

Building distributed leadership for effective supervision of creative practice higher research degrees

Final Report 2014

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List of Acronyms Used

ALTC	Australian Learning and Teaching Council Ltd
ARC	Australian Research Council
AUT	Auckland University of Technology
COFA	College of Fine Arts
DCA	Doctorate of Creative Arts
DCI	Doctorate of Creative Industries
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
ERA	Excellence in Research for Australia
FOE	Field of Education
HDR	Higher Degree Research, also Higher Research Degree
OLT	Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching (successor ALTC)
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
QUT	Queensland University of Technology
UWS	University of Western Sydney
UNSW	The University of New South Wales

Executive Summary

Building distributed leadership for effective supervision of creative practice higher research degrees is an Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) funded project, conducted in partnership between Queensland University of Technology, The University of Melbourne, Auckland University of Technology, The University of New South Wales and University of Western Sydney. The project was initiated to develop a cooperative approach to establishing an understanding of the contextual frameworks of the emergent field of creative practice higher degrees by research (HDRs); capturing early insights of administrators and supervisors; gathering exemplars of good practices; and establishing an in-common understanding of effective approaches to supervision. To this end, the project has produced:

- A literature review, to provide a research foundation for creative practice higher research degree supervision (Chapter 3).
- A contextual review of disciplinary frameworks for HDR programs, produced through surveys of postgraduate research administrators, and an analysis of institutional materials and academic development programs for supervisors.
- A National Symposium, *Effective Supervision of Creative Arts Research Degrees (ESCARD)*, at QUT in Brisbane in February 2013, with 62 delegates from 20 Australasian universities, at which project findings were disseminated, and delegates presented case studies and position papers, and participated in discussions on key issues for supervisors (Appendix 2).
- Resources, including a booklet for supervisors: *12 Principles for the Effective Supervision of Creative Practice Higher Research Degrees*, which encapsulates attitudes, insights and good practices of experienced and new supervisors. It was produced through a content analysis of interviews with twenty-five supervisors in creative disciplines (visual and performing arts, music, new media, creative writing and design) (Printed booklet, PDF, Appendix 4).
- A project website to disseminate project outcomes <<http://supervisioncreativeartsphd.net>>, which holds project findings, relevant references, and a repository of case studies and position papers by supervisors and program administrators.
- A call for papers for a special issue 'Supervising Practice: Perspectives on the Supervision of Creative Practice Research Higher Degrees' of *ACCESS Journal: Critical Perspectives on Communication, Cultural & Policy Studies* (ERA ranked A quality) in 2014 (Appendix 3).
- A community of supervisory practice initiated through project partnerships, a national symposium where supervisors from across Australasia met in dialogue for the first time, resource sharing, and joint publishing opportunities.
- A set of recommendations for supervision capacity building and academic development, produced through the triangulation of literature and contextual reviews, analysis of institutional frameworks, interviews with supervisors and national dialogues.

It is anticipated that the project's outcomes will support experienced and new supervisors in this emergent field, and so benefit HDR students, and will enable creative disciplines to build supervision capacity, and so to accommodate growth in postgraduate enrolments.

Funded as a pilot project, the project set out to establish a robust research base to provide a foundation for future work involving sharing good practices, resource building, and designing effective approaches to academic development for supervisors. Recommendations that were produced out of this project include the need to extend beyond generic, formal training for supervisors to academic development that harnesses

and extends distributed leadership; focuses on local, disciplinary contexts; has a strong emphasis on case studies; provides diverse resources; and facilitates dialogue between supervisors. Recommendations also include developing frameworks for mentoring new supervisors and building a national network to facilitate cross-institutional discourse, disseminate good practices, and share insights into the management of risk factors, ethical issues, and preparing candidates for examination.

As a pilot investigation, the outcomes of this project lay the ground for this future work.

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CHAPTER 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND APPROACH

1.1 Background to the Project

Since the *Strand Report* initiated the inclusion of creative practice as a field of postgraduate research in 1998, over 30 Australasian universities have embarked upon what are variously called 'creative practice', 'practice-led', and 'practice-based' higher degrees by research (HDRs) in disciplines such as visual arts, performing arts, music and sound, design, creative writing, film and new media. A ten-fold increase in enrolments has occurred over the past decade (DEEWR figures cited in Baker & Buckley, 2009). It has been fuelled by the recognition of creative outcomes within the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) reporting framework by the Australian Research Council (ARC) in 2008, and the increasing recognition of the value of the Creative Industries to the economic and cultural fabric (Higgs et al., 2007). By embracing this significant change in HDR culture, and accommodating rapid growth in postgraduate enrolments, creative disciplines have not only recognised the opportunities that creative practice research offers; they have demonstrated a willingness to meet the challenges of a new, uncharted area of learning and teaching.

However, in a recent ALTC funded scoping project, *Creative Arts PhD: Future-proofing the creative arts in higher education*, Baker & Buckley (2009) identified an urgent need to develop a sector-wide understanding; a coherent approach to the form of the creative practice thesis (the written component often referred to as an exegesis); common guidelines for examination; and new approaches to supervision in this emergent field. An ARC-funded project has since focussed on the 'practice-based thesis' (*Writing in the academy: The practice-based thesis as an evolving genre*, Paltridge, Starfield & Ravelli, 2011) and two ALTC/OLT funded projects have focussed on examination (Webb, Brien & Burr, 2010 and Petkovic, Lang & Berkley, 2009). Until now, however, there has been little focussed research on the key learning and teaching aspect of creative practice HDRs: supervision. Creative disciplines across the sector have approached understanding this new field of supervision, as well as supervision capacity building, in an ad hoc way.

The practices of HDR supervision in longer-established disciplinary traditions, such as law; information technology; humanities; and science, are not entirely transferable to Creative Practice HDRs, which differ markedly because they involve the production and presentation of creative practice 'artefacts' (creative works, products, events, or techniques) in conjunction with a written thesis for examination. This combination means that they diverge in terms of research intent; the types of research questions asked; the methodologies, practices, methods and processes of production employed; the types of new knowledge claims made; as well as ways of evidencing the value of the research (Hamilton & Jaaniste, 2009; Yeates & Carson, 2009). Given the unique framing contexts, processes and outcomes of creative practice PhDs, along with the experimentation that continues to occur in what is still an evolving field, the supervision of creative practice HDRs involves unique challenges.

The need to build learning and teaching leadership activities around supervision is not limited to the creative disciplines however. As Bruce and Stoodley (2013) have noted, there is a lack of definition, analysis, processes, and tools around HDR supervision more broadly. And, as Hammond J., & Ryland, K., & Tennant, M., & Boud, D. argue in a recent ALTC project

report (2010), there is growing recognition that HDR supervision is a crucial aspect of learning and teaching given the growing pressure on universities, faculties, disciplines and supervisors to increase enrolments, diversify offerings and prioritise timely completion. They conclude that, “There is a need in many universities for greater emphasis on professional leadership in research education.” It is therefore our hope that, while the work of this project is intended to specifically address the needs of creative disciplines to effectively support unprecedented growth in HDR enrolments, it will be of benefit more broadly.

To enable leadership capacity building in research education we need to capture, articulate, and share the practices and effective strategies developed by supervisors and schools. As Hammond et al. argue in *Building Research Supervision and Training across Australian Universities*, “conversations [around supervision] need to go beyond issues of compliance to address quality of supervision and good supervisory practices.” They therefore recommend, “increasingly sophisticated and constructive conversations about supervision pedagogy that engage all supervisors, both new and more experienced” (2010: v). In line with this recommendation, this project has enacted a cooperative, cross-institutional and multidisciplinary strategy for capturing the insights and good practices of supervisors and HDR administrators from across the sector. From this primary research, it has set out to establish a shared understanding of HDR pedagogies in creative disciplines, initiate the building and dissemination of a set of resources, and establish key principles for the effective supervision of creative practice HDRs. At the same time, a distributed leadership approach has enabled the project to enhance the learning and teaching capacity and experiences of supervisors as the activities of the project have unfolded.

1.2 Project Aims

Through a co-operative partnership between five universities—Queensland University of Technology, The University of Melbourne, Auckland University of Technology, The University of Western Sydney, and The University of New South Wales, this project set out to gain an understanding of the contextual frameworks and administrative practices surrounding creative practice higher degrees by research. And, by capturing insights of supervisors and gathering exemplars of good practices, it set out to establish an in-common understanding of effective approaches to supervision. As a pilot project, its key aim was to develop a shared understanding of the field for the benefit supervisors and their students, and to enable creative disciplines to build further supervision capacity. It was also a primary goal of the project to provide a robust foundation for future work in resource building, sharing effective practices, and designing academic development for supervisors.

The project’s objectives included establishing a research foundation for the field by:

- producing a literature review of the aligned fields of HDR supervision and creative practice research;
 - developing a contextual review of institutional and disciplinary frameworks by auditing policies and resources and capturing the processes and practices of HDR administrators;
 - identifying institutional models for training HDR supervisors and candidates;
- and

- capturing the views, insights, strategies and good practices and practices of early adopter supervisors;

and building leadership at the level of disciplines and faculties by:

- analysing the data produced from the primary research (surveys and interviews) to establish institutional commonalities and differences, identify innovative and effective supervision practices, and synthesise a set of working principles for effective approaches to supervision;
 - articulating a shared understanding of HDR pedagogies in the creative and performing arts, design, creative writing and media disciplines;
- and
- taking a co-operative, sector-wide approach to resource collection and sharing, open dialogue and the dissemination of findings.

1.3 Project Approach

The project design has encompassed a multi-tiered approach. Contextual factors were established through a literature review of adjacent fields (namely HDR supervision and creative practice research); a contextual review of published materials and resources provided by partner institutions to students and supervisors; and surveys of administrators of creative practice HDR programs. An understanding of effective supervision practices and strategies was gained through interviews with experienced and new supervisors at partner universities. Principles and exemplars of effective supervision have been drawn from these interviews and resources. And wider insights, exemplars and case studies have been captured through a national symposium entitled *Effective Supervision of Creative Arts Research Degrees* (ESCARD) held at QUT in early 2013.

The dissemination strategy has also involved multiple, integrated strategies. The ESCARD symposium not only provided an avenue for expanding the capture of insights and exemplars sector-wide, it also created early awareness of the project and facilitated the dissemination of initial findings. A project website has been developed to provide a dissemination portal for the project's resources, good practice case studies, and conference presentations. And an extended dissemination strategy has been designed to facilitate the scholarly publication of findings by the project team, as well as others, through a forthcoming (2014) special edition of the journal *ACCESS: Critical Perspectives on Communication, Cultural & Policy Studies*, entitled 'Supervising Practice: Perspectives on the Supervision of Creative Practice Research Higher Degrees' (2014).

1.4 Distributed Leadership

The project design was underpinned by principles of distributed leadership. The rationale for this approach stemmed from two recent ALTC/OLT project reports on research supervision in Australasian universities. One recommends systemic change while cautioning that "mandated change can harm organisational cultures" (Bruce & Stoodley, 2013: 227) and the other concludes that the advancement of supervisory practices is more likely to occur at the level of disciplines and supervisors than in response to policy-driven governance and oversight of 'quality assurance' (Hammond et al., 2010). Distributed leadership provides a

way forward. It allows us to move beyond 'leadership' as involving the top down implementation of policy towards a model that sees leadership as inclusive and generative.

Theories of distributed leadership envisage leadership as an attribute and capacity, which is not only invested in formal leadership roles but in 'local' innovators who operate as exemplars and sources of information to others. David Green refers to 'leaderful communities', as operating when people believe they have a contribution to make, take initiative, and have followers (Green in MacBeath, 2005). Rather than relying upon the leadership of individuals in designated roles, distributed leadership is a broad-based and networked model. Innovators and early adopters are pivotal because they share a wealth of tacit knowledge, and provide models, advice, and support to others within communities of practice. Because it is contingent upon the strength of relationships between people, it can be strengthened by facilitating interaction, building networks and stretching leadership across institutional levels. Indeed, Johnson, Lee and Green (2000) argue that strengthening co-operative relationships between people in this way improves individual performance in the self, as well as in colleagues and peers. Moreover, it is a sustainable and expansive approach to leadership capacity building.

1.5 Approaches to Distributed Leadership

In line with the overarching principles of distributed leadership, the project team recognised that to facilitate systemic change and increase supervision capacity, it is necessary to both acknowledge and build leadership at multiple levels of learning and teaching. We therefore developed a cooperative, cross-institutional, and multidisciplinary strategy to capture the insights and good practices of new and more experienced supervisors and HDR administrators. And we initiated conversations about supervision pedagogy that engaged supervisors from across the sector. At the same time, we have recognised the contingencies of operating in diverse HDR environments, and therefore sought to identify a range of models and exemplars as case studies, which can be evaluated for contextual 'fit' and applied or adapted by new supervisors and disciplinary groups as appropriate.

The principles of distributed leadership were employed in various levels of the project design: to strengthen relationships between the multi-institutional project team members; canvass insights from multiple tiers of leadership (research degree leaders and administrators, experienced and new supervisors); build national networks by providing forums and scholarly opportunities for supervisors from across Australasian universities; and sustained dissemination of project outcomes to supervisors, universities and national scholarly networks.

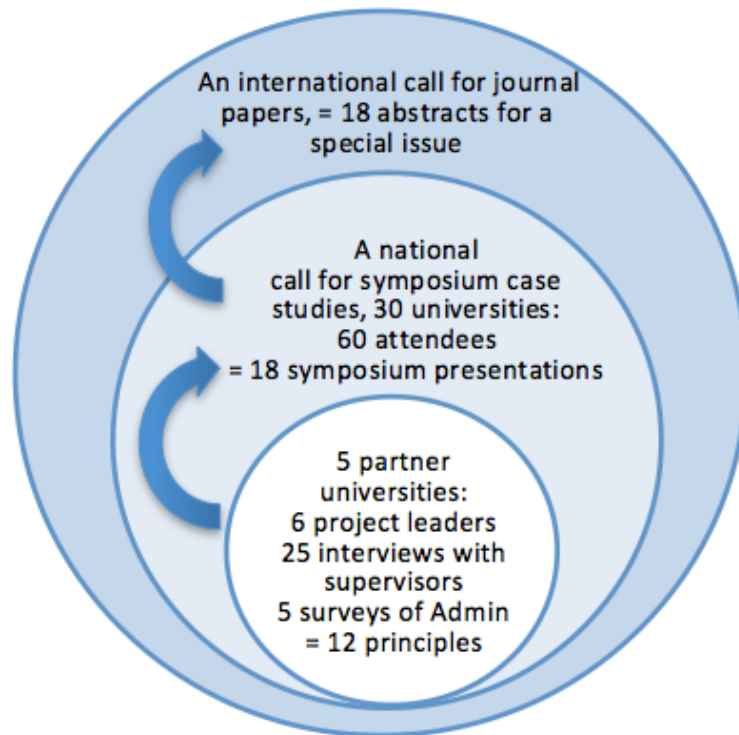


Diagram 1: Distributed approach to expanding data collection and dissemination network

Central network: project team members

While the partner institutions are by no means the only universities in Australasia to offer creative practice PhD programs, each is home to experienced supervisors who have a demonstrated commitment to, and scholarly engagement with, practice-led research and creative practice HDRs, and there was already a deep engagement with the project aims by the project team members. A collaborative and co-operative approach was developed with these 'local leaders' of the project team. It involved a consultative approach to planning (project design, surveys and interview questions) and a collaborative approach to collecting information and good practices, with funds dispersed to partners for this purpose.

Expanded internal networks

The project team acted as conduits for disseminating information about the project through their established local networks, and they identified and recruited 25 early adopter and new supervisors within partner universities for interviews, as well as HDR administrators to complete surveys and to collate institutional resources.

Expansion into national network building

A decision to expand the leadership network beyond the project partners was taken, and the mid-term partner meeting in February 2013 was re-envisioned to become a national symposium. Invitations to attend and present case studies and position papers were circulated via project partners within their universities as well as via Deans and Assistant Deans of Creative Arts and Design Schools and faculties across all Australasian universities. In this way, formally designated 'leaders' within schools identified local 'leader/innovators' across the country, and they were brought into the network. They not only attended the

symposium, many submitted a good practice case study or an abstract for a position paper. The accommodation costs of shortlisted presenters were funded through a reallocation of grant money. To encourage wider attendance, no registration fee was imposed. Over 60 delegates attended, including 18 presenters, representing 20 universities.

Continued expansion

This strategy for engaging multiple tiers of stakeholders across a wide spread of institutions was further expanded through a national and international call for papers for a special issue of a journal on the themes of the project and symposium.

A web portal was also developed to facilitate the dissemination of project outcomes, case studies and position papers that were generated by the project team and the expanded network. Traditional dissemination methods such as conference papers and publications by the project team were also included in the project plan.

