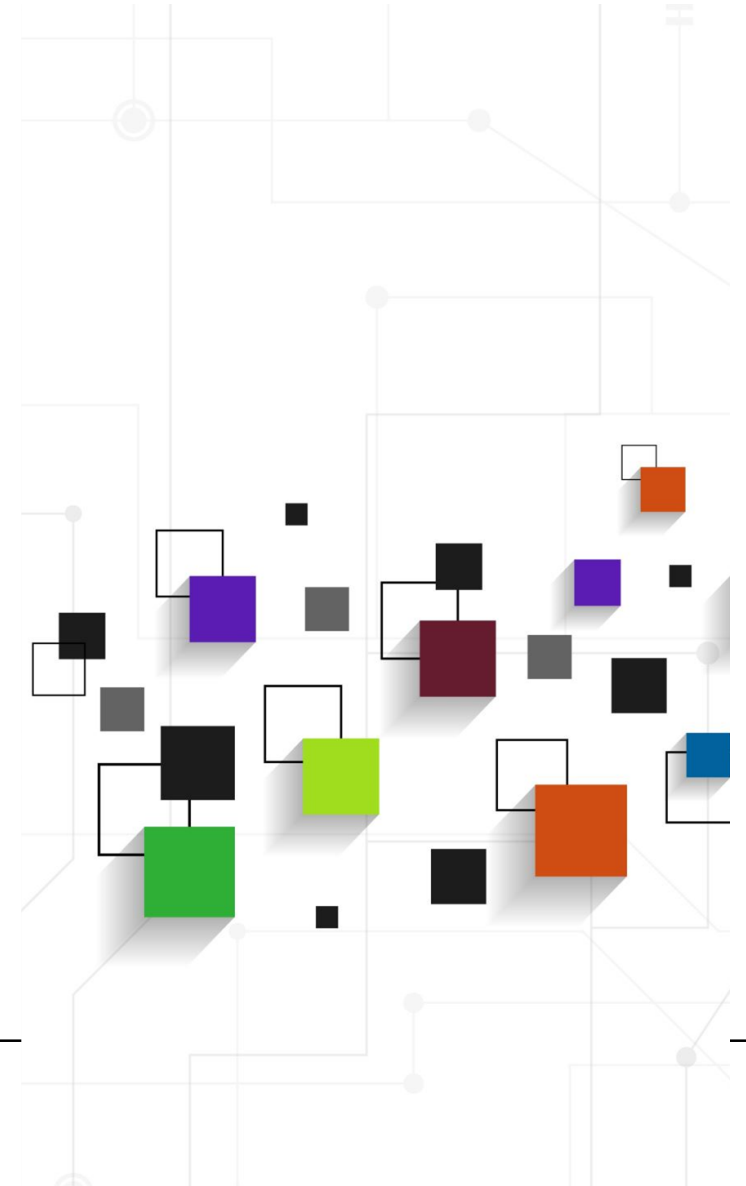# Let's talk about Supervision Lucas Zinner & Pirjo Nikander

