



Study Information Sheet [15-04-16 version 1]

Title of the study

Trust me! Academic leadership behaviours in creating 'quality' doctoral supervision relationships.

Purpose of the study

Trust may be an important marker of quality in supervision relationships. Doctoral study is a time of intense change, learning and development. It is a foray for doctoral candidates into unknown territory, their successful navigation determined in part by the quality of their connections into the wider research community. Good working relationships play a critical role in learning, and the social dimension of research work is significant. Through the perceptions of doctoral students and supervisors of what constitutes 'quality' in doctoral supervision relationships this project will create practical tools to support academic relationship building.

Who are the investigators?

Dr Kay Guccione k.guccione@sheffield.ac.uk is the Principal Investigator. This study also has a steering group from the University of Sheffield who will only see data and information that has been anonymised and aggregated, and will not be able to identify you.

Members:

Deborah McClean, Head of Operations & Assistant Director of R&IS
Professor Jerry Wellington, Head of Research Degrees, School of Education
Dr Gavin Boyce, Doctoral Development Team Leader

Who can contribute?

I would like to talk to doctoral researchers who are writing their thesis, and also experienced doctoral supervisors.

What data will we collect?

There are two ways I am collecting data for this project:

Through group discussions in a workshop on Thesis Writing: A 2h workshop either for supervisors or for students will be delivered. The workshops will contain a taught component that will help you with Thesis Writing, and two 30min group discussions that will use open-ended questions to encourage you to talk about trust, and the student-supervisor relationship. There will be time at the end to contribute further data on a 1:1 basis if you would like this. Group and 1:1 discussions will be recorded and transcribed for analysis. Transcripts will be made anonymous before analysis and information that identifies you will not be shared with anyone.

Blog comments and discussion: The [TRUST ME! blog](#) has been set up to collect supervision stories from a wider pool of researchers and supervisors across the UK. This blog aims also to be a source of personal stories about supervision.

Doctoral students: I'm interested in hearing through the blog what your supervisor does that impacts on you, what makes all the difference, how are you supported, what does good supervision look like, how do you and your supervisor interact, how did you come to trust each other, is your relationship typical?

The logo features the words "TRUST ME!" in a bold, green, sans-serif font. The text is positioned on the left side of a bright yellow triangle that points towards the top right corner of the page.

Supervisors: what's your approach, where did you learn about supervision, how is it working for you, what does good supervision look like, what are the essentials for supervision, where does trust come from, how do you interact with your students?

If you would like to share your thoughts, please use the comments box on [the blog page](#). Please anonymise your story and do not provide real names or details of your university or supervisor. Comments are moderated so that we can ensure anonymity for everyone involved. You are most welcome to share the link to this blog with other research fellows who would like to post their story.

There is also a Twitter account where you can follow the project's progress: [@predoctorbility](#)

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide if you would like to take part. If you take part in the workshop and group discussions, you will be asked to sign a consent form. You may leave the workshop at any time and you do not have to give a reason for withdrawing. If you are posting an anonymous supervision story to the project blog, your posting is taken as agreement that you consent to the data being analysed for research purposes.

Risks of taking part

We do not anticipate any physical or psychological harm as a result of participating in this project. Your data will remain confidential and you will remain anonymous. Workshop participants will have the opportunity to enhance their thesis writing / supervision practices. Additionally, this study will contribute to furthering our practical understanding of doctoral supervision.

Confidentiality / data protection

Your participation and data is confidential. Data collected by social media will be anonymised. All data will be kept securely in password-protected anonymised files on a secure server. The study data will be aggregated and reporting will not identify individual responses or participants. Individual contributions will be quoted anonymously in the final report. All materials will be stored securely in locked cabinets, or on a secure server. After 5 years the materials containing research data will be securely destroyed or deleted.

Reporting of the study

The anonymised findings of the study will be disseminated in publications and presentations. It is hoped that the findings will inform University of Sheffield and national best practice and policy in this area. I will provide you with a copy of the study findings and any subsequent publications or outputs.

Who has funded this research?

This project is funded by the [Leadership Foundation for Higher Education](#)

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

The University of Sheffield Research Ethics Committee has reviewed and approved this project on 11th May 2016.

For further information

Or to ask any questions, please contact Kay Guccione k.guccione@sheffield.ac.uk