Distributed leadership was not only the approach of the project; it was also its goal. As Johnson, Lee & Green (2000) have argued, building co-operative relationships between people and institutions promotes leadership capacity both in the self and in peers across the network. By employing strategies of distributed leadership, the project set out to recognise and acknowledge the broad-based leadership capacity that has begun to arise in the area of creative practice research supervision across the sector, as it gathered diverse, early models and resources of local innovators. By providing a model of co-operative research and resource building and sharing, it set out to strengthen internal discipline networks and to establish new, cross-institutional networks and 'leaderful communities'. And, by inviting early adopter/innovator supervisors and administrators to articulate their tacit knowledge in surveys and interviews, then offering them the opportunity to expand their good practices into conference presentations, and then write up formal journal papers, the project has incrementally extended 'local' leadership capacity (in which innovators have operated as exemplars and sources of information to others in their local networks) into scholarly, national leadership.

1.6 Methods

1.6.1. Literature review:

While little research has been conducted into the specific topic of supervision of creative practice HDRs, a scholarly foundation for the project was developed through a literature review of research and projects from the adjacent fields of HDR supervision and practice-led research. This Literature review appears in Chapter 3 of this report.

1.6.2. Contextual review:

The contextual review involved a multi-pronged approach to data collection. Mindful of the increasingly complex educational environments in which co-operation, as well as tensions, exist between the 'local' and the 'centre' (that is, between the university, faculty and disciplines), the project team sought insights from multiple tiers of leadership to form a contextual understanding of the field. This included document collection (the formal,

published policy documents of partner universities); surveying administrative research program managers; interviewing both experienced and new supervisors, and case study collection more broadly.

Data collection and document sampling: To develop a snapshot of partner institutions' contextual frameworks, university and discipline level document sampling was conducted. This included reviewing publicly accessible (web and printed) documents, and well as internally circulated materials on postgraduate supervision, postgraduate study, and training (for students and supervisors).

Surveys: To complement these secondary sources, primary research was conducted. Surveys were distributed to research higher degree administrators/postgraduate research convenors at research student centers in the partner institutions. Appropriate respondents were identified by project team members. Quantitative and qualitative (open-ended) survey questions related to HDR structures, supervision loads, candidature duration and milestones, supervisor training and academic development. The survey form and questions were approved by QUT Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval Number 1200000625).

Interviews: Evidence-based, qualitative research was conducted through semi-structured interviews with 25 supervisors from five partner universities. Project team members nominated interviewees from their local networks. They included 'experienced' supervisors (with three or more completions) and 'new' supervisors, and spanned a broad range of creative disciplines including visual and performing arts, music and sound, new media, creative writing, fashion, graphic design, interaction design and interior design. The interview questions were approved by the QUT Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval Number 1200000625).

Interviews were recorded and transcribed by hand. All transcripts are contained in a secure location, in confidential documents. All interviewees were asked for consent to be named in the research data. Although most gave this consent, individual statements have been de-identified in this report and in the project outcome: *12 Principles for the Effective Supervision of Creative Practice Higher Research Degrees* booklet.

1.6.3. An open call for contributions, dialogue and feedback:

A two-day National Symposium, *Effective Supervision of Creative Arts Research Degrees (ESCARD)* was held at QUT in Brisbane in February 2013. Sixty-two delegates from 20 Australasian Universities attended. Held half way through the project timeline, it provided a point of dissemination for preliminary findings, and an opportunity to seek formative feedback on the project ideas as they were developing. It also extended the data collection, as it provided the opportunity for a wider, national network of supervisors and HDR administrators to contribute to the case studies and outcomes of the project. It provided a forum to debate ideas, share insights, and further concepts with a broad spectrum of interested scholars and practitioners. And it assisted in building leadership networks across institutions. Outcomes were captured and, in turn, disseminated via the project web site.

1.6.4. Textual and content analysis:

The project employed textual analysis and content analysis to identify patterns across sets of resources and materials. An established research tool, content analysis is commonly used for the quantitative and qualitative evaluation of written and visual texts, and it can similarly be used for the analysis of interviews. It involves the identification of patterns, through the observation of recurrent themes and categories (Stemler 2001). Holsti describes it as, “[a] technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages” (1969: 14).

Content analysis was employed to identify primary concerns and response patterns, as well as recurring themes in creative practice HDR environments, and to establish a holistic picture of the practices and innovations of partner institutions and early adopter supervisors. The transcriptions of interviews with supervisors were subjected to a thematic content analysis in two phases. First, the transcripts were collated into a matrix to capture and sort quantitative and qualitative data into recurring themes and to categorise it according to institutional contexts and experience levels of supervisors (for the purposes of comparison). In turn, this synthesis led to a set of working principles, illustrated by quotes and exemplars of best practice.

This method resulted in an expanded matrix of themes, categorised according to institutional contexts and the experience level of supervisors. Its synthesis of recurring themes and position statements, underpins key project outcomes: a booklet for supervisors entitled *12 Principles for the Effective Supervision of Creative Practice Higher Research Degrees*, as well as the project’s recommendations.

1.7 Project Phases

Phase 1: Project set up and background research (June 2012–November 2012)

The first phase of the project saw the appointment of a project manager and research assistant and established communications between project partners. Interview and survey questions were designed and an ethical clearance application was submitted. The literature review and collection of institutional resources and policy documents commenced.

Phase 2: Data collection (November 2012–March 2013)

Interviews with supervisors took place between November 2012 and February 2013. Surveys were also distributed to administrative centres with briefings provided by project team members. The review of institutional resources began. The organisation of the ESCARD Symposium was a key focus of this phase. Besides logistical organisation, a template for the submission of case studies was produced and disseminated to over 30 Australasian Universities. Submissions were shortlisted. A partner meeting and the ESCARD Symposium were held.

Phase 3: Collation and analysis (February 2013- April 2013)

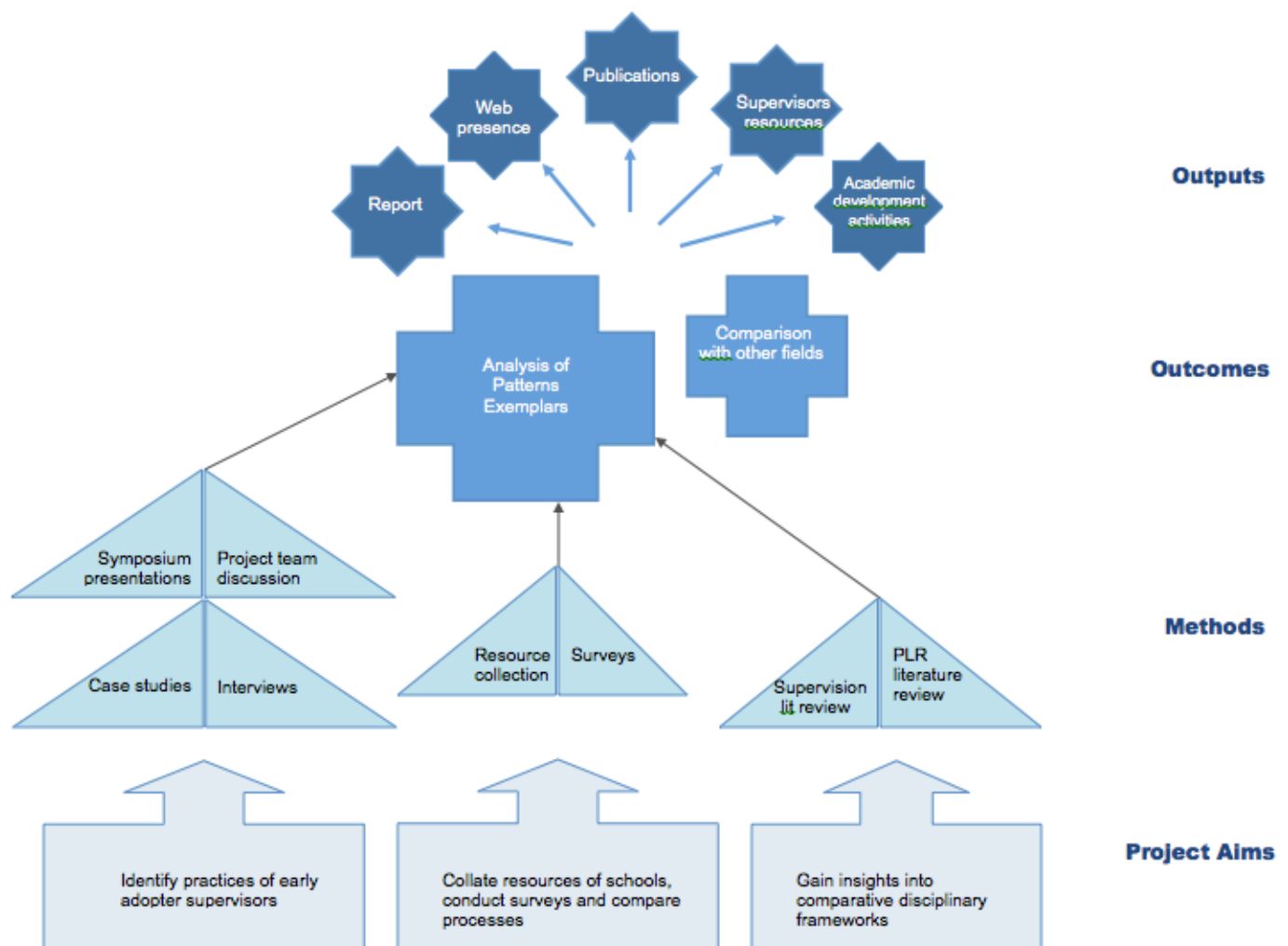
The focus of the third phase was collation of materials and content analysis of surveys and interview transcripts. A preliminary analysis was conducted and a set of principles for effective supervision were extracted and shared with the project team for discussion and comment. The literature review and annotated bibliography were drafted.

Phase 4: Evaluation and dissemination: (April 2013-July 2013)

A project website was designed and content for it was collated. An evaluation of the project and a compilation of findings were drafted. Recommendations for new resources and approaches to academic development were derived. A project report was prepared and circulated to partner institutions before submission. The project leaders were invited to prepare a 2014 special edition of ACCESS Journal based on the ESCARD conference themes. A call for papers was circulated and abstracts received. The preparation of scholarly conference papers and publications to facilitate broad dissemination began.

1.8 Project Logic

Diagram 2 illustrates the flow of project aims to methods, activities, and outcomes/outputs.



CHAPTER 2: PROJECT OUTCOMES

A multi-modal set of project outcomes were developed, including a scholarly foundation for the field in the form of a literature review of aligned fields, and a contextual review of creative practice HDRs produced through an analysis of institutional documents, and surveys of HDR administrators. Other concrete outcomes include a set of principles for effective supervision of creative practice HDRs, which were deduced through a content analysis of interviews with supervisors at partner universities; a repository of supervisory case studies captured at a national symposium; and a series of scholarly papers gathered through calls for papers for a national symposium and a special edition of an international journal. In addition, outcomes of this pilot project include a series of recommendations on administrative processes, support, and approaches to the design of academic development for supervisors in this relatively new field. As a pilot project, the research outcomes of this project provide the foundation for this future work.

Dissemination outcomes include print/PDF materials (a booklet for supervisors and a project report), a national symposium, a project website, conference presentations and a special issue of an international A ranked journal (for 2014).

Less tangible, but nonetheless very important, outcomes of the project include the leadership capacity that has been extended as supervisors became 'informants' on effective supervision and, through the confidence this gave them, then went on to become presenters of scholarly papers, and contributors to a national network of supervisors and universities involved in sharing insights and ongoing dialogue. The strengthening of institutional communities of practice, and the emergence of national disciplinary networks, are also outcomes of the distributed leadership approach.

These outcomes are detailed below.

2.1 A Scholarly Understanding of the Field: Contextual Factors

1. Literature review: A scholarly research base

Because little literature has been produced so far on the specific topic of creative practice HDR supervision, our review of the literature, which forms Chapter 3 of this report, includes a survey of the broad field of HDR supervision and the field of creative practice research (also known as practice-led and practice-based research). In combination, this serves to establish a foundation for a field that sits at their intersection. It primarily focuses on ALTC and OLT funded project reports, resources and publications, but also encompasses other key literature.

The literature review is not only a project outcome in its own right, it has helped to ground this project on existing research; it provides the basis for comparisons with other fields; it has helped to identify the unique attributes and considerations of creative practice HDR supervision; and it has informed the recommendations of the project.

2. Contextual review: A snapshot of institutional frameworks, processes and resources

From the analysis of publically accessible, as well as internally circulated, materials on postgraduate supervision and primary research conducted through surveys designed to elicit quantitative and qualitative information from HDR administrators in partner institutions, a snapshot of HDR structures, supervision loads, candidature duration and milestones, and supervisor support and training was produced. This contextual review, which appears in Chapter 4 of this report, establishes an understanding of varied institutional practices, frameworks and management of creative practice research higher degrees.

The institutional snapshot that has been produced is not only a project outcome in its own right, it helped to identify the unique attributes and considerations of creative practice HDR supervision; it enabled us to frame, develop and interpret the supervisor interviews; and it informs our recommendations for institutional support frameworks and academic development for supervisors.

3. Collation of resources

A review of partner institutions' websites and print materials identified resources provided to supervisors within partner institutions. The resources, which range from broad and generic, institution-wide resources to discipline specific and supervisor generated resources, were collated, categorised and analysed.

This analysis of existing resources has provided a framing context for interpreting interviews with supervisors and for understanding institutional approaches to academic development.

2.2 Practices and Principles of Effective Supervision

4. Interviews with supervisors: Insights into effective supervision practices

Semi-structured interviews with twenty-five experienced and new supervisors of creative practice higher research degrees, conducted across the project's five partner universities captured rich and diverse insights into this emergent field of postgraduate supervision. Some of those interviewed were among the first to supervise and complete practice-led and practice-based PhDs, some have advocated for and defined the field, and some belong to the new/second generation of supervisors. And they represent a broad range of disciplines (including visual art, performing art, music, new media, creative writing, fashion, graphic design, interaction design and interior design).

The interviews provided understandings of supervisory contexts, experiences, attitudes, good practices, and strategies for effective supervision. They elicited supervisors' advice for new supervisors and they also captured perceptions of support needs and recommendations for academic development.

Outcomes of the interviews include:

- 33 hours of tape-recorded interview materials;
- transcriptions of the tape-recorded interviews.

The interviews are not only a project outcome in their own right, they have helped to identify the unique attributes and considerations of creative practice HDR supervision;

provided the foundation for establishing principles for effective supervision.

5. Content analysis of key themes and principles

Transcription of the above-mentioned interviews with supervisors and the collation of transcripts into a thematic matrix of topics, institutional contexts and experience levels of supervisors enabled a process of content analysis, which served to capture and sort quantitative and qualitative data. This analysis subsequently led to the identification of response patterns, comparisons and divergences, as well as a holistic picture of the practices, innovations and primary concerns of partner institutions and early adopter supervisors, complete with sets of relevant quotes. In turn, this synthesis led to a set of working principles, illustrated by quotes and exemplars of best practice.

The primary outcomes of the content analysis of supervisor interviews include

- an extensive matrix of supervisor responses sorted into themed categories, with attendant collated quotes,
- a set of principles for effective supervision (Section 4.3 and as a booklet reproduced in Appendix 3),
- a data source for conference presentations (Outcome 10 below).

This matrix and set of principles are not only outcomes in their own right, they have informed the project findings and conclusions around institutional frameworks, support and academic development for supervisors, effective practices and experiences of supervisors and, and they have underpinned our recommendations for future work, institutional support frameworks and academic development for supervisors (Chapter 4).

6. A National Symposium: Collection of exemplars, case studies, presentation and dialogue

A national symposium was held in February 2013 at QUT, with 18 institutional case studies and position papers presented to 62 delegates from twenty universities, along with facilitated forums. It provided an opportunity to capture a wider range of good practices and insights of supervisors and HDR administrators and enabled delegates to share experiences and issues through focused forums around the themes of academic writing and quality of practice. Case studies and dialogues were captured in a range of mediums including text, slides, video and social media.

Primary outcomes include:

- a two day event, entitled *Effective Supervision of Creative Arts Research Degrees* (ESCARD) held at QUT in Brisbane on the 7th, 8th February 2013 (Appendix 1 provides a schedule);
- submitted abstracts for case studies and position papers produced by attendees were collected into a program distributed to attendees at the symposium (and on the project website);
- presentations, captured as PDFs and/or audio and video (available on the project website);
- video-taped, facilitated conversations on the topics: 'Quality of Practice' and 'A conversation about Writing' (available on project website).

Besides a tangible outcome in its own right, the ESCARD Symposium served to capture a national collection of case studies, as well as reflections on supervision, which provide resources and scholarly reflections for supervisors; and it informed the unfolding project

outcomes including the findings, principles of effective supervision practice, and recommendations.

2.3 Dissemination of Project Outcomes

Early and continuous dissemination of the cross-institutional research and collection of resources and case studies was a project priority. It involved a multi-faceted strategy, which ran in tandem with the data collection processes, and has produced both anticipated and unanticipated outcomes.