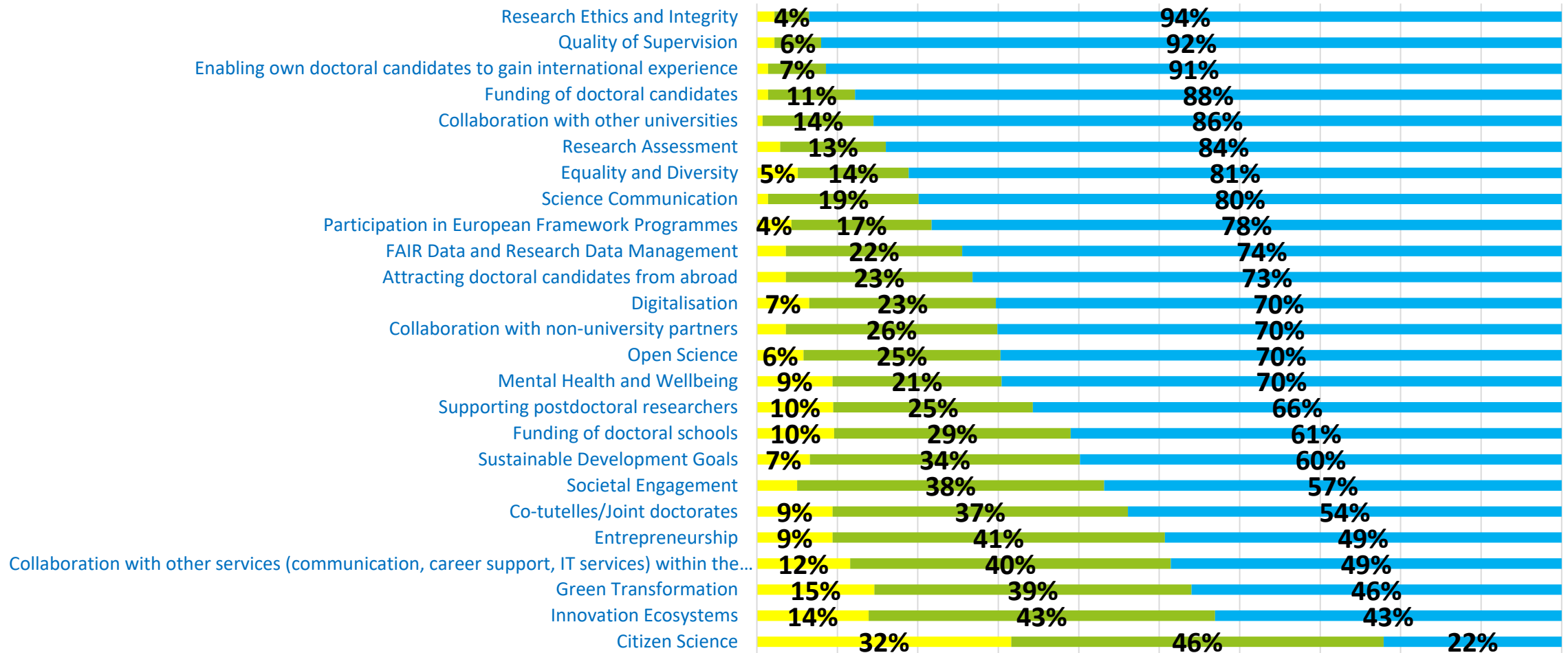10 November 2022, KRECon 2022: Doctoral Schools - Enhancing Research Careers

Key themes today:

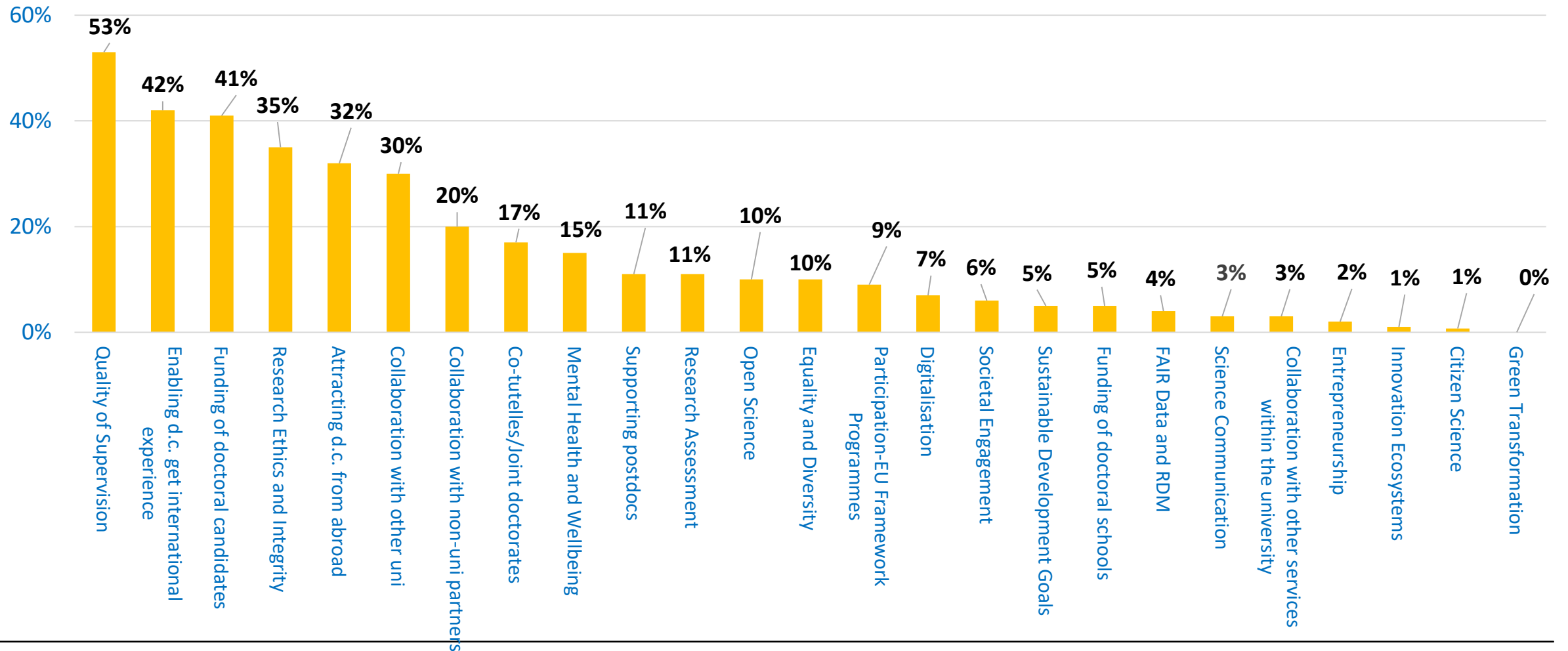1. Supervision training is firmly on the European doctoral education agenda

2. Why is this the case: The new challenges of doctoral education & supervision

3. Tools and resources for you: DocEnhance-course

4. Crucial elements, aspects & questions to consider on the university or your local level

5. Your questions and worries? Please interrupt at any point.

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Q11. Which of the following topics are a priority in the area of doctoral education at your instituion?

Topic	No priority	Low priority	High+Very high priority
Research Ethics and Integrity	4%		94%
Quality of Supervision	6%		92%
Enabling own doctoral candidates to gain international experience	7%		91%
Funding of doctoral candidates	11%		88%
Collaboration with other universities	14%		86%
Research Assessment	13%		84%
Equality and Diversity	5%	14%	81%
Science Communication	19%		80%
Participation in European Framework Programmes	4%	17%	78%
FAIR Data and Research Data Management	22%		74%
Attracting doctoral candidates from abroad	23%		73%
Digitalisation	7%	23%	70%
Collaboration with non-university partners	26%		70%
Open Science	6%	25%	70%
Mental Health and Wellbeing	9%	21%	70%
Supporting postdoctoral researchers	10%	25%	66%
Funding of doctoral schools	10%	29%	61%
Sustainable Development Goals	7%	34%	60%
Societal Engagement	38%		57%
Co-tutelles/Joint doctorates	9%	37%	54%
Entrepreneurship	9%	41%	49%
Collaboration with other services (communication, career support, IT services) within the…	12%	40%	49%
Green Transformation	15%	39%	46%
Innovation Ecosystems	14%	43%	43%
Citizen Science	32%	46%	22%

Legend: No priority (yellow) · Low priority (green) · High+Very high priority (blue)

Number of responses: 136-139/140

Q12A. Please identify which of the following topics you consider most important for doctoral education at your institution. Please indicate max.3-4.

