, 2021).

Nonetheless, for textual work such as thesis chapters, written feedback is identified as most helpful, as ‘you can return to it, and clarify what is important (or detail) or any questions you may have’ and it enables ‘reflection and future planning or edits’ (survey respondents, 2021).

Dissensus in supervisory views are managed in distinct ways across supervisory teams. Some students are encouraged to navigate this challenge and own their decisions as independent researchers, raising ownership and agency in the research project: ‘I was told this was for me to manage, that it was part and parcel of the degree’ (survey respondent, 2021). Students learn how to distinguish between the specific needs of their research project and the interests that the supervisors might express: ‘if one member [of the supervisory team] has a particular line of their own inquiry, I have to judge how relevant that is to my study’ (survey respondent, 2021). Some supervision teams take a different approach, with the primary supervisor either taking a final decision or facilitating a team consensus during supervisory meetings. Both approaches may co-exist and be adopted at different times according to the topic of dissensus, as well as the level of maturity and year of studies. Managing differences in feedback and approaches is an important aspect of the formation of ‘researcher identities’ (Guerin, Kerr and Green, 2015: 107) which supervisors help develop. When handled in a supportive manner, they become an opportunity for the student to develop independent critical thinking and confidence approaching research challenges. This is where the spectrum between ‘hands on’ and ‘hands off’ supervision (Sinclair, 2004) may take different forms throughout the degree as the needs of the project shift, in a balance between supporting and providing space for student’s research independence to develop. The practice of supervision in artistic research degrees has been described as a craft; a practice underpinned by tacit knowledge (Hockey, 2003).

The Students’ Experience of Peer Learning

Informal peer-learning should be encouraged and highlighted as an integral part of the degree. At GSA, students’ peer learning experiences reflect what has been emerging in the literature. One student mentioned that self-led weekly meetings with a peer were helpful to ‘discuss the research and share difficulties’ (survey respondent, 2021). Other students noted that their specific circumstances – such as living far from campus or part time study – made it challenging to access peer learning opportunities. Further, students’ understanding of peer learning is not uniform across the board. Online learning opportunities and learning situations outside the institutional environment or in collaborative contexts are not necessarily experienced as *learning from peers* (Fig. 1). In contrast, workshops, seminars, symposia, and events organised by the school or other institutions, as well as formally arranged student-led discussions are considered by most as peer-learning. To foster peer learning, doctoral programmes might invite students to explore, experiment and test peer

learning formats appropriate for their interests and needs at the start of their degrees. The *Artistic Doctorate Resources*’ section on *Building Community* suggests distinct formats for developing peer-led learning, from writing groups to critique to social spaces according to the goals and interests of the group (Bento-Coelho and Gilson, 2021).