7. Dissemination of early findings

Besides providing a vehicle for capturing good practice case studies and position papers, and providing those in attendance with access to a community of supervisory practice, the *Effective Supervision of Creative Arts Research Degrees* symposium provided an avenue for early dissemination of project outcomes (mid way through the project), the opportunity for feedback, and a consultative approach to the unfolding project findings at a point when attendees still had the capacity to influence the project outcomes and conclusions.

Outcomes of the symposium as a dissemination vehicle include:

- awareness of the project through the distribution of the nomination form and project information to Assistant Deans and Heads of Schools;
- presentation of early project findings by project team members in presentations including:
 - *Supervision, Practice and the Space Between: Literature in the Field*,
 - *Views from the Frontier: Insights of Supervisors of Creative Practice HDRs*;
- a conference booklet distributed to attendees containing presenters' abstracts.

The symposium led to further dissemination opportunities, including an invitation to edit a special issue of an international journal (detailed below in Outcome 11).

8. A booklet for supervisors

A booklet entitled, *12 Principles for the Effective Supervision of Creative Practice Higher Research Degrees*, was derived from the content analysis of interviews with supervisors. It encapsulates and shares reflections of supervisors and insights they have gained by over the past decade. It identifies recurring themes from the interviews, and summarises them into a background statement and advice for supervisors. It includes representative quotes that encapsulate reflections and examples of good practices.

The booklet is available as a printed copy (700 copies were produced) and as a PDF on the project website. It is summarised in Section 4.3 of this report and reproduced in full as Appendix 3. It is intended for supervisors' academic development. It is important to note, as we state in the introduction to the booklet, that the principles are not presented as rules but as advice, because one thing that the supervisors were unanimous about is the need to avoid proscriptive models and frameworks, and to foster creativity and innovation in what is still an emergent field of postgraduate supervision. The tone is therefore one of dialogue that is advisory, rather than one of authority that is prescriptive/proscriptive.

9. Project website: A dissemination portal for a repository of resources

A project website <<http://supervisioncreativeartsphd.net>> provides access to the sharable resources, findings and outcomes of the project. The website contains:

- project information including a project summary, its aims and objectives, and sections of this report;
- a collection of literature from the field (with links and PDF resources);
- a snapshot of institutional frameworks including an analysis of the management of HDR creative practice projects and supervision issues (forthcoming);
- a program from the ESCARD symposium including abstracts;
- multi-institutional good practice exemplars, case studies and position papers;
- a booklet for supervisors entitled *12 Principles for the Effective Supervision of Creative Practice Higher Research Degrees* as a downloadable PDF;
- scholarly, peer reviewed papers as they emerge from the project;
- recommendations for future planning, academic development and resource development; and
- updated news relating to the project and continuing outcomes, including calls for papers.

10. Project report: Summary of project approach, findings, outcomes and recommendations

This project report provides a summary of the project's aims and objectives; a description of the project outcomes, findings and impact, a literature and contextual review, strategies for dissemination, factors that impacted upon the success of the project and recommendations for future work. This report is disseminated to partner institutions, the OLT, and to the wider academic community via the OLT website.

11. Phased dissemination plan: Scholarly outcomes

A phased schedule has been designed for the dissemination of project outcomes and findings through conference papers and journal articles. This includes:

- 6 papers presented by project team members at the ESCARD symposium, 7th February, 2013, QUT;
- a presentation on the project by the project leaders entitled 'Sharing effective supervision practices' at QUT's CIF supervisor retreat: *Sharing best practice in doctoral supervision* (4th December 2012);
- a presentation entitled 'Practice-led research in Australia' at an international seminar on supervision in practice-led research for Bath Spa University, UK (January 2013); and
- discussion and sharing of project outcomes at *Critiquing the North American Design PhD: A symposium exploring the institutional frameworks for practice- transforming design research*, October 5, 2013, School of Design, Carnegie Mellon University, USA.

Abstracts have been produced for forthcoming conference presentations including:

- 'Relational practices in the supervision of creative research higher degrees', *Quality in Postgraduate Research QPR Conference* 2014, April 9 -11, Adelaide;
- *Accidental academic development: The power of dialogue for supervisors in an emergent field* (abstract to be submitted);
- *The Supervision Moment: A Snapshot of procedural issues in the supervision of creative practice higher research degrees* (abstract to be submitted).

Other papers in preparation by project team members address a range of topics including:

- research ethics for postgraduate candidates;
- the form of the exegesis;
writing the exegesis, and
- managing risk in candidature.

These scholarly outcomes contribute research findings on the pedagogies of postgraduate supervision to the field. They are intended to assist supervisors and schools, help to ensure the maturation of this emerging field and position supervision as a high order of teaching practice.

12. Journal special issue: Facilitating scholarly outcomes from the field

A special issue of the journal *ACCESS: Critical perspectives on communication, cultural & policy studies*, entitled 'Supervising practice: Perspectives on the supervision of creative practice research higher degrees' (Vol. 33, No. 2, 2014) is being edited by the project team leaders. *ACCESS* journal was ranked A Quality in the ERA Rankings. Key themes in the call for papers align with those identified through the project, namely:

- Assisting students in developing the relationship between theory and practice in the structure and/or form of the thesis/exegesis/dissertation;
- Solving challenges encountered in the supervision of creative arts research degrees;
- Designing strategies, tools, and resources to facilitate smooth student progress in creative arts higher research degrees;
- Supporting the academic/professional development of PhD students;
- Academic development for supervisors of creative arts research degrees.

Building on the ESCARD symposium, participants have been invited to write up their presentations for submission to the journal. The call for papers has also been distributed more widely through national and international networks. Papers will be subjected to international blind review. The special issue will be edited by the project leaders. Abstracts have been received, with full paper submissions due in January 2014.

This call for papers extends the capture of supervisor perspectives and case studies, and expands dialogue on the subject of effective supervision of creative practice HDRs. It ensures further dissemination of project outcomes in a scholarly form, builds the research leadership capacity of supervisors, and contributes to the scholarship of postgraduate supervision.

2.4 Recommendations and Other Outcomes

Along with the above-mentioned concrete project outcomes, recommendations have been made and other, unanticipated, outcomes have emerged.

13. Recommendations for change and new approaches

A series of recommendations around institutional change, approaches to supporting supervisors, training and academic development have been made through the triangulation of findings from the literature review, analysis of institutional frameworks, interviews with supervisors, and forums and dialogue at the ESCARD symposium. They include a descriptive

list of potential approaches that institutions might take to supporting supervisors, academic development, and other avenues for capacity building.

The recommendations are summarised in Section 4.4. Their purpose is to instigate systemic change in institutional approaches to supervision management, practices, and academic development.

14. Recommendations for future work

A one-year seed project, the outcomes of this project have established a robust foundation for future work around new models for supervisor academic development that focus on local disciplinary contexts, emphasise a case studies approach, provide diverse resources for supervisors, and facilitate dialogue between supervisors at local and national levels.

Future work is also proposed to build a national network to share good practices and provide further insights into the management of risk factors, ethical issues, and preparing candidates for examination. A descriptive list of recommendations for future work appears in Section 4.5.

15. A community of supervisory practice

By employing the principles of distributed leadership at the heart of the project, a cooperative, dialogic approach was sustained throughout the project. A fledgling community of practice emerged and networks have been established between supervisors and schools. This is described in detail by attendees at the ESCARD symposium in evaluation responses (Section 6.3). It evidences the momentum that has been initiated by the project across the sector. Besides the robust research foundation that has been established, and the recommendations that have been made, this momentum provides an important foundation for future work. As a project outcome, it has established a precedent and good will for future co-operation and sharing of good practices.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

To date, there has been little discussion in the literature, or in strategic ALTC/OLT projects, on the supervision of creative practice Higher Degrees by Research (HDRs). However, as this topic sits at the intersection of two established fields—namely the emergent field of creative practice research (also referred to as practice-led and practice-based research) and the pedagogy of research supervision more broadly—a foundational understanding can be developed from a review of the literature that spans these two domains. This literature review therefore includes an overview of how the emergent field of creative practice research has come to be defined and pursued, as well as what Australasian universities and supervisors consider important aspects of postgraduate research supervision across disciplinary fields. A number of Office of Learning and Teaching projects and fellowships have been conducted in both of these domains over the past decade, and literature has been developed more broadly on both topics.

3.1 The Emergent Field of Creative Practice/Practice-led/ Practice based Research

History and current contexts

Higher research degrees in creative practice—in fields such as visual and performing arts, music, design, creative writing, film and media—represent a relatively new area of postgraduate study in Australasian universities. In a comprehensive scoping study entitled *Creative Arts PhD: Future-proofing the creative arts in higher education*, Baker and Buckley (2009) chart its history, noting that the first creative arts professional doctorate was offered in 1984 at the University of Wollongong. However, it was not until the Strand Report's formal recognition of practice-led research in 1998 that a wide range of creative disciplines began to support HDR students to submit creative works with an accompanying written document or 'exegesis' for examination. Baker and Buckley (2009) track a ten-fold increase in enrolments in creative disciplines over the next decade, growth which has also been documented by Evans, T., & Macauley, P., & Pearson, M., & Tregenza, K., (2003) and Brien, D.L., & Burr, S., & Webb, J., (2010).

This rapid, unprecedented growth has been fuelled by a combination of factors. Firstly, creative practice doctorates provide a new form of accreditation for creative practitioner-academics, which allows them to meet increasing expectations of a PhD as an entrance level requirement for academic roles. Secondly, in 2003, creative outcomes came to be recognised within the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) framework, which established the legitimacy of practice-led and practice-based research. Thirdly, the value of the Creative Industries and its research modes to the economic and cultural fabric has been emphasised in recent years (Higgs, Peter L.; Cunningham, S., & Pagan, J. D., 2007)¹. And finally, an increasingly competitive funding environment has led to increased HDR enrolment targets across the board. With 30 Australasian universities now offering creative practice

¹ See also www.unctad.org/en/docs/ditc20082cer_en.pdf and www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-

higher research degrees, creative practice has come to be widely recognised as a legitimate methodological choice for students engaging in higher degrees by research.

Definitions

Despite its rapid and widespread uptake, creative practice remains an emergent field of postgraduate study, and its definitions and approaches are yet to stabilise. There is broad agreement around a base definition: HDRs in creative practice combine the production of creative artefacts (for example art or design objects or processes, creative writing, film, new media, performance, or a combination of such mediums) with a written, theoretical component. And, as Dally, K., & Holbrook, A., & Lawry, M., & Graham, A. (2004) note, there is increasing recognition that, while the practice may speak for itself (within the context of an exhibition for example), as a research endeavour, both the exhibition/outcomes/products and the written thesis must speak to each other. There is consensus that, “The mere presence of art [is] not indicative of a novel paradigm called artistic research” (Biggs, M.A.R., & Büchler, D., 2009: 9). That is, creative practice undertaken as a research endeavour must be framed as such within a written explication, which explains how it is situated within its field, how is underpinned by a methodology, and how it contributes to the formation of ‘new knowledge’.

However, there remains a lack of consensus around key terminology, and much debate around what the paradigm of ‘artistic research’ entails. During the past decade, various defining terms, models, methodologies and research paradigms have been proposed in academic papers, as well as in university guidelines. The terms ‘creative practice as research’, ‘practice-led research’ and ‘practice-based research’ are variously employed (sometimes for different types of projects and at other times interchangeably). Postgraduate degree titles and forms (at doctoral level alone) range from PhD, to Professional Doctorate, to Doctorate of Visual Arts and Doctorate of Creative Industries. And the written component is variously referred to as a thesis and an exegesis. Moreover, the evolution and contestation of the field continues to play out on the ground, as students and their supervisors experiment with what is possible in terms of the form, content and structure of both the practice and the written document.

Much of the definitional work that has occurred around creative practice research has been a result of efforts to establish its legitimacy and value, and to differentiate it from other fields of research or, as Estelle Barrett puts it, to establish, “an identifiable location within the broader arena made up of more clearly defined disciplines or domains of knowledge” (2006: 7). It is widely agreed by advocates of creative practice as research that there are significant conceptual and methodological differences between scientific and creative research. For example, citing Eisner’s (1995) definition of research, Dally et al. write that, “scientific methods, such as formulating hypotheses, pursuing solutions and reaching conclusions may be incompatible with artistic practice” (2004, para 3). Biggs and Büchler go on to suggest that the key to effectively supervising PhDs in creative practice is in understanding the distinctions of this alternate paradigm. They write,

supervision of the PhD in areas of creative practice is perceived as complex only when it attempts to produce research that imitates received paradigms rather than being in accordance with its own worldview. (2009: 12)

A number of authors have set out to identify, or perhaps to establish, what the distinctions are. Darren Newbury's early positioning report for the United Kingdom Council of Graduate Education pragmatically identified the types of new knowledge contribution that creative practice research might make (1997: 3). They include innovations in design, aesthetic development, methods and methodologies for art and design, new understandings, models and theories of art/design, as well as empirical novelty. Other writers have offered relatively open definitions. For example, Dally et al. (2004) argue that the key factor of artistic research in advancing understanding is in "recontextualizing the familiar and awakening viewers to new ways of seeing, thinking and knowing" (para 4). Biggs and Büchler suggest that while traditional research involves a question and an answer, and a method that meaningfully connects the answers to the questions order to produce 'knowledge'; the 'alternative paradigm' of creative arts research revolves around the artefact, rhetoric, and personal experience. Creative production may generate the question, be instrumental in the response to the question, or form an integral part of the communication of the outcome (2009: 8-9).

The practice

Many authors argue that the creative practice occupies a central position within, and plays an integral role in, the research process. For example, Hamilton and Jaaniste (2009) argue,

Practice-led research is a unique research paradigm because it situates creative practice as both an outcome and driver of the research process and positions the researcher in a unique relationship with the subject of the research.

And, in defining what it means to conduct higher degree research in/through, creative practice, Brien et al. suggest that "outcomes typically encompass research products that make an original contribution to knowledge in the field, and creative products that satisfy relevant aesthetic standards" (2010: 2). Understanding what constitutes the latter, somewhat esoteric, part of this definition provided the impetus for their current OLT funded project, *Examination of doctoral degrees in creative arts: process, practice and standards* (2010). It responds to criticism around the quality of creative practice HDR outputs (in terms of content, rigour and assessment standards) and sets out to establish a consistent understanding of high-level creative aptitude.

Methodologies

The methodologies of creative practice research are emergent and, as yet, are unsettled. There has been increasing discussion since Carol Gray first argued that "'practice-led' research [is] initiated in practice, where questions, problems, challenges are identified and formed by the needs of practice and practitioners" (1996: 3) and, borrowing from Donald Schön, suggested that this involves practitioners researching through 'action', and 'reflecting in and on action'. Haseman (2006) and Bolt (2008) have since developed the concept of practice-led performative research, which challenges the binaries of qualitative and quantitative data collection. Barrett (2005) describes the research process as experimental and speculative; involving a dynamic interplay of understandings gained from theory, practice and the researcher's situated knowledges.

Recently, Hamilton and Jaaniste (2009) have argued that distinctions exist between creative fields due to differing forming contexts, research goals, intentions invested in the 'artefacts' (creative works, products, events), and knowledge claims made for the research outcomes;

which all gives rise to a plurality of methodological approaches and ways of evidencing and reporting new knowledge. Gray also described a 'pluralist approach' and the use of a multi-method technique or 'expansive synthesis', in which a range of approaches and interpretive paradigms may be employed. That is, there is no single methodology for creative practice research, but different creative fields may adopt, adapt, and recombine a range of methodologies from other fields and, indeed, establish new ones.

The exegesis

Besides the quality and role of the practice, the written component is also of particular interest to supervisors. Some scholars in the field have differentiated the emerging genre of the exegesis from the dissertations or theses of other academic fields. Indeed, this is part of the scope of the *TEXT* journal in Australia and the *Writing PAD* project in the UK. A number of writers have explored the role of the exegesis in the creative practice PhD, including Bourke, N., & Nielsen, P., (2004); Hamilton, J. & Jaaniste, L., (2010); Ings, W. (2013); Dally, K., & Holbrook, A., & Lawry, M., & Graham, A., (2004). It has variously been described as an explication of the practice, a framing document, and a thesis; and various models have been proposed in the literature as well as in university guidelines. Milech, B.H., & Schilo, A. (2004) describe what they call the 'context' model, in which the exegesis explains the theoretical and philosophical frameworks, historical precedents, or conditions of practice. They also describe a seemingly opposite approach, which they call the 'commentary' model, in which the exegesis acts as an 'explanatory annotation' to the creative work and focuses on reflections on the creative process, the works, and/or their reception. Hamilton and Jaaniste (2010) describe a 'connective' model of exegesis, which combines these approaches into an integrated thesis. However, the function, form, and even the name of the written component remain contested. Indeed this subject is currently being addressed in a large, ARC funded project entitled *Writing in the Academy: the Practice-based Thesis as an Evolving Genre* (Paltridge, B., Starfield, S. and Ravelli, L., 2011).