Topic	%
Quality of Supervision	53%
Enabling d.c. get international experience	42%
Funding of doctoral candidates	41%
Research Ethics and Integrity	35%
Attracting d.c. from abroad	32%
Collaboration with other uni	30%
Collaboration with non-uni partners	20%
Co-tutelles/Joint doctorates	17%
Mental Health and Wellbeing	15%
Supporting postdocs	11%
Research Assessment	11%
Open Science	10%
Equality and Diversity	10%
Participation-EU Framework Programmes	9%
Digitalisation	7%
Societal Engagement	6%
Sustainable Development Goals	5%
Funding of doctoral schools	5%
FAIR Data and RDM	4%
Science Communication	3%
Collaboration with other services within the university	3%
Entrepreneurship	2%
Innovation Ecosystems	1%
Citizen Science	1%
Green Transformation	0%

Improving the efficiency and quality of doctoral studies

- The Czech ministry of Education, Youth and Sports aims at

1. Shorter time to completion.

2. Increased and effective supervision.

3. Increased number of competitive international candidates.

4. Higher numbers of transferable & career training.

STRATEGIC PLAN
OF THE MINISTRY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
FOR THE PERIOD FROM 2021

June 2020

What is supervision?
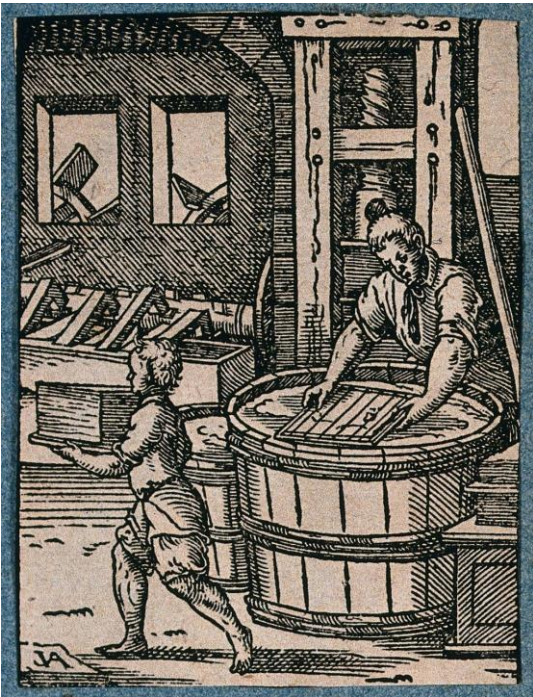
Credit: A man making paper; his apprentice carrying away the finished sheets. Woodcut by Amman, Jost, 1539-1591, Collection.Public Domain Mark

Supervisor can be defined as a person who **directs and oversees** the work of a junior (e.g., doctoral student/ candidate, early-stage researcher).

However, the supervisory process is supported by many others in various aspects of learning e.g., school coordinators, heads of schools, librarians, IT personnel, mentors, sponsors, career advisors, your peers …

The role of the supervisors is to guide the PhD candidates, the learning and research is entirely in their hands.

Where did the impetus for changing focus to supervisory supports come from?

In respect of individual doctoral candidates, arrangements for supervision and assessment should be based on a transparent contractual framework of shared responsibilities between doctoral candidates, supervisors and the institution (EUA-CDE Salzburg Principle, V, 2005).

In Salzburg II it is stated that universities have a responsibility to provide training for doctoral supervisors. (EUA-CDE, 2010)

Supervision is crucial. Its form adapts to the needs and resources of an institution. Universities should invest in the training of supervisors, enabling them to embrace their roles fully and ensure that the doctoral school or environment plays its appropriate supportive role. (EUA-CDE 2022)

Supervision is arguably the highest form of teaching accessible in higher education today.

Q1. If you agree to that statement: **isn't it surprising that the training offered to academic staff is rarely a requirement or prerequisite for supervising doctoral candidates, who pursue the highest award a university can offer?**

Supervision is arguably the highest form of teaching accessible in higher education today.

Q2. What do you know about your PhD candidates and their satisfaction or expectations regarding supervision?

Supervision is arguably the highest form of teaching accessible in higher education today.

Q3. What do you see as the **particular challenges** in your environment that could be addressed through supervisors training?

What are **possible obstacles** to implementing such a training?

Resources & tools: Supervision course

- ✓ Up-to-date, systematic, and high-quality PhD supervision is the crucial tool that supports impactful doctoral education and prepares doctoral candidates to contribute to research and society.