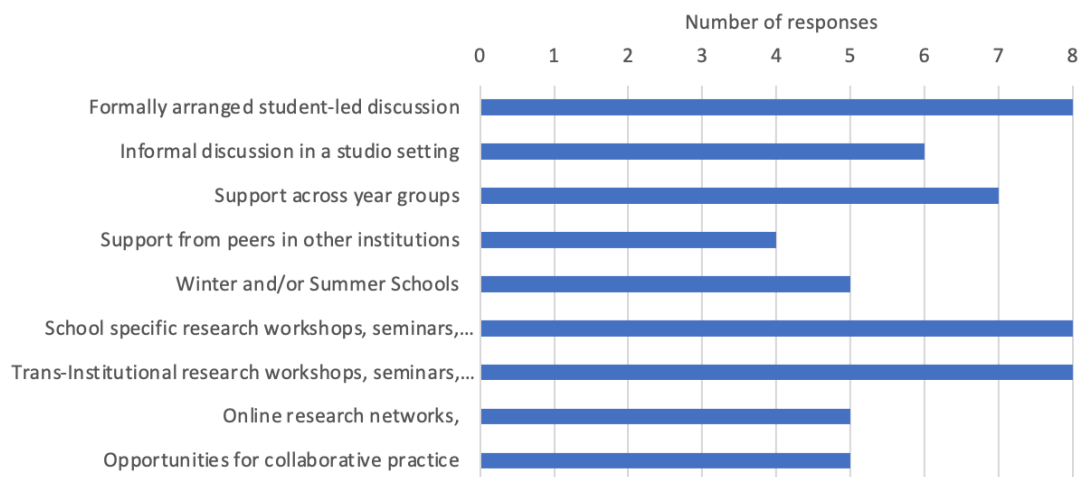


Fig. 1: Peer learning contexts identified by PhD students at The Glasgow School of Art. In response to *From your experience, what does peer learning include?* Four students identified all situations as peer learning. PhD student survey, 2021.

Similarly, formal peer learning situations facilitated by supervisors or through research clusters have shown to lead to the development of peer learning and peer community:

Students who shared one or both of my supervisory team were invited to weekly research seminars that allowed us to share our progress and learn from each other. This also built a strong sense of community which was essential for me to complete my PhD (survey respondent, 2021).

This echoes the value of facilitated peer learning as previously seen in the FOCUS group (University College Cork, Ireland) or Craig Batty’s creative writing group (RMIT University, Australia). For this student, the sense of community was deemed *essential* to complete the doctorate. The group brings together students whose research interests intersect – as they share the same supervisor(s) – creating a space for regular exchange. It would be relevant to potentially adopt similar structures across GSA to support students in other areas and departments: whilst most students felt that they had the opportunity to work with, learn from and engage with distinct groups of people, just under half of survey respondents felt that peer learning had been a strong aspect of their degree. Of course, the Covid 19 pandemic also has a strong impact, as in normal circumstances, doctoral researchers ‘would be spending a significant amount of time in the studio and workshops that would hopefully have fostered this [peer learning]’ (survey respondent, 2021). Peer learning can be encouraged at department level and/or at institutional level in order to enhance the overall experience of the cohort, through potentially the provision of studio space and the implementation of facilitated peer groups.

The Triadic Model for Supervision

Alternative learning approaches can be integrated in doctoral education to yield positive results. Sarah Tripp's *Triad Tutorial* (2016) sits in between one-to-one supervision and peer group seminars. In her article (2016), she reflects upon the evolution of the 'triad tutorial', a hybrid form that emerged from the reconsideration of the traditional studio tutorial format commonly adhered to in art schools and her engagement with psychotherapeutic training methods, especially that of 'active listening' (Rogers and Farson, 1957). The intention was to rethink the prevalent model of the tutorial (1960s) in art education focused on the conversational framing of a student's practice in relation to contemporary art (Cornock, cited in Tripp, 2016), to establish a more productive experience for those concerned in which 'links are drawn between critical self-reflection, reciprocity and the sustainability of artistic practice' (Tripp, 2016: 1). As Tripp observes, the triad model consists of three individuals that occupy and rotate three different roles: the Speaker, the Listener, and the Observer. The Speaker raises questions or issues to which the Listener will 'actively listen', whilst the Observer silently observes and takes notes (2016). This approach, which Tripp experienced weekly for 12 months as part of a counselling skills training course, is drawn from the need to record exchanges during counsellor training (Tripp, 2016). In the art school context, two students choose their roles whilst the tutor takes the remaining role (but never the role of the Speaker). The triad has a duration of two hours: after a brief 15-minute introduction to the model, the first tutorial (30 minutes) is followed by Observer feedback (10 minutes) and an open discussion (10 minutes). After a 5-minute break, the tutorial, feedback and discussion is repeated (Tripp, 2016).