Standards

Highlighting the diversity of definitions, frameworks, methodologies, guidelines and models in the field of creative practice research, the OLT (formerly ALTC) scoping project, *Creative Arts PhD: Future-proofing the creative arts in higher education*, recommends that we must resolve the confusion of terminology across the sector along with other anomalies, such as inconsistent admission processes and examination procedures (Baker and Buckley, 2009: 12). Indeed, a key aim of this project was to, "provide an overview of current practices, which in turn could then provide the basis for the discussion of best practice and movement towards consideration by the sector of benchmark standards" (Baker and Buckley, 2009: 12). Similarly, in the project report for the OLT/ALTC project, *Learning and Teaching Academic Standards Statement: Creative and Performing Arts*, Holmes (2010) argues for the need to establish a clarifying statement on higher degrees and the creative arts. He proposes convening a network of Deans to help manage standards and address the variations in HDRs offered and maintained in Australian institutions.

On the other hand, while flagging the lack of consensus around terminology and institutional structures, and the wide variation in examination guidelines provided by Australian institutions, Dally et al. (2004) report a surprising level of consistency between the Visual Arts examiners they interviewed. Despite being drawn from a range of backgrounds–

including curators, art historians, art practitioners and academics from across institutions; what these examiners/informants considered to be doctoral standard—both in terms of artistic merit and exegetical standard—was in almost absolute agreement. While a small study (N=15), this research emphasises the need to focus on academic attributes, such as what constitutes new knowledge in the creative arts, and the standard of the examinable components, above consensus on functional aspects and terminology. It suggests that a shared, tacit understanding of ‘quality’ may already serve to provide an unstated, yet nonetheless, consistently applied ‘standard’.

Supervision

While there has been little investigation into supervision practices in the field of creative practice research, some ALTC/OLT projects on creative arts higher research degrees have raised issues relating to it within their recommendations. In *Creative Arts PhD: Future-proofing the Creative Arts in Higher Education*, Baker and Buckley draw conclusions based on interviews with postgraduate coordinators. The final report notes that “supervision was seen as a critical factor in the success or otherwise of the student’s experience and the quality of the submission” (2009: 77). Hence, a key recommendation of this project was that,

Further examination of patterns of supervision could assist in establishing some best practice models to assist in creative-arts-specific research supervision training programs (2009: 97).

The *Creative Arts PhD* project also identified issues around the (limited) number of academic staff in creative fields with doctoral qualifications (and so the number of registered supervisors), as well as the number of students that supervisors are allowed to supervise (which varies institution by institution), which have led to pressures on intake capacity. It also raised issues around consistency, noting that some universities accept a doctoral qualification *or equivalence* as the capacity to supervise. It pointed out that this can lead to generational differences, given the growing expectation for newly employed staff to have a PhD (2009: 89-90). And, while contextual factors, such as the backgrounds of supervisors, have led to supervisors sometimes supervising different ‘parts’ of the PhD (i.e. the exegetical component or the creative component), the report identified a gradual shift to supervisors overseeing the entire thesis, as more supervisors become able to do so. This process aligns with the increasing recognition that these components are integral to each other. The report concludes that rigorous and fine-grained data collection would be useful in identifying issues such as overloading of supervisors and managing candidate demand (: 91).

The ALTC funded project, *Australian Writing Programs Network (AWPN)* by Webb, J., Brien, D. L., Bruns, A., Battye, G., Williams, J., Bolland, C., and Smith (2008) has similarly identified issues that have arisen out of the rapid growth of creative writing programs in Australian universities. They span from inconsistencies in policy frameworks and variations in supervisor experience and expertise. On the latter, they write,

... teaching staff come from highly diverse academic and professional backgrounds... many have little research training, or knowledge of what is involved in preparing a candidate to complete a doctoral program. Other supervisors are experienced researchers in cognate fields but have limited background in creative practice. (: 7)

Both project reports note differences between institutions in terms of training, and the

Creative Arts PhD project recommends establishing national training and ‘best practice’ standards for academic development for supervisors. On the other hand, the AWPN report recommends developing and promoting “knowledge building about supervisory best practice”, based on network building and encouraging a community of postgraduate writers and supervisors across universities (: 6). Through a series of workshops in 2008 (which covered the selection of candidates; research ethics; coursework for HDRs; methodologies; practices; examination practices; personal/professional issues in relation to supervision; and informal and formal student cohorts) the project modelled the approach it recommended, with an emphasis on information provision, knowledge transfer, networking and community building.

3.2 HDR Supervision

The supervision of HDR students is a significant learning and teaching activity in Australasian universities, which has been subject to significant changes in recent years. Firstly, there has been a substantial increase in the intake of candidates into postgraduate research programs as a whole since 2000 (a 28.6% increase from 43,433 to 55,869; with the largest relative increase (nearly 50%) being in the area of PhDs (DIICCS RTE, 2013)). This growth is due to higher intakes of both domestic and international enrolments, as well as an expansion of postgraduate research degrees into new and emergent fields. At the same time, relatively static funding allocations have resulted in increased pressures on completion rates and limits to duration of candidature. As noted in a recent discussion paper, *The changing PhD* (Group of Eight, 2013), “An overriding challenge for universities is to increase the number and quality of graduates without corresponding increases in funding”(: 5). Secondly, the past decade has seen significant changes in the nature of postgraduate research, driven by an increased diversity of students, research areas, and what constitutes HDR outputs and the examinable thesis (Hammond et al., 2010). This diversification has increased the complexities of supervision processes and the approaches of supervisors who, at the same time, also face increasing pressure to balance their own academic and research responsibilities.

Given this combination of change factors and pressures, there has been considerable discussion around the inclusion of coursework (particularly around academic literacy), as well as calls for clearer management structures for dealing with ‘risk’. However, it is the role and capacity of supervisors that has been the most prominent area of scrutiny for, as the recent Group of Eight discussion paper (2013) concludes, “It is difficult to underestimate the importance of supervision and the quality of supervision in creating the PhD experience and in ensuring the completion of a PhD.” (: 13).

The OLT and its predecessor bodies have funded a number of learning and teaching projects and fellowships on postgraduate research degree supervision. They span a range of discipline areas and diverse topics from graduate entry to research skills training and coursework in PhD programs, supporting international and indigenous students, scoping studies of established and emergent HDR fields (such as law, business, information technology, creative arts, and trans-disciplinary studies), as well as examination and effective supervision. It is the resulting outcomes, particularly the project reports and scholarly publications, that focus on the latter, which are of particular importance here.

A recent project by Hammond et al., *Building Research Supervision and Training Across Australian Universities* (2010) provided a detailed exploration of cross-disciplinary supervision. The project's methods—a symposium, surveys (with 1884 responses), interviews, and dissemination—generated many new insights into the role and practices of supervision in Australasian universities. It provides insights into the implications of the professionalisation and formalisation of higher degree research education for supervisors. Central to this change, they argue, is quality assurance and the increased scrutiny of supervision practices that this quality assurance has driven. They write, “Supervision no longer occurs just in the private space between supervisor and student” (2010: 7). However, they go on to argue that it is necessary to look beyond compliance drives, and to engage in discussions around supervision pedagogies. A key recommendation of this project is the theorization of what it means to be a supervisor, and what constitutes effective practices of supervision. The project report pays particular attention to changes in supervision practices. Importantly, it notes that there is a “decreasing relevance of supervisors’ own supervisory experiences for supervision in the twenty first century university, and hence the need for supervisors to develop new supervisory practices” (: 12).

This agility in supervision expertise is especially pertinent to the creative arts—not only because it is a relatively new area of postgraduate supervision, which means that first generation of supervisors must necessarily supervise PhD projects that are fundamentally different to their own, but because experienced, as well as second generation supervisors, continue to face shifts in what is still an emergent field. Moreover, there are many varieties of PhD outcomes that constitute viable and valuable contributions to the field, and interdisciplinary projects are commonplace. For these reasons, it is likely that a supervisor may be supervising students who are working outside of their own principal research domain, are practicing in different mediums, and are following methodologies and conventions that are fundamentally different to those in the PhDs they undertook themselves.

Hammond et al. take up the implications of the changes in HDR cultures and institutional and sector expectations of supervisors. They argue that academic development for supervisors must involve more than opportunities to ‘top-up’ supervision skills; it must “address the increasingly complex nature of supervision” (2010: 14). The report recommends that training should include “*reactive, pre-emptive and proactive dimensions*” (: 15, original emphasis). However, noting concerns voiced by supervisors that universities value compliance over quality, the report cautions against tying academic development to quality assurance processes. Furthermore, it cautions against the efficiencies of centralised generic training, noting that,

there is considerable resistance from supervisors to compulsory, centralised and formal training programs. There is also considerable cynicism about the value of such programs. (: 15)

By contrast, the report notes a continued interest in decentralised training. What is highlighted by this project is the need for local, discipline level exploration of supervisory practices and processes. This potentially includes the development of contextually targeted exemplars of good practice for supervisors and informal mechanisms for supervisor training, such as peer mentoring.

One of the most significant discipline-based studies on postgraduate supervision was produced by Christine Bruce's 2008 ALTC fellowship, entitled, *Towards a pedagogy of supervision in the technology disciplines*, which focussed on Bruce's field of expertise: science and technology. The findings of her fellowship fall into three categories: the perspective and assumed roles of supervisors, approaches to supervision, and specific supervision strategies.

First, from questions about how supervisors perceive their practice, the project situates postgraduate research supervision in a unique place within universities—within the “teaching-research nexus”. Bruce concludes that,

In practice, while many universities position research higher degree supervision at least in some respect as a teaching and learning practice, typically supervisors largely consider supervision as part of their research endeavor rather than as part of their teaching endeavour. (: 9)

Bruce's final report goes on to identify three primary supervisory roles that are adopted *as required* throughout a student's candidature. They include directing roles, collaborative roles, and responsive roles. Within these roles, the report identifies three defining approaches to supervision namely: a direction setting approach, a scaffolding approach, and a relationship approach. Drilling down further into the detail of these approaches, the report extends to identify key strategies for effective supervision. In summary form, the strategies can be described as follows: negotiating expectations; creating a structure; generating outputs; focusing on the big picture; creating space and creating groups. Bruce concludes by discussing the potential of adapting this pedagogical framework to other disciplines, and it is worth considering whether these ideas provide a potential framework for creative practice supervision. Such a framework could provide an interesting trigger for dialogue amongst creative practice supervisors in a forum to assess its relative merits for the field and what adaptation may be required.

Besides the findings and outcomes of Bruce's fellowship, what is particularly interesting for this project is her research methods, which included interviews and small group discussions with supervisors to provide initial methods of data collection. Then, through the process of qualitative analysis, a propositional ‘best practice’ framework (a pedagogy of supervision) was developed and presented to supervisors for comment and discussion. This participatory, dialogic approach has elements of distributed leadership embedded within it.

Moreover, the impact of Bruce's dialogic research methods provides a useful precedent. Of particular interest in the report is the description of the way in which the interviews and small group discussions produced benefits for the respondents themselves. Bruce writes,

Individual interviews enabled supervisors to become aware of their own, previously implicit, thinking. Supervisors' new self-awareness was commented on explicitly in their evaluation comments. (: 24)

It also produced benefits for the group as a whole, as Bruce goes on to explain:

Holding conversations with supervisors in small group and workshop contexts raised awareness of each other's approaches. Interest in adopting the approaches of colleagues was explicitly commented on in evaluation responses. (: 24)

That is dissemination took place *through the conduct of the research*. This provided insights into the benefits of early dissemination to this project. Notably, as we discuss in the outcomes section of this report, we encountered a similar response from those participating in our interviews and the ESCARD symposium we held, which allowed supervisors to reflect and to share stories and experiences with colleagues.

Bruce concludes that conversations around supervision as a teaching and learning practice are crucial. Indeed, she argues that the key to effective academic development for supervisors is to encourage dialogue, with self-reflection providing a tool through which personal preferences and insights can be articulated. To further extend this dialogic process, Bruce goes on to recommend a mentoring scheme for less experienced supervisors. Such a recommendation aligns with the recommendations of earlier reports (including the *FIRST* project), albeit for different reasons. And, finally, to enable regeneration of supervision pedagogy in the future, the report recommends increased support for supervisors and postgraduate student researchers, as well as the introduction of faculty level awards as a form of recognition of good practices. These insights and recommendations can be aligned with Hammond et al.'s (2010) recommendation for contextually targeted exemplars of best practice and informal, personalised approaches to supervisor training. They provide a useful foundation for this project's questions around appropriate forms of academic development for new and established supervisors of creative practice higher research degrees.

Online Supervision Resources

Besides formal publications and project reports, three main forms of online resources have been developed for supervisors through funded research projects. They include websites, for example *FIRST* (for Improving Research Supervision and Training) <www.first.edu.au>. *FIRST* provides a comprehensive collection of supervision resources, guidelines, and supervision practices. It includes references, workshop suggestions, and questionnaires. Moderated and structured by a steering committee, it has been established as a long-term, updating resource.

Online repositories of books/PDF resources for supervisors are also available. Examples include Christine Bruce's *Resource for Supervisors*, <<http://eprints.qut.edu.au/28592/>> an output from her ALTC fellowship. A large, linear document, it offers strategic information, comments, and suggestions for supervisors from a wide variety of backgrounds and it includes an extensive bibliography. Blogs include the *Supervisor's Friend*, produced by Geof Hill, which offers informal, personal discussions on the role of the supervisor. Another is *The Doctoral Writing SIG*, which raises questions and poses potential solutions through informal discussion. Other blogs primarily targeting research students rather than supervisors, including Inger Mewburn's *The Thesis Whisperer* and the *Research Whisperer*. Contemporary and multimodal in form (including Twitter feeds, tagging and archiving), such blogs assume an informal, personal tone, and foster dialogue around topics of interest to the research student community.

An expanded summary analysis of online resources is provided on the project website. However, it is important to note that, like those mentioned here, all of these resources are generic and cross-disciplinary, and make no specific mention of the creative arts or creative practice HDRs.

Conclusion

While little literature exists on the supervision of creative practice HDRs specifically, crystallising the contexts, issues, and key concepts of the fields of creative practice research and HDR supervision more broadly was crucial in establishing our project approach, developing questions for our surveys and interviews, and informing our recommendations. In particular, understanding what is considered important to effective supervision more broadly provided an important foundation for probing the practices of supervisors of creative practice.

Nonetheless, analysing responses to the interview questions we asked has provided illuminating perspectives on what supervisors of creative practice PhDs consider creative practice research to be. And, analysing interview responses in light of this background has resulted in establishing striking similarities to, as well as differences from, other more established fields.

CHAPTER 4: CONTEXTUAL REVIEW - PROJECT FINDINGS

Alongside the broad contextual framing of postgraduate supervision of creative practice projects outlined in the literature review in Chapter 3, local factors such as the processes and practices of schools, HDR administration, supervisors, and HDR students impact on postgraduate supervision in all fields, including creative practice. This contextual review presents the project's findings, which are primarily derived from focal research conducted at the five partner universities in this project: Queensland University of Technology, The University of Melbourne, Auckland University of Technology University, University of New South Wales, and University of Western Sydney.

This collection of universities represents a range of diverse contexts, from 'sandstone' to 'technology' to 'regional' universities, with additional variations in both scale and relative 'youth'. They have commonalities too, which are important considerations for this project. Each has been offering creative practice as research HDRs for a decade or more, and all are compliant with the AQF framework and guided by the DDOGS statement from 2008 (or New Zealand equivalent) regarding best practice for doctoral degrees. We might consider this sampling—in all of its diversity—to be representative of the diversity of creative practice programs across the sector.

The twenty-five supervisors recruited for interviews for this study are also diverse. They represent a range of disciplines, including visual arts, performing arts, music and sound, interior design, fashion, graphic design, design, creative writing, film and new media, and they reflect a range of experience levels from early advocates, architects and methodologists of creative practice research degrees—who by now have double figure completions—to very new supervisors, who have recently completed their own PhD in creative practice. Again, we might consider this broad sampling to represent the spectrum of creative practice supervisors.

Through surveys of creative practice HDR convenors and administrators across the partner universities in the project, we have gained insights into a wide range of contextual factors, process, and practices surrounding the supervision of creative practice postgraduate degrees. And our interviews with supervisors have provided rich perspectives on experiences, insights, challenges and exemplary practices. This chapter brings these two perspectives together. It presents a summary of findings from the surveys and interviews and makes comparisons with the literature and previous OLT/ALTC project findings and recommendations, before making recommendations that are specific to supervisory practices, academic development for supervisors, and support for supervisors at local levels.

4.1 A Snapshot of Procedural Issues and HDR Supervision

Through the analysis of publicly accessible information (on websites, and in published materials), as well as survey responses received from HDR co-ordinators/administrators at the five partner universities, the following contextual factors were identified. Each is specific to postgraduate research in creative fields. The following themes highlight the unique issues and challenges of the field.

Access to data

It is important to note at the outset of this section that while all institutions in this study were able to provide figures on HDR supervision and candidature in creative arts disciplines overall, data around creative practice HDRs is not differentiated from traditional projects in creative disciplines. None of the institutions in the study report centrally on creative practice projects as a distinct field, and they therefore do not collect separate figures around admissions, completions, and attrition rates. As one informant advised,

we have no figures at all regarding creative practice PhDs ... we don't even really have precise numbers about how many there are... this kind of fine-grained detail is a complete mystery!