- ✓ Learn how to support doctoral candidates by using Supervision models and tools.

- ✓ Prepared and implemented in two loops by Tampere University in Finland, Matej Bel University in Slovakia, and University of Alcalá in Spain.

- ✓ This course aims to create a forum for discussion and sharing knowledge and experience between junior and senior supervisors and to improve the quality of the supervision practices.

- ✓ This course can be used as part of organized, taught doctoral supervision courses and tailored to the needs of different supervisory target groups.

https://docenhance.eu/supervision/

06/12/2022

DocEnhance

Find out more!

in ⬚ 🐦 DocEnhance

Subscribe to Supervision course at https://phdhub.eu/courses/phd-supervision/
Subscribe to our newsletter at https://docenhance.eu

What next?

- What local steps do you plan to take in your university?

- Do you have resources on which to plan training?

- What other practical discussion are ongoing?

Crucial questions & aspects to address:

- Format & contents of the training + resources?

- Training for whom: the young/ beginning vs. more mature, discipline specific or generic? Compulsory or voluntary?
  - Healing the heathy – opening the eyes of the "ignorant"
  - Time allotment: short events – longer training

- The contents and width of training: university pedagogical vs. practical induction profile

- Clear division of labour between individual supervisors, the doctoral programmes & the Doctoral School