Tripp explains that the method not only allows participants to experience all roles, but also provides an insight into the dialogical event that has taken place through the crucial role of the silent Observer. She writes, '[s]ilent observation also creates a particular mode of attention not immersed 'in the moment' of active listening or speaking' (2016: 3). One student described their experience of receiving the Observer feedback as if 'we had filmed ourselves and played it back', bringing to the fore how we talk, listen, and observe: 'I noticed at points I may not have been listening or may have misinterpreted something' (student feedback, cited in Tripp, 2016: 10). Tripp speaks about how the model enables students to develop self-reflection through reciprocity, bringing a fellow peer to the hierarchical dynamic student-teacher. The active Listener role, normally reserved for the supervisor enables students to develop critical self-reflection. Being listened to and listening 'actively and critically, when shared between students, enables self-reflection' (Tripp, 2016: 13). Further, in offering a space to 'listen carefully to how other artists articulate their ideas and methods' (student feedback, cited in Tripp, 2016: 10), the triad becomes a structured peer learning activity. One student reflects,

I feel that the questions I pose to the other were simultaneously posed to myself because it's very hard to fully adopt a listener role. In so doing, sometimes there's a meta-moment when the question is projected and bounced back. Certain questions I had for myself were resolved simply by

listening to someone else articulating the same problem (student feedback, cited in Tripp, 2016: 9).

In doctoral education, as students at similar points in their journey are likely to encounter the same challenges, the ability to reflect on one's own questions with a peer can be incredibly valuable. As Tripp writes, the 'reciprocity introduced by the triad structure makes tangible to the students that offering active listening and robust critique informs their own critical self-reflection' (2016: 13). In critically listening and offering inquisitive questions to the Speaker, the Listener develops their own self-reflection in a structured encounter. This approach creates a bridge between supervision and peer learning which may yield significant benefits in the context of doctoral education, expanding the scope of peer learning into the live time of supervision. In providing students with space for critical engagement with each other's work in a structured format, the model 'enhanced critical discourse between students, increased student confidence and introduced students to a new reciprocal structure of critique' (2016: 1). In adopting distinct roles, listening carefully, and responding to each other in a collegial manner, students are also developing community and a sense of trust.

Another model for critical thinking in a peer learning context is the *Critical Response Process* (CRP), a method for drawing feedback developed in the early 1990s by choreographer Liz Lerman (2021). The CRP aims to expand and advance the practice of any artist at any stage through a facilitated conversation with a group. The process is composed of four parts: firstly, after the artist shows work, the group members state what they felt was relevant, meaningful or insightful from what they saw / experienced; secondly, the artist asks questions; thirdly, the group asks neutral questions without showing an opinion; and finally, the artist may give permission for group members to share their views (Lerman, 2014). This last step follows a specific format: 'I have an opinion about the costume [or the climax, the language, the movement vocabulary you've chosen]. Would you like to hear it?' (Lerman, 2014: 36). The permissibility aspect of the question contextualises the following exchange in the realm of feedback which the artist may choose or not to act upon. The CRP has been used in dance programmes and theatre companies as a strategy to advance a student/artist's work in a safe, challenging, and rigorous manner (Lerman, 2014). Lerman's approach could well be applied within a peer learning context in the doctoral framework, within or outside the supervisory context. In a group presentation, for example, the CRP would enable the group to feedback their perception of the research, almost like a mirror, and offer a safe space for the student to ask specific questions of the group. This structure might prove particularly useful when the doctoral researcher is facing a challenge, since, as discussed above in Tripp's model, hearing about and discussing one's challenges not only enables self-reflection, but also aids students in thinking through their own problems in the research. The *Critical Response Process* might offer a critical context for questions to be 'projected and bounced back' within the group, creating a space where questions are worked through by listening to a peer articulate their thinking on the same issue (Tripp, 2016). It would be relevant thus to explore how these two methods – the *Triad Model* and the *Critical Response Process* – might be implemented in doctoral programmes to support the development of peer learning in structured formats.

Strategies for Student Wellbeing

Peer learning can also have a positive impact on student wellbeing, particularly, on a psychological level (Hanson et al., 2016). Considering that the wellbeing of academic staff in higher education influences the quality of education provided, wellbeing should be fostered from the start of the academic journey during doctoral study (Schmidt and Hansson, 2018; Stubb et al., 2011). Further, the increase in mental illnesses in graduate (Evans et al., 2018) and undergraduate students (Storrie et al., 2010), and the current global mental health crisis (Mindful Nation UK, 2015) highlights the need for HEIs to reflect on how they may enhance and adopt innovative ways of fostering student wellbeing (Evans et al., 2018). Whilst the importance of student wellbeing and its impact in doctoral education has been recognised, the lack of resources and support has not yet been fully resolved (Pretorius, 2019). Graduate students are at a higher risk of experiencing anxiety and depression (Evans et al., 2018), and strategies such as mindfulness have been shown to make a positive impact in education in supporting mental health and work-life balance (Mindful Nation UK, 2015).