This lack of transparency around creative practice HDR numbers echoes the findings of Baker and Buckley in *Future-proofing the creative arts in higher education* project report (2009). Acknowledging that access to accurate data was a limitation of their study, the final report cautions, “[inconsistencies in data figures] along with difficulties encountered in distinguishing specific creative arts disciplines mean that the statistical data within the report should be considered as providing an informed impression.” (: 15) This problem can perhaps be attributed to a number of factors. Firstly, Fields of Education (FOE), defined by the Australian Government for reporting purposes, do not distinguish creative practice from other research approaches; secondly some schools/institutions are relatively new to creative practice higher degree research; and thirdly local contexts, histories and reporting structures make parity of reporting challenging (for example, faculties or schools that have recently been amalgamated into a university may be separately located, and have their own cultures, but may be clustered with other disciplines within an overarching administrative structure and regulatory environment).

Like Baker and Buckley, we would argue that supervisors and managers would benefit from more fine-grained data gathering, given that a PhD creative practice project requires a significant and unique type of commitment from both the supervisory team and the institution in terms of workload, resourcing and infrastructure provision.

Supervisor profiles and completion rates

Our surveys of administrators and course convenors have revealed that the number of candidates supervised by a principal supervisor differs widely across creative practice areas. However, on average, the number of candidates supervised by a principal supervisor at one time is between three and five. However, there are a small number of individual supervisors who are seen as ‘experts’ within a discipline and highly experienced supervisors, and they have a much longer supervision list.

The majority of principal supervisors in partner institutions are at the senior lecturer level (Level C). However, in at least one university, the majority of supervisors are in the A-B lecturer band, largely due to practitioners who have recently entered the university system as supervisors. The data reveals interesting information about the qualifications of supervisors. The majority of interviewees have a PhD (17 of the 25 interviewees), although the type of PhD varies, with the majority of the 17 (10) holding a ‘conventional’ PhD and seven holding a practice-led PhD. Others hold a Doctorate of Creative Arts, are still

completing their PhD, or are accredited as supervisors on the basis of equivalence (their experience and reputation in the field). Some interviewees mentioned their supervisions of Masters projects as important aspects to their training and experience.

Irrespective of their qualifications or the form of their own PhD, most of the interviewees supervise across both creative and written aspects of a project. And they often supervise across different disciplines. Disciplines/faculties appear to have taken the pragmatic approach of combining supervisors with different backgrounds, disciplinary expertise, and experience levels on supervision teams until they have built supervisory capacity. However, interestingly, the interviews revealed that experienced supervisors do not consider supervising PhD projects that are different (in form or area of specialisation) to their own training, to be a particular challenge, nor an impediment to their capacity to supervise effectively.

This is borne out by data collected from schools that shows that experienced supervisors (based on three or more completions) complete around 50% of candidatures, while new supervisors (in the Lecturer A-B band) complete considerably less—20% of candidatures. This may be influenced by the attributes of ‘early adopter’ supervisors, who have evidenced considerable commitment to driving forward this new field, but it also appears to suggest that experience is of benefit to supervisors/supervisions/candidates. It also suggests that the insights gained by experienced supervisors may be of particular value to new supervisors in the form of mentoring, providing exemplars of good practice, or leading academic development.

Intake philosophy, enrolments, and admission structures

Decision-making around intake is influenced by a combination of the strategic demands of a university, availability of supervisors, and a discipline’s resourcing capacity. However, while there are growth targets for HDR enrolments across the board at some institutions, in creative disciplines there appears to be a shift (reported in qualitative responses to surveys) to emphasising the importance of ‘quality candidates’, and an emphasis on standards of creative work over higher growth. What ‘quality candidates’ means varies between institutions however. There are differences in intake priorities, which relate to differing expectations around professional creative experience and the academic record of candidates. In one institution, successful candidates tend to have between 10 and 15 years experience in their field as professional practitioners, while in others, applicants tend to move from undergraduate to postgraduate study and grade point average (GPA) is a significant factor. This difference between the representative backgrounds of candidates, and the immediacy of their professional and academic experience, provides an important contextual factor for supervision, and this varies institution by institution.

The processes of admission are similar amongst the partner institutions. Supervisors or staff members in a school or discipline tend to be approached first by a candidate, and local information provision and discussion occurs prior to the formal submission of an application. Some institutions ask applicants to be interviewed by a local panel, while others rely on the prospective supervisor to assess the applicant (then a discussion between them and a head of discipline or school would usually take place). Given local intake philosophies, coupled with supervision capacity, the emphasis tends to be on ‘goodness of fit’.

After 'local' assessment, the application zig-zags between distributed and centralised administration teams until an offer is made and accepted. The candidature journey therefore begins with a series of interactions with, and between, local and faculty level representatives before formal processes begin, and decisions around supervision are made locally. As one of our respondents comments,

The decision around who is best to supervise is made at the local department level and takes into account load, their practice, needs, and the topic area of the candidate.

There is a preference among supervisors and schools to maintain this localised process. Given the length and depth of supervisory relationships and resourcing and infrastructure requirements of an average four-year candidature, agency around decision-making on admissions is crucial.

The form of the creative practice PhD

While all of the universities that partnered in this project require the submission of a combination of practical and written (exegetical) components for examination, the proportion of practice to theoretical aspects varies between institutions, with some internal variation providing choice for candidates. One institution requires at least 30% of the assessment to be placed on the written/critical component and limits the creative practice to 70%; one sets the range between 66% and 33% for each component; another mandates a 50% split between the areas but states that the creative practice is primary; and another has no formal demarcation between components (examiners are advised to consider the interdependency of the various aspects of the project and the importance of the practice). However, all of the partner institutions recommend that the 'dissertation/exegesis' component and the creative component be integrated and examined as one, conceptually coherent project.

For supervisors, this coherence presents one of the greatest challenges to candidates. Supervisors spoke of the difficulties of creating a project that not only demonstrates excellence in creative practice *and* written research outcomes, but also integrates them into a unified whole.

The extent to which innovation in the form and presentation of the exegesis varies, with a great deal of experimentation at AUT (where the medium of the practice tends to influence the approach to the exegesis), while at another university innovation is encouraged in the creative practice, but is discouraged in the exegesis. (The other three universities sit somewhere between these two poles.)

Milestones and examination processes

Research managers increasingly see milestones as a critical aspect of HDR candidature and they have been embedded into most doctoral frameworks. Confirmation of candidature (referred to instead as a D9 at AUT University for local reasons) occurs after one year of full time study. Progress on the creative practice as well as the critical material tends to be reviewed at this point, through a confirmation document as well as an oral presentation. In one institution, the presentation emphasises the project design aspect of the project and its potential contribution, as the practice may be less developed at this stage. Another requires

an examination of oral and written materials and a greater emphasis is placed on the practice. Again, this may vary between disciplines, projects, and candidates.

Some partner institutions also require a range of additional, internal milestones. However, the form and timing of them varies. One university sets a milestone after the first three-months, which requires setting out the scope of the project and its approach (an extended project proposal), which is assessed at multiple levels (supervisor, internal evaluator, faculty evaluator and graduate studies committee). Others incorporate an online annual progress review, which involves evaluation by the supervisor and HDR manager. At other institutions, candidates must appear in person before a review panel on an annual basis.

The universities in this project usually review the creative and written component around the end of candidature. At one university, creative production work and the written component are considered by a panel (comprised of the supervisors, two members of faculty, and a chair) three months prior to submission for examination, with feedback and advice offered from a range of perspectives. Another university holds a European-style Viva or 'Defence' at the point of examination, with the supervisors and examiners in attendance (examiners have already read the document and attended the exhibition of work in advance of the Defence, but have not yet provided their report).

Representatives at all partner institutions commented on the challenges involved in the examination of creative practice projects. The process was variously described as 'lengthy' and 'complex.' Supervisors often must negotiate layers of internal administration around the examination process. In one institution, for example, four levels of management oversee the examination of a creative practice project.

In addition, external examiners are considered vital to maintaining excellence in creative practice research. Due to the nature of creative work (its form, scale, and the importance of experiencing/interacting with it first hand), examiners may need to visit the host institution as part of the examination process, and this may be logistically difficult (as well as costly) to arrange. Moreover, because the field is in its formative stages, it is often difficult to source the required number (between 1 and 3) of appropriately qualified external examiners, who are available to travel at the time.

Given that the criteria for PhD examination varies between institutions, and that examiners may not have assessed projects at doctoral level before (given the newness of the field and the issues around securing examiners mentioned above), familiarity with local processes, conventions and expectations cannot be assumed. Faculties therefore tend to provide guidelines to examiners. In general, these include several common aspects—in particular examining the exegesis and creative component as one integrated project. However, the point of examination of the theoretical and practical components might not occur at the same time. For example, one institution allows three months between the examination of the creative component and the submission of a final document for examination (to allow time for reflection on the exhibition and reception of the work).

The preparation of candidates for milestones and examination and negotiating the processes of examination are clearly important issues for supervisors. However, given that

an OLT project entitled *Examination of Doctoral Degrees in Creative Arts* (Webb, J., Lee Brien, D., and Burr, S.,)² is currently under way, this project has not set out to cover this ground in detail.

4.2 Supervisors' attitudes, experiences and training

In the formative years of creative practice higher degree programs, supervisors were required to be flexible, adaptable, and open to new and sometimes unanticipated challenges. Along with their students, supervisors have functioned in a changing environment that is increasingly subject to academic pressures relating to completion rates and questions of rigour, as well as public pressures relating to professional recognition in the creative arts.

Nonetheless, the most striking impression created by the interviews with supervisors was the level of commitment and enthusiasm they bring to this new area of learning and teaching. Far from being daunted by the challenges they encounter, supervisors find the potential for innovation, experimentation, and invention fulfilling and invigorating for both themselves and their disciplines. Many believe that creative practice research has breathed new life into higher degrees by research, as well as into their discipline's course offerings. And there appears to be a genuine sense of pleasure involved in being at the forefront of a new and emergent field, and being involved in practices that sit at the nexus of teaching and research. Supervisors overwhelmingly welcome the opportunity to engage with a more diverse, cross-disciplinary higher degree research community—both within their institution and beyond it. And practitioner-supervisors often commented that the process of supervision strengthens their own practice, while theorists report gaining a deeper understanding of creative arts practice by supervising creative practice HDRs. All of the supervisors we interviewed take their role very seriously and report working hard with candidates to support and encourage them and to help them navigate the uncharted territories of this new field. They are personally committed to their candidates and their project outcomes.

The differences between management and leadership

The language that supervisors used in the interviews around management and leadership reveals firmly held attitudes to the role of supervision, to the field, and to institutional contexts. For example, supervisors do not tend to talk of 'managing' students, their projects, or their progress. The term 'management' tends to be reserved for discussions relating to the formal processes of candidature (admissions, milestones, formal processes, examination). Instead, they tend to speak of their supervisor-candidate engagement in terms of 'student-colleague' relationships. In addition, content analysis of the supervisor interviews revealed that the term 'leadership' is associated with 'experienced supervisors' or

² See the forthcoming OLT project report and recently published project outcome: Webb, J.; Lee Brien, D.; & Burr, S., *Examining Doctorates in Creative Arts: A Guide* http://aawp.org.au/files/Examiners_booklet_final_0.pdf. This booklet sets out an 'Examiners Checklist' drawn from roundtables and focus group discussions and recommendations for the examination of creative arts PhDs.

‘disciplinary experts’, rather than managers/administrators of the HDR environment. There appears to be a chain of ‘advice’ from these local leaders, rather than a chain of ‘command’ in regard to procedural matters.

While most supervisors said there was no ‘consensus’ in their work area on approaches to creative practice supervision, a common mode of supervisory behaviour appears to be facilitated by the adoption of effective approaches. Supervisors tend to refer to colleagues when challenges arise and interviewees spoke readily of the informal networks that operate in relation to discussions around supervision. This suggests that there is a form of distributed leadership that has arisen in local contexts, in which innovators and experienced practitioners advise and support their colleagues in informal networks. Recognising the importance of such local, informal relationships in the network of higher degree supervision and enabling them is pivotal to expanding and enhancing leadership capacity in postgraduate supervision.

It is also important to note the resistance that was voiced around the potential imposition of prescribed models, ‘standards’ and formats for creative practice research. As one experienced supervisor points out:

What we need is new but not absolute models. New critical and insightful models ... They must remain flexible because the learning mode is discovery based. I think this is the flaw when people try to systematise models for creative practice PhD. They don’t understand the fundamental premise that it is discovery based.

That is, supervisors hold their relationships (with their students, peers and local networks) in higher regard than institutional ‘management’, and they hold the potential for innovation and experimentation as having higher value to them than systems, standardisation or prescriptive models.

Training

Supervisors also draw a distinction between training and academic development. Training is seen as institutionally imposed, generic, functional, and focussed on process. The term ‘model’ is also associated with institutional oversight, and the imposition of ‘standards’, rules, and limitations. The term academic development, on the other hand, is used in a more open (and welcome) way to refer to workshops, case studies, and mentoring.

Most institutions offer introductory supervisor training, and there is a move in some institutions to make it compulsory. In general, this training is generic and offered by a central division (such as graduate school or research students centre). The resources are well developed and are usually available, along with a variety of support materials, on universities’ websites. However, there appears to be no consensus around online training. Once again, each institution is subject to local conditions and histories.

In addition to university level training, three of the five partner universities are involved in a network of online supervision training called *fIRST* (for Improving Research Supervision and Training). It offers a range of accessible, well-developed resources (although there are no creative arts specific resources). Another university is a member of ‘Alliance,’ a group of universities offering online supervisor forums and workshops within the group.

At some universities, initial and/or ongoing accreditation, registration, or membership of a graduate supervisor register requires the completion of either an online or in-situ training program (as well as the endorsement of the supervisors' line manager). However, the level of development of accreditation programs appears to be influenced by the 'newness' of the faculty. Some make their registration lists (including renewal status) publicly available.

While most supervisor-respondents recognise the value of centrally offered supervisor training for understanding 'process', some are resistant to it, while others are ambivalent. Comments suggest that supervisors may not attend face-to-face courses or complete online modules, or even be aware of them. Some supervisors commented that although programs exist, attendance is not mandatory. Others believe that it is compulsory but not 'policed'. As one respondent notes, "There is a 'new supervisor' training course that is compulsory, but many staff have not done it."

This is not unique to creative practice supervisors. Indeed, it echoes the conclusions of Hammond et al.'s broader 2010 study, *Building research supervision and training across Australian universities*, which concludes that, "there is considerable resistance from supervisors to compulsory, centralised and formal training programs. There is also considerable cynicism about the value of such programs" (: 15). Whether or not the supervisors in our study appreciated centrally offered face-to-face and online training modules, a clear aversion to 'didactic' delivery was voiced.

Academic Development

On the other hand, however, we found considerable interest in decentralized, contextually targeted academic development opportunities. There was much discussion in the interviews about the unique aspects of creative practice research, and the need for programs that are targeted, local and organic and address the particular frameworks and issues that supervisors of creative practice HDRs encounter. As one respondent proposed,

It would be great if there were [academic development] opportunities available to supervisors that focus on creative practice in particular. The university does not have the expertise in many ways to offer this [support]; however, we do have a few very good higher-level academics in our faculties who do support the more up and coming supervisors.

Many new supervisors commented upon the value of opportunities to learn from experienced peers, both formally or informally in local, discipline level workshops on supervisory practices and processes, peer-to peer dialogues, sharing contextually relevant exemplars of good practice, and other informal approaches. Working within a 'small' community to undertake academic development that includes opportunities to hear and voice practices and discuss in-common issues is preferred by the majority of supervisors we interviewed. Again, this echoes Hammond et al.'s (2010) findings across a broad range of disciplinary fields. While none of the partner institutions currently offers systematic and regular discipline or faculty-specific supervision training, supervisors would clearly prefer such local programs.

Local leadership and mentoring

Supervisors frequently discussed mentoring as a positive experience—whether as mentors or

mentees. They commonly reported seeking the advice of their immediate colleagues or a 'recognised mentor', who acts as a fulcrum and referral point in the discipline, before engaging with institutional processes at faculty or university level. Besides the influence of their own PhD supervisors (which was persistently mentioned), they commonly noted the influence of experienced colleagues, and reported that they value and 'trust' the advice and modelling they provide.

Many supervisors commented that mentoring provides an important part of training and provides an opportunity to learn effective strategies. As a new supervisor relayed,

It is useful to hear of other supervision methods. Such as the student making a record of the discussion and considering the recording and checking that material.

Moreover, pleasure and relief was conveyed at being able to talk about issues as they arise with peers who have more experience. Again, a conversational approach was identified as a preferred model for learning.

Mentors mentioned using supervision exemplars: often ones they have developed personally, along with previous examples of (successful) creative practice PhDs. As one mentor explained,

I use examples of exegeses with supervisors and colleagues, as they are tangible evidence when used in conjunction with the story. Back-story is important; [it might be] an example of risk taking, but it needs to be based on deep working knowledge and lived experience with the context [of the student].