- Top down and bottom up formats combined.
  - E.g. doctoral supervisors' coffees
  - Faculty lunches around a topic
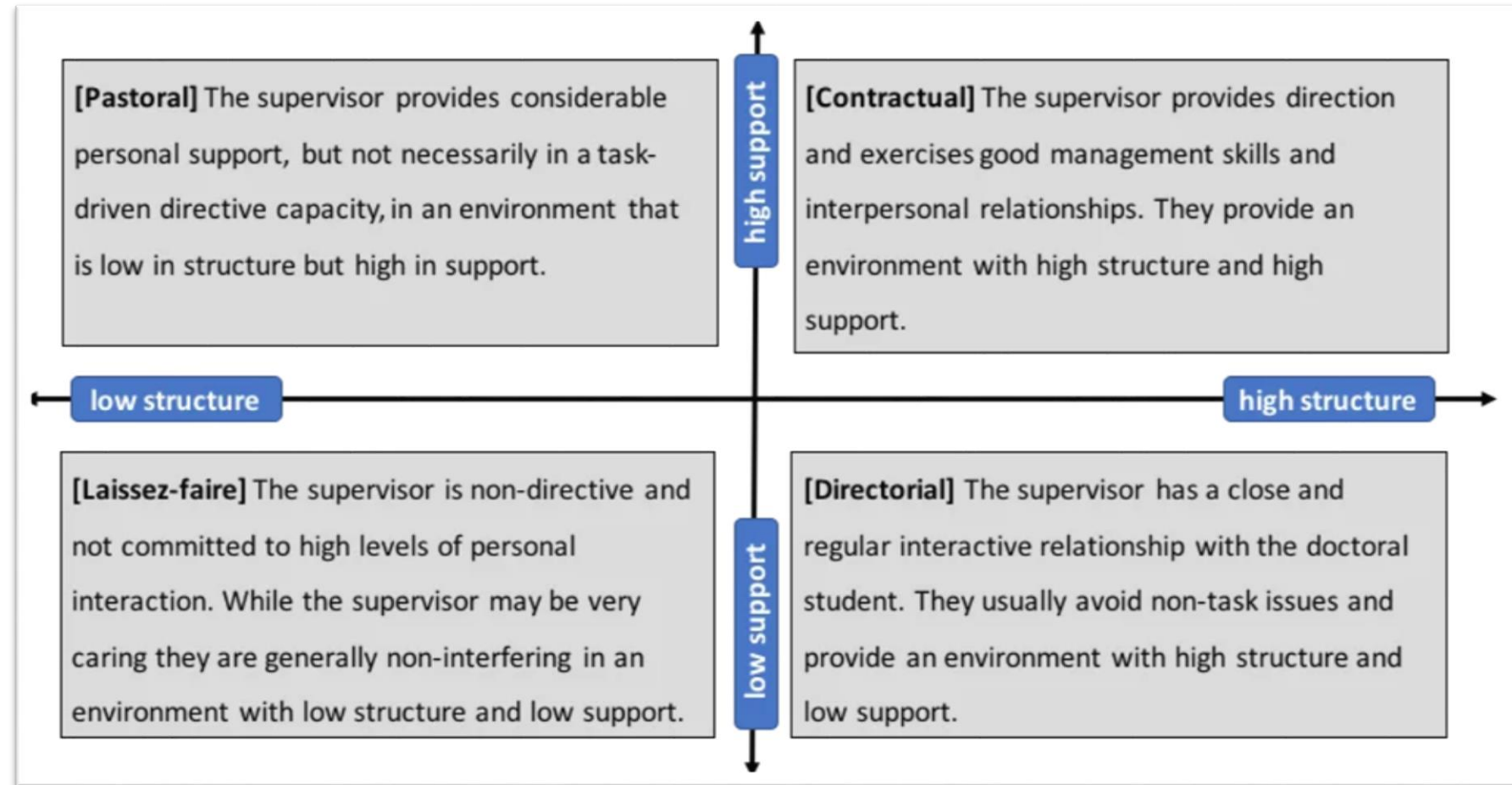 - Young supervisors' club/peer group for postdocs etc.
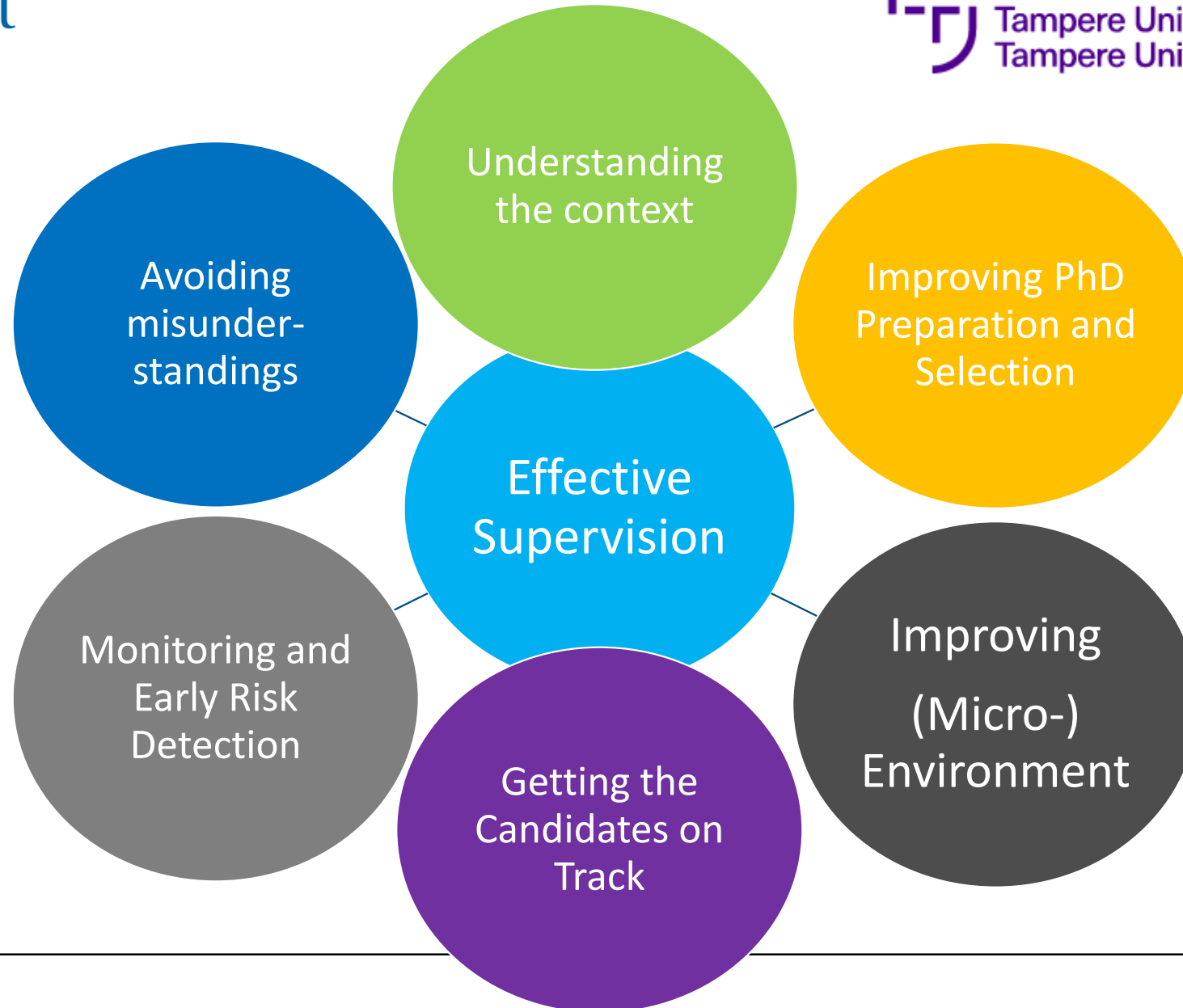
Preventing conflicts