The artistic research doctoral context brings with it several additional challenges, as anxiety is also present at systemic and institutional level (Candlin, 2000). Further, a number of factors increase anxiety in doctoral students: reframing the evaluation of the quality of work as ‘academically valid’, rather than ‘artistically’ valid; operating between the apparent opposing demands of institutional requirements and artistic production; and unclear milestones and evaluation criteria (Candlin, 2000: 7). Whilst much has changed in HE, several of these factors are still at play, such as the lack of awareness of what doctoral education entails (Nelson, 2013), and unclear milestones coupled with examination challenges (Bento Coelho and Gilson, 2021). Nonetheless, the commitment of HEIs to constructively address common issues in third cycle education is evident in recent policies such as the *Florence Principles* and the *Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research* (ELIA, 2016 and 2020).

A growing number of studies in doctoral education wellbeing emerged in the last decade in Europe, USA, and Canada (Schmidt and Hansson, 2018). Manuela Schmidt and Erika Hansson’s (2018) literature review highlights the numerous challenges that PhD students face and proposes a more student-centred approach to support wellbeing. *Wellbeing in Doctoral Education* (Pretorius et al., 2019), written by doctoral students and staff, compiles a selection of students’ reflective accounts from an Australian institution on how they encountered and resolved wellbeing challenges. Doctoral researcher Ricky Lau writes, ‘the lack of clarity regarding my role as a PhD student led to significant uncertainty, making my candidature stressful and mentally exhausting’ (2019: 49). He further discusses how his perception of lacking academic skills to thrive enhanced his stress levels. Mindfulness and self-compassion helped him manage his stress and anxiety by finding ways to ‘let go’ of an idealised version of what the perfect doctoral student should be (Lau, 2019). He outlines another successful strategy to address imposter syndrome: developing a sense of belonging within a community, which can be fostered through communities of practice such as writing groups (Lau, 2019), peer learning, or sharing a studio space. The book’s closing chapter

suggests that lack of wellbeing hinders one's capacity *to be in the zone* of doctoral work and to maintain a flow of focused involvement with it, which is crucial for keeping progress (Tandamrong and Ford, 2019).

Mindfulness and Mindfulness Training

Mindfulness has been shown to be a successful strategy to support student wellbeing (Mindful Nation UK, 2015; The Mindful Initiative, 2020; Andrahennadi, 2019; Lau, 2019; Hindman et al., 2015). It can have a positive impact in education by improving academic results, easing mental health concerns, and building resilience (Mindful Nation UK, 2015). Mindfulness can be defined as 'paying attention to what's happening in the present moment in the mind, body and external environment, with an attitude of curiosity and kindness' (Mindful Nation UK, 2015: 13). It allows one to 'develop healthier, more compassionate responses to their own experience, as well as to events in their lives and the people around them' (Mindful Nation UK, 2015: 14). Despite its positive influence in wellbeing, the integration of mindfulness in higher education is still in its infancy. A comparative study examined the success of formal and informal approaches to teaching mindfulness in higher education (Hindman et al., 2015). The authors conclude that a Mindful Stress Management programme involving formal group meditation and individual practice was more successful in decreasing student stress levels than a similar programme without formal meditation. Nonetheless, the positive outcomes of both groups evidence the success of mindfulness in managing stress and in improving student wellbeing (2015).