When managed well, mentoring can be an integral and successful part of supervisor development. One emerging supervisor describes mentoring at her institution as "The strongest aspect of the program". She elaborates,

I have had really good mentorship as a supervisor [in both] supervisor arrangements [and] leadership of the program. It is a strength of the school.

Some universities have developed a mentoring system that pairs experienced supervisors with emerging ones (with the experienced supervisor in an associate role—although in one university they assume the principal role). This co-supervision is seen as a form of 'apprenticeship', which allows the associate to 'learn the ropes' before taking on their own principal supervision. Of course, this approach can be, and often is, undertaken informally without formal endorsement of (or even knowledge of) the discipline, which makes it difficult to evaluate the extent of the practice. While there is not always a desire to formalise a mentoring relationship, emerging supervisors tend to prefer some level of formal arrangement and structure in the early stages of their supervision careers in all forms of training, including mentoring. As one emerging supervisor suggests,

I think a formalised relationship would be of great benefit rather than only informal: an acknowledgement of an apprenticeship of sorts, with conversations after [meetings], etc.

Clearly, local leadership by early innovator supervisors is present in the schools we visited, if not necessarily evident from other 'tiers' of leadership. Such approaches are clearly valuable in acknowledging and increasing leadership in this area of learning and teaching. It is therefore a recommendation of this project that such leadership be recognised, nurtured,

and harnessed. Some universities provide recognition and reward for the leadership that experienced supervisors provide. For instance, one partner university has recently introduced a tiered accreditation system that recognises levels of experience through titles conferred (Level 1 New Supervisor, Level 2 Experienced Supervisor and Level 3 Mentoring Supervisor), and it recommends that workload be allocated for mentoring new supervisors in a formal arrangement. Two partner universities have an award for Postgraduate Research Supervision, with one offering a medallion and cash payment.

There may also be other ways to achieve these goals and, given the clear value that mentoring provides, this initial investigation into the potential, design and recognition of mentoring strategies for supervisors should be investigated further.

Resources such as case studies and exemplars

Some institutions offer links to external resources on aspects of supervision. For example, one partner is a member of the ATN (Australian Technology Network), which has online supervisor training course in Creative Arts, Media and Design and offers resources and ideas, as well as copies of regulations at other ATN universities. However, other than this, few resources exist for creative practice supervision.

Alongside mentoring, an overwhelming majority of supervisors in our study expressed interest in the idea of capturing and sharing case studies and access to other resources that are specifically designed for creative practice research. A number of interviewees called for increased access to creative practice supervision exemplars from ‘outside’ their own institution. In this regard, academic development in a ‘small community’ does not necessarily mean ‘local’; it can also mean a community of disciplinary colleagues who work in the same creative field.

A project to capture and circulate contextually relevant case studies and targeted resources is therefore a strong recommendation of this project, but these must be provided as a range of exemplars and good practices—as possibilities, which can be adapted to suit the supervisor’s own context and situation rather than as standard templates. For that reason they should include a ‘back-story’ and provide insights and potential strategies, rather than prescribed guidelines.

Communities of practice and dialogue

In the interviews, supervisors often stated a preference for informal and collegial support and conversation over formal supervision mechanisms. Supervising in a relatively new field can be an isolated experience in the absence of a community of supervisory practice. Due to local circumstances and accreditation requirements, some supervisors are the only ones in their discipline taking on a supervisory role. There was an often-stated desire to engage in conversations with others around new discoveries, experience, insights, and practices. Yet this is not often afforded. Opinions such as “we don’t get the chance to talk” and “a supervisor role is such a cloaked affair compared to other contexts” were frequently voiced.

Supervisors clearly recognise the value of reflection and they appreciated the opportunity to talk about their practices in the interviews. The opportunity to voice their hard-won tacit knowledge, when it had never been voiced before, often created powerful reactions. A key

aspect of this was that the two project leaders—both experienced supervisors of creative practice themselves—conducted the interviews. This allowed for empathetic dialogue to develop on common ground.

That is, it is not just new and inexperienced supervisors that benefit from passing on insights that experienced supervisors have gained. It is mutually beneficial. As a supervisor noted, “The best academic development is talking things through,” and another said, “there’s a sense of peer sharing that works for me—a multiplicity of voices, keeping things open rather than closed.”

Again, the desire to belong to a community of supervisory practice does not necessarily mean a local, internal community of supervisors. It simply means a community in which supervisors working in a similar context (however that might be defined) can share issues, experiences, strategies, and practices in a supportive environment, with peers. For some this means peers in their faculty, for others it may mean that peers in their disciplinary field, who may not be co-located.

Therefore, new models for enabling connections and dialogue between supervisors within schools are needed and for connecting supervisors in similar fields across universities. This is a key recommendation of this project.

4.3 Insights from Supervisors: Principles for Effective Supervision

Interviews with twenty-five new and experienced supervisors from across the partner universities brought to light many other contextual factors and issues surrounding supervision in this relatively new field of postgraduate research. From a content analysis of these interviews, and the identification of persistent topics and themes, twelve key principles for the effective supervision of creative practice research were identified. Each was presented with a contextual framework, the principle itself, and representative and illustrative quotes from supervisors. They were collected and developed into a resource for use by supervisors, which contains supervisor-to-supervisor advice illustrated by case studies and scenarios from their experience.

It was formatted as a booklet, *12 Principles for the Effective Supervision of Creative Practice Higher Research Degrees: Dispatches from the field*. It was printed in hardcopy (700 copies) for distribution to universities across Australia. It appears in Appendix 3 of this report, and it is also available as a PDF version on the project website:

www.supervisioncreativeartsphd.net

In summary, these principles are:

1. Adopt a student-centred approach

A student-centred approach involves recognising each student’s unique attributes, needs and capacity. The lynchpin of this principle is support with respect—for the research student and their ideas and creative passion; for the integrity of their research question(s); for their

chosen mediums of expression and how they approach their work; and for their capacity as practitioners and researchers. Supervisors emphasise the importance of providing space for questioning, and it is worth noting that many supervisors are reluctant to determine what a student's thesis should look like in form.

2. Embrace diverse projects, practices, and working methods

Agility in supervision expertise continues to be important in creative fields because of the many forms of HDR outcomes that constitute viable and valuable contributions, because interdisciplinary projects are commonplace, and because supervisors continue to face shifts in the field in terms of form and practices. While the core principles of research design are central to PhD supervision, it is also important to acknowledge the differences in methodologies and processes of different fields and not seek to impose familiar approaches across disciplines and projects.

3. Ensure your students believe in the validity of creative practice research and its experimental nature

While some supervisors are very confident in the validity of creative practice as research (indeed some of those we interviewed were fundamental in establishing and defining it), others raise concerns that differences between traditional frameworks and creative practice as research may still be misunderstood and its value questioned by both universities and candidates. However, many supervisors argue that it has advantages for the discipline (and more broadly) because it allows for a different mode of answering the same question that a traditional research project might pursue and because it necessarily produces different outcomes—not just in form but also in new knowledge. While establishing rigor around methodologies, outcomes and new knowledge creation, supervisors need to be confident in the validity of creative practice research as well as comfortable with its undefined boundaries and continued experimentation.

4. The theory and practice need to speak to each other

Although naming conventions differ across institutions and local contexts, there is broad agreement amongst supervisors that the written component/exegesis/thesis/explication is an integral (if sometimes difficult) component of the higher degree by research. There is consensus that its role is to articulate the research problem and creative practice methodology and to contextualise the outcomes in relation to them. To this end, experienced supervisors advise that the exegetical/written work must engage with relevant theory as well as with the existing field (through a contextual and/or literature review). Some supervisors, though not all, argue for the inclusion of reflection on the practice. Supervisors agree that some form of interweaving or integration of the practice and the writing is necessary to best articulate the contribution of the research.

5. The theory and practice might not be done simultaneously, despite the need to work together in the completed work

Supervisors overwhelmingly agree that the theoretical and practical work must be of a similarly high standard and they recognise the importance of their integration. However, they also recognise the tension between theoretical and practice processes, and acknowledge that it is often difficult to work on them simultaneously. Some supervisors suggest that the practice should lead while others propose that theoretical and contextual research drives the practice (this depends largely on their discipline perspective). However, none suggest that continuously working on both simultaneously is crucial, and supervisors are often acutely aware of the difficulties of balancing creative and theoretical progress.

6. Balance the big picture and attention to the detail

With an eye on timely completion and the rhythms of candidature, supervisors emphasise the importance of a student-tailored approach that combines a sense of routine and regularity but also allows students who prefer to work independently to be able to do so (within the constraints of the degree). To generate a routine for the student, most supervisors believe that regular meetings and shifting between the big picture and attention to detail are crucial. Besides helping to ensure relevance, ‘zooming in and zooming out’, as one supervisor describes it, helps to contain scope and maintain momentum. Some supervisors provide a roadmap for completion, with clear points of focus along the way, some keep an eye squarely on the central research goal and question, and others encourage a gradual ‘resolution’.

7. Provide frequent, constructive feedback

Concern about quality and integrity often prompts discussions on the role of academic writing in creative practice higher degrees by research. Supervisors—both new and experienced—acknowledge the importance of the written component in “helping the student do justice to the work they have done.” However, academic writing is an area in which support may be needed. It is sometimes necessary to provide a great deal of academic writing support and it is always necessary to interrogate the writing at a close level.

8. A supervisor should also attend to the practice in the studio

Some supervisors reflect that the focus of their attention can tend to be pulled towards the written work, particularly when candidates are established practitioners and are less familiar with academic writing requirements. It is important to remember however that, regardless of a student’s ease or enjoyment of it, the practice requires full attention. As an experienced supervisor advises, “Be very involved with the creative product as well as the exegesis”.

9. Milestones are time consuming, but ultimately rewarding components of the journey

While the terminology, processes and timing of PhD milestones are not consistent across the sector, their role is fundamentally similar – to ensure progress, rigour and timely

completion. Some supervisors believe that milestones need to be carefully managed in order to be useful. Many others see them as fundamentally important to progress and an opportunity to pull together components of the research and practice. It is important to ensure that students understand the necessity of milestones in the institution, and for supervisors to assist them to utilise them in the most practical and meaningful way. One experienced supervisor for example uses them to help their students to “get into the academic space” and a fundamental part of strengthening the final product before examination.

10. Provide support while managing interpersonal relationships

As yet, there are few formal processes for managing creative practice higher degrees by research and the supervisory ‘relationship’ (unless there is an escalating problem). Some institutions have candidate-supervisor agreements, but some supervisors reject this ‘management’ because it is important to consider the candidate as a newcomer to the field with individual working styles, strengths, and support needs. Supervision necessarily involves a tailor-made approach to support, which is attuned to each candidate. Supervisors need to be aware that candidates are often balancing other stresses in their lives alongside (or exacerbated by) their degree. However, supporting a student through milestones and supporting them through their life are distinct concepts (though they may overlap). Support involves balancing ‘tea and sympathy’ with pragmatic support like frequent meetings, being attentive to the work, modelling rigour and honesty in feedback.

11. Don’t feel limited by boundaries as a supervisor, but be aware of regulations

Supervisors are conscious of formal institutional requirements and that the candidate’s work must conform with HDR regulatory frameworks in order to ensure smooth entry, milestones, and examination. As one experienced supervisor counsels, “With the shrinking timeframes, as supervisors we are more aware of our responsibilities to the candidate and the way we report it as research to our school.” On the other hand, supervisors emphasise that they enjoy their students having freedom to experiment and want them to be able to shape their projects according to their individual goals and contexts. Perhaps what is most important then is to assist candidates to navigate their way through process, while being open to experimentation; and to support them to reach a balance between allowing the work to find its own performativity and identity and conforming to the requirements of the degree.

12. Reflect, discuss and share your practices with colleagues

One of the most pronounced, yet unanticipated, outcomes of the interviews was the effect on supervisors who participated in the process. For some supervisors it had a profound impact in terms of confidence in their position, willingness to progress conversations with other supervisors in their school, and to present at conferences. The value to supervisors of all experience levels in articulating process and practices, concerns, experiences and strategies for success is clear. Reflective practice is of considerable value to supervisors and,

given the broad resistance to ‘generic’ central training, participating in dialogue with other supervisors is an important component of supervisors’ professional development.

4.4 Recommendations

Through the triangulation of the literature review, contextual review, supervisor interviews, collected case studies, and open dialogue at the ESCARD symposium; and in light of the resulting analysis of institutional frameworks and principles for effective supervision, a series of recommendations have been formulated. They relate to institutional and national frameworks for managing of HDR candidature and supervision processes, approaches to academic development for supervisors in creative fields, and the production of new resources.

Institutional and national frameworks

1. Access to contextual Data

Data on aspects of candidature and supervision in creative practice HDRs is currently not distinguishable from overall HDR figures in schools/faculties. Supervisors and managers would benefit from more fine-grained data gathering on the numbers and profiles of candidates enrolled in creative practice research degrees, including length of candidature, completions, and active supervisors. This would facilitate informed decisions to be made on intake, availability of supervisory teams, workloads, resourcing and infrastructure provision.

2. Entry into programs

Entry into HDR programs currently tends to be managed at a local level at the first stages (prior to a formal application). There is a preference amongst supervisors and schools to retain this localized process. Given the length and depth of the supervisory relationship and the resourcing and infrastructure requirements of a HDR candidature, this agency around decision making on admissions is crucial.

3. The limitations of setting national benchmarks and standards

There is considerable diversity in the institutional/faculty/school contexts—each has its own history, culture, strategic priorities, practices, and profile and quantity of accredited supervisors. There is also great diversity in candidates – in terms of their background (eg. the longevity of their creative practice and the recency of their undergraduate studies) as well as in the types of research projects undertaken in terms of disciplinary/interdisciplinary approaches and mediums, proportion of the practice and critical component, the form of presentation, and the designated role of the creative artefact in the contribution to new knowledge.

In addition, experienced supervisors—who have often supervised across disciplinary boundaries, created new systems, helped candidates to negotiate a new genre of writing and to combine practice and theory into an integrated ‘thesis’ for the first time—argue that the innovation of the field has not yet been exhausted. Given that the full capacity of supervisors and candidates to shape the future of practice-led research is still to be realised, and that the potential of this new area of learning and teaching is yet to be fully explored, supervisors require the agency to continue to be agile, innovative, and open to new

possibilities. In light of this diversity, as well as the continued need to experiment with a variety of aspects of the emergent field, supervisors fear, and strongly caution against, a ‘top-down’ imposition of uniform standards, benchmarking, and proscriptive ‘one size fits all’ models.

Academic development and support for supervisors

4. The limitations of ‘training’ and the need for local academic development

While some supervisors appreciate the insights into university processes and guidelines that institution-wide training offers, many are ambivalent, and some are unaware of their existence. Often they see little bearing on the realities of supervising creative practice projects. There is a clear preference for localised training at faculty level, or perhaps even at the level of disciplines (with the proviso that many projects are interdisciplinary), which addresses the unique contexts, particularities, and complexities of supervising creative practice HDRs. The preference of supervisors is workshops with peers, which look beyond matters of process to consider a range of issues such as the complexities of supervision, the academic and intellectual relationship between supervisor and candidate, academic writing and the exegesis, ethical issues, and managing ‘risk’ for example.

5. Harnessing the expertise of experienced supervisors in workshops and mentoring programs

Because experienced supervisors have a relatively high rate of completion, and because their experience is seen by new supervisors to be of benefit to them and their candidates, it is important to recognise and acknowledge the insights, expertise and leadership that experienced supervisors bring. This leadership should be harnessed (where experienced supervisors are willing), in workshops and dialogues, as well in mentoring programs for new supervisors. Experienced supervisors often already provide advice and support at an informal level, however some new supervisors would like to see this formalised. Formalising mentoring relationships would also provide recognition to experienced supervisors. Awards and workload allocation are other forms of recognition for the service that local leaders provide to their peers, their school, and the field.

Developing resources and communities for supervisors

6. Increased access to a range of resources (case studies and exemplars of good practice)

While supervisors see singular and proscriptive models as inappropriate to an emergent and diverse field, they overwhelmingly see the potential benefit of increased access to a range of authentic resources, such as case studies and exemplars of good practices. Given the contextual variation of supervisions in the field, it is a recommendation of this project that resources are collected and disseminated that are multi-disciplinary, cross-institutional and varied in approach. However, instead of ‘models’ and ‘templates’ this extensive range of exemplars and practices should be presented as a collection of *possibilities*, which may be adaptable to the supervisor’s own context and situation, at their own discretion.

7. Local community building and opportunities for dialogue

Because supervising in a relatively new field can be an isolated experience, the majority of supervisors appreciate opportunities to work within a ‘small’ community to build informal and collegial support, share practices, and discuss issues that arise. According to new

supervisors, academic development within local communities of practice should provide the opportunity to learn from experienced peers, but it should also provide opportunities for supervisors of all experience levels to voice practices, share experiences and strategies and to discuss in-common issues in a supportive environment. Examples include supervisor dialogues to initiate conversations around an aspect of supervision, scenarios that provide a trigger to work through risk issues together, and supervisor-to-supervisor interviews. In this, we concur with Christine Bruce's (2009) findings that facilitating conversations around supervision practice is crucial to the development of effective HDR pedagogies, and the academic development of supervisors.