Image: Jose R. Cabello from Pixabay

Causes of conflict	Overcoming strategies
Lack of communication	Discuss expectations at the beginning and make them explicit Be available when needed Ask candidate to record and share the outcome of meetings React early to sign of worries
Mismatched expectations	Keep expectations realistic on both sides Be organised and professional and help candidates to develop adequate attitude and work habits Don't take anything for granted without making it explicit
Personality clash	Understand discipline/cultural differences Find mutual ground and make effort to compromise
Competing pressures	Understand uncertainties and and ups and downs Give sufficient notice about times of absence Keep an eye on the bigger picture Remember you are both human beings

One size fits all?

Terry Gatfield proposed a model for supervisory styles ranging from **laissez-faire** to **pastoral** (both of which necessitate greater student independence), to contractual and directorial (which provide greater supervisor direction to students).

[Pastoral] The supervisor provides considerable personal support, but not necessarily in a task-driven directive capacity, in an environment that is low in structure but high in support.

[Contractual] The supervisor provides direction and exercises good management skills and interpersonal relationships. They provide an environment with high structure and high support.

high support

low structure ← → high structure

[Laissez-faire] The supervisor is non-directive and not committed to high levels of personal interaction. While the supervisor may be very caring they are generally non-interfering in an environment with low structure and low support.

[Directorial] The supervisor has a close and regular interactive relationship with the doctoral student. They usually avoid non-task issues and provide an environment with high structure and low support.

low support

Anne Lee's Five Approaches to Supervision

- Functional – project management approach

- Enculturation – student becomes a member of the disciplinary community

- Critical thinking

- Emancipation – student developing themselves

- Developing a quality relationship

Lee, Anne. "How are doctoral students supervised? Concepts of doctoral research supervision." *Studies in Higher Education* 33.3 (2008): 267-281.

Anne Lee's Five Approaches to Supervision

	Functional	Enculturation	Critical thinking	Emancipation	Relationship
ADVANTAGES	Clarity Consistency Progress can be monitored	Encourages standards, participation, identity, community formation	Rational inquiry, fallacy exposed	Personal growth, ability to cope with change	Lifelong working partnerships Enhanced self esteem
DISADVANTAGES	Rigidity when confronted with the creation of original knowledge	Low tolerance of internal difference, sexist, ethnicised regulation (Cousin & Deepwell 2005)	Denial of creativity, can belittle or depersonalise student	Toxic mentoring (Darling 1985) where tutor abuses power	Potential for harassment, abandonment or rejection

Lee, Anne. "How are doctoral students supervised? Concepts of doctoral research supervision." *Studies in Higher Education* 33.3 (2008): 267-281.

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