In parallel, some pedagogical techniques in HE resemble the focus on attention and on mindfulness, such as journaling, dialogue, or questioning (Iowa State University, n.d.). Incorporating mindful approaches into pedagogy – normally called 'contemplative pedagogy' – brings benefits for students: 'enhanced cognitive capacity including focus and creativity; improved stress management and coping skills; increased community, connection, and awareness; increased resiliency and overall well-being; [and] improved work/life balance' (Iowa State University, n.d.). All of these key points are essential during doctoral education, which relies on the candidate's capacity to focus over long periods of time, manage stress, develop resilience, and manage work-life balance over a number of years of study. Short mindful activities such as 'Beholding' and the 'Five Senses Exercise' (Iowa State University, n.d.) can be easily incorporated in supervisory practice or doctoral training to support mindful approaches in educational contexts.

In design education in particular, the literature suggests that mindfulness has potential to support designers to develop ethical and creative design practices by fostering the qualities of the mind (Rojas et al., 2015; Andrahennadi, 2019). Fernando Rojas et al. argue that including mindfulness in education supports the development of the designer's inner awareness, which enhances 'awareness of our relations with others and with the world, (...) important for emerging participatory and co-design contexts' (2015: 1). In examining the potential of mindfulness in HE, Kumanga Chanduni Andrahennadi (2019) developed a workshop series – the *Mindfulness-Based Design Practice* – to integrate mindfulness in

Design from a Buddhist perspective of deep awareness. The course fosters the recognition and development of several qualities of the mind – including compassion, focus, resilience, calmness, reflection, acceptance, and empathy. In doing so, it has potential to support students’ ‘mental and physical wellbeing as well as their action of designing for the global needs of the twenty-first century’ (Andrahennadi, 2019: 899). As mindfulness enhances reflexivity, it can have a positive effect on design thinking, therefore affecting design choices (Andrahennadi, 2019) and resulting in stronger design solutions (Rojas et al., 2015; Andrahennadi, 2019). These authors highlight the strengths of adopting mindfulness pedagogies in HE, which, as we have seen from other studies, are most successful within a formal framework (Hindman et al., 2015). Integrating the *Mindfulness-Based Design Practice* workshop in education at doctoral level would support the development of ‘inner awareness’ of not only designers, but also, of artistic research practitioners in other fields. It would enhance student wellbeing as well as their capacity to respond reflectively and creatively to the development of their doctoral projects. Consequently, it would positively amplify students’ ability to respond to challenges in their wider social context and in their future careers.

Recommendations

I think we’re not doing supervision right anymore. I think that the method of supervision has a history of coming out of humanities degrees that were only for a tiny percentage of students. (...) My own experience is that the whole PhD process needs to be supervised in a slightly different way and that we should be saying, especially for the first year, ‘you’re going to have three streams: one of them is going to be the supervision team, one of them is going to be a peer network, and the other one is going to be publications. Through each one, we’re going to build you to be able to then do your own PhD’ (supervisor interview, 2021).

The educational learning context has much to bring to the doctoral experience: staff (and student) development takes place within a situated research environment, where peer learning has much scope for development (Boud and, 1999 and 2005). The vision of a PhD process in ‘streams’ expressed by the supervisor in the quote above – who, to note, is not a practitioner – is one which echoes the authors’ thinking and shapes the first recommendation we hereby put forward. We propose that institutions develop a *peer learning strand* in parallel with the already existing, regulated (to various degrees) and implemented *supervision strand* to support the development and enhancement of artistic research PhDs, and therefore, of future researchers. We discussed examples of successful peer learning practices across multiple contexts and networks, and we now invite staff and their institutions to consider which approaches may be best suited for the specificities of their research environment. Some ideas may be taken forward and adapted into new configurations of practice. We also propose – and perhaps this would be the subject of further research, which was not possible within the scope of this writing – to consider the implementation of a *third strand*, not focused on publications (as it is the practice in humanities subjects), but instead, on its equivalent in artistic research: frameworks for the

presentation and dissemination of research outputs, *expositions*, exhibitions, etc, as appropriate to distinct fields of practice. The Research Catalogue developed by the Society for Artistic Research (2021) is an excellent starting point to explore this strand.