8. National networking, community building and sharing frameworks

While supervisors express the desire to belong to a 'small community' of supervisory practice, this does not necessarily mean local or internal, it simply means a community in which other supervisors are working in a similar mode (however that might be defined). Because some supervisors may be the only academic in their discipline that supervises creative practice HDR projects, establishing national networks is particularly important for some disciplinary fields.

National network building is also important for another reason. Either through the literature or through their encounter with variant examination guidelines, supervisors across the universities in this study are quite aware of variations in the forms of the creative practice HDR terminology, the length, and structure of the exegesis, and approaches to its relationship with the practice. However, this was not raised as an issue in need of urgent resolution by supervisors. Instead, they recognise a gradual emergence of common understandings of the past decade. This can be progressed by strengthening national networks of supervisors, for it is through dialogue that meaning, in-common understanding and shared language is negotiated.

4.5 Future Work

The majority of the recommendations we have made are contingent upon facilitating distributed leadership. Besides establishing an important foundational understanding of the issues, challenges and roles of supervisors in creative practice HDRs, this project has commenced work to respond to these recommendations. However, more work is needed to design and realise new, effective approaches to academic development at local levels; to build and formalise mentoring programs; to collect, produce and improve access to a range of resources (such as authentic case studies and exemplars of good practice); and develop models that facilitate local community building. And, while this project has taken the first steps in establishing national dialogue and networking (through a national symposium, an initial online repository of shared resources, and a collaborative approach to publishing case studies and position papers), more work is needed to establish enduring national networks, and sharing frameworks. That is, much work remains to be done on designing and implementing new, expanded models of distributed leadership.

CHAPTER 5: DISSEMINATION

5.1 Description of Sharing Framework

The principles of inclusion and distributed leadership have been central to this project, and this has distinguished its approach from a normative ‘top-down’ analysis resulting in a set of policy recommendations on higher degree research management, and standards. A simultaneous contribution and dissemination strategy has worked through a widening participation strategy, illustrated through the concentric circles in Diagram 1 (page 11). This network began with the small, multi-institutional project team and expanded, via the networks of project team members, to administrators and supervisors at partner institutions. Recognising the influence that multiple tiers of leadership (university, faculty, discipline, and supervisor) exert on a candidature, this project set out to capture a multi-perspectival understanding. The project design then expanded further to include participation by representatives of universities across Australia, who in turn have contributed to material and insights and taken back them into the local networks of their universities.

The first circle of this network involved the project partners, who were invited to join the project on the basis of their experience with creative practice research HDRs in Australasia, their recognition as leaders in the field, and the key network points they provide within their institutions. Besides gathering data and exemplars for sharing through the project, drawing upon their institutional networks to recruit interviewees, and providing feedback and input into aspects of the unfolding project, they also incrementally disseminated information about the project through their local networks. Materials disseminated to the project partners included project plans, ethical clearance, interview questions, an evolving literature review, symposium planning, and reporting documents—via a ‘live’ file sharing application (on Google Docs). Project updates were also sent via email to project partners periodically with increased frequency, especially around with two key events: the ESCARD conference (February 2013) and the final project phase (July 2013). The material shared at these points includes: a reference list (online); Web resources (online); case studies collected at ESCARD (online); a recording of ESCARD presentations (online); and the draft booklet ‘12 Principles of Effective Supervision’ (via email).

The second circle of the participation and dissemination expanded across partner institutions. To gain a multi-perspectival picture, university regulations of each of the universities were reviewed and university administrators were invited to contribute their perspectives via a survey. At the same time, the project also focussed on the leadership qualities of experienced and emerging supervisors and captured their insights through interviews. Interview questions and ancillary conversations acknowledged the contributions the interviewees make to the field of creative practice as research in Australia. With the project leaders who conducted the interviews being experienced supervisors themselves, the interviews were framed as a collegial ‘sharing’ of knowledge between skilled practitioner-supervisors, as well as between interviewer and interviewee. The reflective, dialogic approach of these interviews acted as a catalyst for change, prompting the emergence of supervisor forums in some of the partner universities. The summary principles

derived from the interviews, once collated, were disseminated to the project partners for distribution to interviewees.

The interview process, which occurred very early in the project (November and December 2012) generated interest in a conference to share ideas. This laid the foundations for a plan to capture and share more case studies through the *Effective Supervision of Creative Arts Research Degrees* (ESCARD) National symposium at the mid-point of the project. This led to a third circle sharing framework, and extended the leadership network nation-wide. Project team members recruited presenters/participants through their networks, and invitations were sent to all Australasian Universities (via Assistant Deans) to nominate local creative practice HDR leaders to submit case studies and position papers, to participate in dialogues, and to take insights back to their home institution.

An all-partner roundtable meeting preceded the symposium, and the spirit of co-operation, which had already been generated in this central network, set the tone of the following two days. 62 delegates from twenty universities attended. Alongside the presentation of papers and case studies by delegates and the open forums that were included in the order of proceedings, preliminary project findings were introduced to this national audience. Their feedback and discussions informed the shape of the project, as well as the project outcomes (for example, the *12 principles of Effective Supervision* booklet). That is, the symposium provided the opportunity for information capture for the project, an avenue for sharing and disseminating resources, and early findings, and an opportunity for feedback and early evaluation of the project so far.

The success of the ESCARD symposium validated the collaborative and consultative approach of the project, and the design of the sharing framework as a two-way flow of information and resources. It deepened the project team's appreciation of the work that has been undertaken to date in the field, at the same time as facilitating the sharing of progress to date, and it also motivating attendees and speakers to engage in future exchanges. As one ESCARD attendee noted in feedback,

How wonderful it is to talk to people about supervision, to test ideas, get a feel for the lie of the land, ask for advice—knowing there's a potential community out there.

Attendees at the conference have acted as a point for further dissemination to their home universities, taking back what they have discovered and the networks they have made. As one delegate wrote in feedback:

[The symposium] furthered my knowledge about the different approaches taken by PhD supervisors and the challenges faced when supervising these kinds of research projects. This has assisted me as a PG supervisor and I will share the information with my creative arts colleagues at USQ.

The ESCARD achievements were reported widely in other ways (through for example, a review of the conference on the SIG Writing blog on doctoral writing <<http://doctoralwriting.wordpress.com/>>). In this way, the project has engaged with new audiences.

And finally, this early dissemination strategy involving the ESCARD symposium resulted in an opportunity to widen the circle of participation yet further. The editor of an A ranked

international journal (Professor Elizabeth Grierson) invited the project leaders to propose a special edition of ACCESS journal on creative practice supervision to expand on the symposium themes. This will provide the ESCARD symposium presenters an opportunity to extend their presentations into scholarly papers, and it will provide a formal mechanism for disseminating knowledge gained through the project by the project team. But it will also expand the circle of awareness, participation and dissemination of the project outcomes to a fourth, international circle. A national and international call for papers has been issued (Appendix 3) and a strong level of interest has resulted in the submission of a large number of abstracts.

In all of these ways, the project team has modelled principles of distributed leadership in both the collection and sharing of materials throughout the term of the project. We have taken an inclusive, participatory approach, which has benefited both the project outcomes, and dissemination. For example, presentations by delegates and the discussion forums during the two day symposium were captured on video and permission was sought to upload the videos and/or the presenters' PowerPoint slides to the project website. These are now available for public view, where permission was granted. Integral approaches to dissemination throughout the project are complemented by more traditional strategies to disseminate key project outcomes. This includes the circulation of print documents such as the '12 Principles of Effective Supervision' and a project website. The project team will continue to share project outcomes across the higher education sector nationally and internationally through conference papers and publications. As a result of this diverse, multi-tiered, and continuous approach to dissemination, the project has developed a strong identity, awareness is widespread, and considerable momentum has been developed across the sector.

5.2 Outcomes Available and Dissemination Mechanisms

Concrete outcomes of the project and the processes of their dissemination include:

- A presentation on the project by Project Leaders to QUT's Supervisor Retreat, 'Sharing Effective Supervision Practices' on 4 December 2012 (4 months into the project);
- Discussions held at each of the five partner institutions during the interview process (November-December 2012);
- A presentation entitled 'Practice-led Research in Australia': an international seminar on supervision in practice-led research for Bath Spa University, UK in January 2013 (5 months into the project);
- A National Symposium, *Effective Supervision of Creative Arts Research PhDs*, with 62 delegates from 20 Australasian Universities, which disseminated initial project findings, gathered early feedback, and broadened the collection of case studies, scholarly work, and discussions on key issues for supervisors (Appendix 1; website), held at QUT in Brisbane, February 2013 (6 months into the project);
- Papers reporting early findings presented by the project team at the ESCARD symposium, February 2013:
 - 'Creative Intersections: Supervision, Practice and the Space Between' (Ellison);
 - Views from the Frontier: Emerging Approaches to Creative Practice HDR Supervision' (Hamilton and Carson);
 - All of the project partners also presented their own case studies, delivered papers or

hosted forums at the symposium.

- Online audio-visual records of the ESCARD presentations were provided to presenters;
- A Website <<http://supervisioncreativeartsphd.net>> was produced to house project outcomes including:
 - Project description and partner profiles;
 - Literature Review, and reference list with collected key readings (via links and PDFs);
 - Booklet for supervisors (see below);
 - Conference Program/Schedule of presenters, abstracts from the ESCARD symposium;
 - Presentation slides and video recordings of case studies, position paper and forums;
 - An initial repository of collated resources, case studies, and position papers produced by supervisors and program administrators.
- A booklet for supervisors: *12 Principles for the Effective Supervision of Creative Practice Higher Research Degrees*, which encapsulates attitudes, insights and good practices of supervisors was produced as a print booklet (700 copies) and sent to partner universities and those that participated in the ESCARD symposium. It is also available as a digital PDF on the project website, shared via SIGs;
- A forthcoming special issue of *ACCESS Journal: Critical Perspectives on Communication, Cultural & Policy Studies* (ERA A quality journal): 'Supervising Practice: Perspectives on the Supervision of Creative Practice Research Higher Degrees' (Vol. 33: 2, 2014: Routledge) will include the publication of approximately 10 scholarly papers in relation to the theme of the project;
- A final report with literature review, analysis, bibliography, and project findings and outcomes, is provided to the OLT, and made available on the OLT website.

CHAPTER 6: PROJECT IMPACT

Given that this has been a seed project of one-year duration, at the time of reporting a number of concrete outcomes (the booklet for supervisors, publications, and project website) are currently being launched, and their impact is yet to be seen. However, what is already clear is the impact that the *processes of the project design* has had on participants. Partner discussions, interviewing supervisors, collecting case studies, and sharing practices and insights at the symposium have all had a positive impact because they have acknowledged and built participants' expertise and local leadership; facilitated the sharing of effective strategies; and fostered new networks between, and within, universities.

6.1 Impact of Project Partnerships

The processes of the project's partnership strengthened existing relationships and established new ones. It enabled the project partners to gain objective insights into commonalities and differences in HDR organisational structures at their university and to share effective strategies. For example, some organisational structures around milestones at other institutions have been suggested at a discipline/school level at QUT, and QUT's processes are being considered at AUT. Other outcomes include opportunities to conduct research on the area together, and to share pragmatic information (such as openings for PhD graduates). In addition, by extending the partner networks into their own universities, the project has enhanced the leadership capacity of the project partners and extended their existing networks.

6.2 Impact of the Interviews on interviewees

Interviews with experienced and new supervisors concluded with an open-ended question: "Is there anything you would like to add?" Responses to this question very often revolved around the value of the process of being interviewed to the interviewees. Voicing their practices, reflecting on their tacit knowledge, having the opportunity to speak about the challenges and opportunities of supervising in a new field often had a profound effect on them. It was described by one respondent as "the best form of academic development"—not only for others, but also for the self. Example (de-identified) comments include:

I've found this process very useful. It allows us to learn. You're responding to questions, words, phrases on the fly and it is very useful.

It is exciting to be part of such a rich area and it is gratifying to be part of a process of change. Exciting experience.

The project does something in professional development [as] we don't get the chance to talk.

This impact is similar to that noticed by Bruce, who employed conversational frameworks in her project methods (2009). That is, self-reflection provides a tool through which supervisors can engage in effective personal academic development.

6.3 Impact of Symposium

The ESCARD symposium (with its 62 delegates from 20 universities) also provided an opportunity for dialogue—this time through the exchange of ideas in a combination of presentations, open forums and informal dialogue. The symposium was formally evaluated through a qualitative questionnaire. The overwhelmingly positive feedback spoke to the impact of the event on attendees: the insights they have gained, the benefits of dialogue and sharing practices, and the sense of community and networks that the Symposium generated. Answers to the questions: “What will you take away from this symposium?” and “Has/how has the symposium informed your supervision practice?” are recorded in Table 1 below. In many ways the responses show the power of the project approach in building distributed leadership and they illustrate the significance of this as a project outcome.

Table 1: Evaluation of the ESCARD Symposium—qualitative data

What will you take away from this symposium?	Has/how has the symposium informed your supervision practice?
How wonderful it is to talk to people about supervision, to test ideas, get a feel for the lie of the land, ask for advice—and just knowing there’s a potential community out there...	Yes, absolutely—from the conceptual to the practical—do you want my whole list? Mainly, the inspiration and ideas I take away are in the area of creativity and examination.
Broader understanding of sector wide supervision issues. Sense of collegiality.	Support, expansiveness, strategies.
A clear understanding and awareness of the varied possibilities of presentation of the doctoral work, and a sense of adventure in the supervision process.	Opened my mind to ways my students can maintain their own voice with integrity and still fulfil requirements. Differentiating more clearly between the artwork and the work of art.
Strategies. Shared knowledge. Energy/energised to take on supervision and research.	Writing strategies. Reinforced both instinct in supervision and the institution I am in.
A sense that we are all in the same boat as supervisors; that we care about our practice and the shaping of the practice-led space within academia; that it is important to know what other institutions are doing in this field.	Given me more ideas about the relationship between the exegesis and the creative artefact; prodded me to reflect on this and the threads that connect the student, the institution, the supervisor’s role, the examiners, the outcomes. Often there is a disconnect!
Fabulous ideas about innovative approaches to supervision and to the design of research education programs.	Can’t tell yet. But I intend to talk to my colleagues about trialling some of the cohort approaches.
Overview of current supervision practice/direction/thinking in a range of disciplines in creative arts. People to contact, invite as speakers/examiners.	Reminded me of some of the ‘nuts and bolts’. Opened up ideas and knowledge about the purpose and form of the exegesis.
Feel enriched by different perspectives—there is an ongoing community of practice.	Assisted me to focus on other strategies and implementing those.

A more informed understanding of supervision and the tension/demands on supervisors, challenges that seem to be faced by many academics from a variety of universities.	Has given greater insight into requirements for supervision—best practice.
A greater understanding of the breadth of supervision.	Given me more confidence in my own value and ability to facilitate the research of students.
This symposium has revealed that there are many people concerned about similar issues and there is plenty to learn from one another.	Some useful techniques have been presented which I will continue to draw upon. Welby's presentation on the multiple ways of communicating was truly inspiring! I will push this within my own research.
So many new exciting ideas! Wonderful networking opportunity! Much better understanding of practice led research.	In many respects, it has given me confidence to keep doing what I do; because there are no right or wrong answers... every student/study is different and requires individual assessment/study design.
A broader and deeper understanding of the significant developments that have taken place in creative practice supervision, and heartened by the collective knowledge so willingly and generously provided to assist the perplexed and confused.	Given me a whole lot more strategies both as a supervisor and mentor of supervisors.
Refreshed ideas on research/supervision Inspirational, encouraging.	Confirmed some existing strategies but opened up a range of new ideas.
A key point is the shared issues—so often you feel alone with a problem (dear Auntie!). Some great new ideas on how to move things along, especially with writing.	I note the issues discussed are also relevant for management of doc programmes, not just for supervision. This is important, supervisors need to know others (inc. management) have the same concerns, and management needs to recognise supervisors 'at the coal face'.
A sense of optimism and a desire to read some of this material in more depth—conference proceedings.	It has made me think more about working collectively.
Too much to quantify at this stage!	Already started to reflect on discussions for current supervisions.
Furthered my knowledge about the different models available to candidates when undertaking a creative practice MA or PhD. Also furthered my knowledge about the different approaches taken by PhD supervisors and the challenges faced when supervising these kinds of research projects. This has assisted me as a PG supervisor and I will share the information with my creative arts colleagues.	I heard from a variety of speakers about their practice, about their methods of supervision, about the challenges they face, and the 'wins' they have had. This provides me with a variety of models to explore.