Research degree supervision is also an important part of the development of sustainable research environments and communities, and one of the key learnings from this research is the importance of adaptability. There is no ‘one model’ of doing supervision, rather, several strategies that supervisors adopt at distinct points in the process as required. The need for adaptation is an important skill in supervisory practice, and one which becomes more evident in artistic research projects, where the unknown derived from artistic practice and the distinct modes of production, exhibiting, and creative thinking add to the already complexity of writing at doctoral level. As we discussed, supervision is an organic process which evolves as the project progresses. It is also a space where shared learning between student and supervisor takes place, and which contributes to the development of meaningful research cultures:

We are building knowledge together, and sometimes they [student] are leading the way and sometimes I’m leading the way, and those roles can swap around. They will have a frame of reference that is probably more current than mine. And they’ve got more time to do the reasoning about it which is a real pleasure for me. So yeah, shared learning it’s a really valuable element of PhD supervision, if we consider it to be part of a genuine meaningful research culture or research community (supervisor interview, 2021).

The notion of shared learning is echoed by Boud and Lee (2005) and one which permeates our discussions on the importance of peer learning. There will be a moment where the *student* overtakes the *master* in their knowledge base of a particular subject area, a point to be celebrated in the journey of becoming a peer. To note, however, the challenge of power dynamics between students and supervisors. Potentially, that hierarchical dynamic begins to dissolve towards the end of the degree as the PhD researcher criticality, knowledge, and comprehension of the field reaches doctoral standards. Perhaps this is where the supervisor truly becomes the learner, and one of the moments where the delights of supervision manifest itself: ‘one of the joys around supervision is the expanding of your own personal knowledge as a supervisor’ (staff interview, 2021). The Viva or the public defence, therefore, as a rite of passage, celebrates not only the achievement of doctoral standards, but also, of the level of *peer-ness*.

We discussed at length how some institutions and networks are exploring the value of inter-institutional frameworks as an extension of their research environment towards the internationalisation of doctoral education. This brought many benefits for doctoral scholars as the feedback of the SAAR Summer School attests for example. The value of inter-institutional frameworks not only in fostering peer learning opportunities but also in highlighting distinct practices across international spheres and/or disciplines cannot be underestimated. Inter-institutional summer schools have been developing protocols for strengthening the doctoral learning experience, with SAAR focusing particularly in

exploring depth in participants' artistic research projects and the SGSAAH focusing in research training relevant for a number of arts and humanities disciplines. These two examples show how wider educational structures can be successfully implemented, and perhaps pave the way for a future European Doctoral School of Artistic Research. In addition, the value of trans-institutional and international doctoral events, schools, and training programmes as moments of connection with peers was highlighted as a key aspect of delivering internationalisation, expanding student horizons, and dipping the toes in distinct ways of doing artistic research. We therefore recommend that as part of the development of both a stronger research environment and of doctoral provision, that institutions consider the implementation, expansion, or creation of inter-institutional or international frameworks as relevant for their specific context and the areas that they wish to develop. The Summer Schools are incredibly distinct in approaches, outcomes, and types of value that they offer doctoral scholars. Our earlier discussion also provides a good overview of not only their potential but also of distinct approaches to developing and implementing such projects. Appropriate funding through a 'research assistantship' could support a doctoral scholar to manage, produce and aid the delivery of a Summer/Winter School or an artistic research national network, thus enhancing employability prospects.

The earlier discussion on the positive role of mindfulness in education, and its potential benefits in doctoral provision raises a timely question: should mindfulness courses sit alongside established research methods training as a way of ensuring not only a rigorous but also a healthily fulfilling doctoral experience? We would argue that the answer to this question is a full sounding 'yes'. Such an approach would contribute to strengthening the mental health of our academics, institutions, and universities, as the current generations of doctoral students are the academics of the future. Developing a culture of healthy work-life balance will have a positive and lasting impact not only on staff productivity but also on learning and teaching and on the quality of our degrees. Mindfulness training – not mandatory but offered as another mode of training – has proven to have a positive impact in developing the qualities of the mind, necessary not only for doctoral study but also for careers beyond the degree. The wellbeing of academic staff influences the value and quality of the education they provide, thus, fostering well-being from the very beginning of the academy career – at PhD level – can only be regarded as a valuable enterprise (Schmidt and Hansson, 2018). What is more, in enhancing staff wellbeing, we are contributing to creating a professional context where research environments can develop in a healthier way.

Another recommendation this review puts forward is the implementation of peer learning and mentoring approaches to develop supervisory capacity. This has been shown to be widely beneficial (Hamilton and Carson, 2015b; Malterud 2013; Jara 2020). New supervisors learn through discussions with their more experienced peers, which highlights the role of distributed leadership in this context (Hamilton and Carson, 2015b). Sharing successful practices through peer-to-peer mentoring approaches fosters the development of a 'common language and shared understanding of what the field is' (2015b: 1358). Thus, complementing formal supervisory training with such reflective approaches – where the tacit knowledge of supervisory practice can emerge and become apparent – would enhance staff

capacity and support the development of not only doctoral provision but also of the quality of the resulting (as well as future) research environments. Hamilton and Carson's recommendation of doing so through mentoring, 'peer-to-peer dialogues' and sharing of case studies is one which the authors of this paper echo strongly. To note here is also the concern with time allocation: when engaging in supervisory practice, staff is expected to find circa 30h per year to devote to it. The contracted research time allocation (20%, common in the UK context) does not include supervision time. Furthermore, time for supervision is not accounted for in the identified student–staff ratio and stipulated academic contact time. A recognised percentage for time allocation for supervision would also support current and new supervisors in developing more sustained and healthy approaches to supervisory activity.

Finally, the question of terminology around doctoral education is one which deserves further attention. As Boud and Lee state (2005), the way PhD candidates position themselves within the research environment influences how they see their development as becoming peers, their view of hierarchical relationships within the department, and how they position themselves either as 'students' or as 'peers' in the making. As a PhD is a process of 'becoming' a researcher, where one starts as a student of how to do research, and finishes the degree through a rite of passage to become a peer (the Viva), it makes sense then to focus on the process of 'becoming' a scholar, rather than on the initial student status. Language has a role to play, and as staff, it is our responsibility to encourage PhD candidates to see themselves as 'becoming peers'. This approach ties in with one of the 10 pillars of doctoral education identified in the *Salzburg Principles*, which supports the conception of 'doctoral candidates as early-stage researchers' and advocates for the recognition of doctoral researchers as professionals in their field (European University Association, 2005: 2). Thus, we propose the removal of the word 'student' from the language around doctoral education: research scholars, PhD candidates, PhD scholars, PhD researchers, are expressions which convey the doctoral experience more clearly.

Closing Summary

Peer learning should be an integral part of doctoral education. Learning takes place in the student-supervisor relationship as well as across levels with other students, staff, and members of the research community (Flores-Scott and Nerad, 2012). This suggests a need to value and integrate sustained opportunities for peer learning throughout the degree. Implementing peer learning structures designed around the situated practice of the studio would be crucial for creating communities of practice. Doing so would potentially lead to lower levels of isolation (Lau, 2019), and positively impact student wellbeing. In response to the increasing mental health challenges at doctoral level, formal mindfulness training has shown to have a strong potential to increase focus, compassion, and other aspects of the mind, with positive and lasting outcomes. Implementing mindfulness training would support students in developing resilience, improve results and enhance mental health (Mindful Nation UK, 2015). Further, a shift towards a more horizontal approach between supervisee and supervisor in doctoral education could be adopted as a strategy to encourage students'

views of their educational training towards one of ‘becoming peers’. For example, shifting the language in doctoral education from *student* towards *scholar*, places the emphasis on the research activity and on the process of becoming a *researcher* rather than the *student* status. This approach may yield an environment where peer learning can be enhanced, particularly in peer groups facilitated by supervisors as existing hierarchical dynamics would be less palpable. It remains to be seen whether that is the case in institutional cultures which adopt this approach.

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