6.4 Relationships

The cooperative and collaborative approach of the project has strengthened relationships between partner institutions. The ESCARD symposium attracted a high level of attendance and involvement and this, in turn, generated new networks and collegiate relationships between supervisors and institutions across Australasia. Importantly, the feedback from the symposium revealed a belief in the importance of the research and its outcomes, and a keen interest to further build the relationships between universities, disciplines and supervisors through Special Interest Groups, further symposiums, and further collaboration in further building resources and academic development programs to suit the contextual frameworks of creative practice HDR supervision. The invitation to produce a special issue of an international high quality journal around the project themes is also an example of relationship building, because of the symposium.

Besides building and deepening these relationships, new momentum was created across the sector, expressed through enthusiasm for further symposia, building online networks, and becoming involved in further scholarly work. In these regards, the relationship building of this project provides a foundation for the extension of the project in application, as well as a benchmark for other OLT projects. Indeed, it is the positivity and generosity of these multi-level relationships that has inspired the project team to develop an extended project submission.

6.5 Extensibility to a Variety of Locations

This project has recognised the contingencies of operating in diverse and evolving HDR environments. The project design has therefore focused on considering a variety of contextual frameworks by canvassing the views of various tiers of leadership within the diverse programs of the partner universities. It has sought to capture a wide range of views in interviews. Interviewees include experienced and new supervisors drawn from a broad cross-section of creative disciplines from visual and performing art to music, new media, creative writing, fashion, graphic design, interaction design, and interior design. And, through a concentric approach to data collection, insights, feedback, and exemplars have been sought from beyond the project team and partner universities to encompass universities from across Australasia (as illustrated in Diagram 1 page 13).

This has resulted in the understanding of how diverse contexts have responded to the challenges of a new field, how a range of supervisors have responded to the challenges and opportunities they have faced, and the collection of a diverse range of good practice case studies. The findings and outcomes we have produced therefore represent a multi-perspectival view, and the resources we have produced take the form of a repository of ideas, which might be adapted by new supervisors and disciplinary groups to suit their own contexts and working methods.

Applying the principles of distributed leadership means that this repository and sharing framework has been, and can continue to be organically expanded through an extended network. This means that rather than providing definitive, closed models that may be inappropriate to some contexts, the outcomes of the project are presented as open *possibilities* for sharing and for learning from each other. This means that the project

outcomes are adaptable, broad ranging and shareable across stakeholder institutions. The potential for the outcomes to be amenable to implementation in a variety of institutions or locations is therefore high.

6.6 Linkages with Priority Areas

The 2013 OLT Leadership for Excellence in Learning and Teaching Program Priority 2, Disciplinary and Cross-Disciplinary Leadership, focuses on projects that enhance learning and teaching through leadership capacity-building in discipline structures, communities of practice and cross-disciplinary networks. This project, *Building distributed leadership for effective supervision of creative practice higher research degrees*, fulfils the central goals of this priority area. In line with the concept of distributed leadership, the project has identified and recognised multiple levels of existing leadership in the field of creative practice HDR supervision within Australasian universities. They include HDR managers and administrators, scholars in the field, early adopter and experienced supervisors who act as local leaders, who provide support and advice and act as role models within their disciplines and faculties, and new supervisors who are preparing to lead the next wave of innovation. The learning and teaching practices, as well as the leadership capacity, of each tier of leaders has been strengthened by recognising, capturing, and disseminating their insights and knowledge.

Moreover, by seeing these local leaders as important nodes within their local discipline contexts, and activating their goodwill in the collection and dissemination of ideas and resources, the project has further strengthened local leadership and the relationships between people within their discipline structures. And, by initiating national network building (including cross-disciplinary and cross-institutional, networks and communities of practice), we have fostered the strength of relationships between people. That is, by employing the principles of distributed leadership at the heart of the project, a cooperative and dialogic community of practice has emerged. The impact of this outcome is described in detail by attendees in evaluation responses in Table 1. And it is anticipated that this network will be sustained through the distributed and networked model that has begun to gain traction and spread.

On an individual level, it is useful to consider how the project design has facilitated the building of leadership capacity of individual supervisors. Often, the supervisors we interviewed have already developed rich and deep insights into effective practices of postgraduate supervision, but they had not before shared them. Through the reflective practice that occurred through the interview process, they realised the value of their experience to others. They were then able to publicly test their ideas and share them with others at the ESCARD symposium, and many are now writing them up for publication (subject to international peer review) in an A ranked international journal. This project then has facilitated leadership capacity building in supervision practices, and in individuals as it has benefited the scholarship of teaching.

6.7 Links to Other Projects and Fellowships

This project is indebted to strong research of the ALTC supported project *Creative Arts PhD: Future-proofing the creative arts in higher education* (Baker et al. 2009), which identified the

growth in creative practice research and provided insights into a range of contextual factors, which were important in the design interviews and surveys. It also flagged the need for a project on HDR supervision to consider practices, support and development. The 2010 OLT funded project, *Examination of doctoral degrees in creative arts: process, practice and standards* by Brien, Burr and Webb (report forthcoming) has also provided important contextual understandings, and has allowed us to limit the scope our study, leaving examination issues to their scholarly analysis.

In a process of cross-fertilisation of projects, the findings of the *Examining Doctorates in the Creative Arts* project were presented at the ESCARD symposium, and the project outcome *Examining Doctorates in Creative Arts: A Guide* was disseminated to participants. A presentation by former OLT/ALTC project member Associate Professor Cheryl Stock (*Dancing Between Diversity and Consistency*) was also given at the symposium. And the symposium was launched by Professor Rod Wissler, Executive Dean of the Creative Industries Faculty, QUT and author (with Jill Borthwick) of *Postgraduate research students and generic capabilities*, commissioned by the Department of Education, Science and Training under its Research Evaluation Programme.

This project applies strategies provided by Christine Bruce's 2009 ALTC (now Office of Learning and Teaching) Fellowship, *Towards a pedagogy of supervision in the technology disciplines*, which not only provided insights into a range of supervision factors, but also provided a precedent for a conversational framework in the project design. The current OLT Project, *Benchmarking Leadership and Advancement of Standards for Sessional Staff* by Harvey M., McCormack, C., Brown, N., McKenzie, J., Parker, N., Luzia, K., provided an effective model for the ESCARD symposium, and emulating the exemplary practices of that project in the collection of national case studies has helped to ensure our success.

Three OLT/ALTC projects have guided our approach to the booklet for supervisors, *12 Principles for the Effective Supervision of Creative Practice Higher Research Degrees*. They include *The Red Resource* (2008); *Seven insights for leading sustainable change in learning and teaching in Australian universities* (2012) and *Examining Doctorates in Creative Arts: A Guide* (2013).

CHAPTER 7: ANALYSIS OF CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

7.1 Factors that Contributed to Success

Fundamental to the success of this project has been its approach to recognising and building distributed leadership, which has driven the project design. Applying the principles of distributed leadership has meant acknowledging that leadership exists at all strata of the university (at the levels of institutions, research degree co-ordinators and administrators, and experienced supervisors who, as 'local' early adopters and innovators, operate as exemplars and sources of information to others). Seeing each of these tiers as stakeholders in the project outcomes has ensured that the relationships we developed were based on respect for their leadership capacities, and have affirmed and strengthened the inherent leadership roles of the various participant groups.

By capturing the views of each representative stakeholder group (through the combined methods of document sampling, surveys, interviews and case study collection) the project has developed a richer, multi-perspectival view of creative practice HDR supervision than it would have if it had focussed on any one of them. In addition, this approach instigated a collegiate, cooperative approach that proved to be invaluable. For example, the project team worked together to sharpen the questions prior to the interviews, ensuring that assumptions were minimised and that questions could be answered in different contexts. Another example involves the symposium, where the tone was set by the collaborative, mutually respectful and open approach modelled by the project team members during the introduction. Ideas were shared and debated in a collegiate and inquisitive way, rather than transmitted in the authoritative and competitive manner encountered at some conferences. In addition to strengthening the networks between project team members and the participants more broadly, it meant that we have already learnt much from each other.

An unexpected success of the project was the impact of the interviews on supervisors. The 'accidental academic development' that this dialogic, reflexive tool produced was a benefit that the project team did not foresee. Having the two project leaders, who are both experienced supervisors of creative practice themselves, conduct the interviews facilitated an affirming process, which led to informative and considered dialogues, and elicited deeper responses. In addition, the open-ended questions allowed room for new ideas that had not necessarily been considered when preparing the questions.

Perhaps the most important factor that contributed to the success of the project however was learning the benefits of early dissemination at the OLT Project Managers' Workshop early in the project's timeline. This understanding changed the strategic approach of the project. Instead of pursuing a planned partner meeting to share our institutional strategies and case studies, participation was broadened into the vehicle of a National symposium. By sending an invitation to Assistant Deans of Creative Arts and Design Faculties and heads of postgraduate research at all Australasian universities and inviting them to nominate 'best practice' exemplars to present at a national symposium, key change-makers in the field became aware of the project early on, and played a part in our dissemination network. The symposium not only provided the opportunity to share early outcomes of the project, it led to the opportunity to gain feedback from a national delegation of over 60 HDR managers,

and supervisors at a point when modifications could still be made. Moreover, it broadened the catchment of exemplars of good practice, increasing the breadth of case studies and position papers. It gave a wider voice to supervisors from across the sector through opportunities to present; and it extended dialogue and sharing amongst delegates across 20 Australasian universities, who then went on to become part of our dissemination network. And finally, the call for case studies led directly to an invitation to produce a special issue of an A ranked journal to capture further insights and to disseminate project findings. In short, the early dissemination strategy set up a momentum that led to far greater outcomes than was anticipated in the project proposal.

7.2 Factors that Limited Success

Several minor challenges were encountered through the course of the project. Finalising Partner agreements and QUT's Ethical Clearance process required more time than envisaged. The latter required multiple document versions and drafting and re-drafting the interview questions prior to submission. However, having the interview questions so thoroughly considered proved to be beneficial during the interviews and the rich interview data we gained is the result of the time and attention allocated to this process. The pragmatics of the interview process, especially in the case of the University of Western Sydney, which has dispersed locations, was a minor challenge. However, the support and commitment of the project team in organising all of the local interviews was invaluable.

Organising the ESCARD Symposium in to run only six months in to the project was logistically challenging. However, it was unavoidable given the project's one-year timeframe and scheduling it within the non-teaching period to optimise attendance. Nonetheless, as explained above, it proved most productive to disseminate findings early and to gather a wide range of responses from stakeholders so the project outcomes are wider than they otherwise would have been. Moreover, it means that anticipation of the project outcomes has built, and that they will engage our colleagues as more than audiences, but as participants in the research process.

Other issues encountered involve negotiating the language of a relatively new field. For example, 'creative practice research' 'practice-led research' and 'practice-based' research have different meanings for different respondents. Gaining accurate data from institutions on the distinct field of creative practice HDRs was also challenging, as universities do not report on 'creative practice research' to the Australian Government as a separate category. Therefore, the accumulated 'on-the-ground' knowledge of higher degree research administrator/coordinators at each university was invaluable. And finally, the project report was more time consuming than expected, but enjoyable nonetheless.

CHAPTER 8: EVALUATION

The evaluation of the project has involved a combination of proactive strategies. They include formative feedback from project team members on the project design (event sequencing, methods of data collection and collation, analysis of materials and data, approaches to disseminating project outcomes, and so on); a self-evaluation of project outcomes against proposed goals and outcomes (Table 2); specific questions included in the interviews; and anonymous surveys completed at the ESCARD symposium (Table 1). Quantitative feedback has been captured at particular project points (e.g. the number of attendees at the symposium, and responses to the call for symposium presentations and journal articles). Web analytics will capture traffic to the project website.

8.1 Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of formative feedback, which was sought throughout the project, was to strengthen the project design. Reflecting on incremental feedback from project team members, the project leaders made iterative changes to improve the efficacy of approaches to capturing resources and insights, improving project strategies, and disseminating outcomes. The purpose of the evaluation of project outcomes against stated project goals (in the project proposal) has provided a measure of achievements (Table 2). Interview questions on the effect of participation, as well as the qualitative surveys conducted at the symposium, were designed to formally capture feedback on the impact of the project design on participants. Counting respondents to the symposium and call for papers has served to gauge the impact of the distributed leadership approach and early interest by the sector. All of these evaluation approaches were conducted to learn about the strength of the approaches we were taking, as much as for reporting purposes.

8.2 Evaluation Strategies and Outcomes

Formative Feedback

The project team provided continuous formative feedback and advice to the project leaders. Each project phase was documented and updates were sent to the partners. All decisions and changes to the approach (e.g. adding the symposium to the project design) were shared with, and agreed upon, by all partners. Materials collected, such as the literature, institutional resources, and case studies through to project planning and fortnightly project team meetings were available to partners for comment throughout the course of the project by way of a shared Google Drive. Pivotal materials, such as draft project reports, interview and survey questions, calls for papers, the symposium rationale and schedule of presentations, and dissemination strategies were also circulated by email for comment. A project team meeting in February provided an opportunity for face to face consultation and feedback on the project approach midway through the project timeline.

The Ethical Clearance process at QUT provided formative feedback on the design of the survey and interview and questions. And feedback on early project findings and the project design was received from participants at the ESCARD symposium. In combination, this influenced decision-making and planning for each subsequent project phase.

Qualitative Feedback

Open-ended questions at the end of the interviews, which enabled participants to comment on any aspects of the project, were not designed to elicit responses about the benefits of participation. However, many of the responses provided this feedback (several examples are relayed in Section 6.2 above).

Other qualitative evaluation data was captured in surveys that were distributed to delegates at the conclusion of the two-day ESCARD symposium. They asked a limited number of open ended questions including, “What will you take away from this symposium?” and “Has/how has the symposium informed your supervision practice?” The (overwhelmingly positive) responses are tabulated in Section 6.3. They illustrate the considerable impact of the Symposium on the supervisors, HDR managers and Assistant Deans in attendance. Besides surveys, feedback was captured in email exchanges, Special Interest Group reviews, tweets, and posts to blogs.



Quantitative Data

Quantitative data has supplemented insights gained through qualitative feedback, including registrations for the ESCARD symposium (more than 60), submissions of case studies (18), and submission of abstracts for the journal special issue (16 to date). Quantitative data will also be collected on visits to the project website (through web analytics).

Evaluation of outcomes against stated goals

An evaluation of outcomes achieved by the project team against the outcomes and stated project goals in the project proposal was produced through a tabular matrix, which appears below in Section 8.3.

8.3 Achievement of Project Goals and Realisation of Outcomes

Table 2: Comparison of project objectives and proposed outcomes to realised outcomes

Project objective	Proposed outcome	Realised project outcome
A Scholarly Understanding of the Field: Contextual factors		
Develop an understanding of HDR supervision practices across disciplines and of creative practice HDRs.	A literature review identifying supervision practices in other fields and creative practice HDRs.	Literature review, scholarly research base: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annotated bibliography (available on project website); • Concise literature review (Chapter 3 of this report).
Identify institutional models for managing HDR candidature and academic development for supervisors. Identify principles that can be used by the sector for future planning and resource development.	A review of institutional HDR processes and frameworks.	Contextual review of institutional frameworks, processes and resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional surveys and analysis; • A review of institutional documents for students and supervisors; • 'A Snapshot of Procedural Issues in the Supervision of Creative Practice HDRs' (Section 4.1, Paper abstract submitted); • Recommendations and new approaches (Section 4.4);
Resources, practices, and principles of effective supervision		
Collating the reflections and materials developed by early adopter creative disciplines in Australasian Universities as a sharable resource.	A collection of resources in use by supervisors in partner institutions.	A repository of resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of available resources and literature for supervisors (on project website); • Collection of exemplary resources (on project website); • Case studies captured at the National Symposium <i>Effective Supervision of Creative Arts Research PhDs</i> (on project website)
Interviewing supervisors to establish the practices of early adopters of practice-led research HDRs, through a case studies approach.	Interviews with supervisors.	Interviews with 25 supervisors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33 hours of tape-recorded interview materials; • Transcriptions of the tape-recorded interviews
Analyse this collection to identify innovative practices, institutional commonalities and synthesise broad principles	An analysis of the literature, case studies and resources to identify commonalities and innovative practices.	Content Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A matrix of categorised interview responses; • Synthesised set of principles for effective supervision (Section 4.3);
Articulate a shared	A set of working	• A booklet: <i>12 Principles for the Effective</i>

understanding of HDR pedagogies in creative disciplines.	principles, derived from this analysis.	<i>Supervision of Creative Practice Higher Degrees by Research</i> including exemplars provided by supervisors (print resource; on project website);
Dissemination		
Take a co-operative approach to resource sharing, and dissemination of findings.	Institutional dissemination of project outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation at a 'Supervisor Retreat: Sharing Best Practice in Doctoral Supervision' QUT; • Strengthened community of supervisory practice at each partner university • National ESCARD Symposium;
	Broader dissemination of resources, exemplars and case studies through a web portal;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Website <http://supervisioncreativeartsphd.net>
	Scholarly, peer reviewed papers that articulate shared understandings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project report; • ACCESS Journal special issue; • Phased dissemination plan of scholarly outcomes.

8.4 Variations to the Project

A variation to the project design occurred due to attendance at the OLT Project Managers Workshop, where advice to begin dissemination early was received. This led to the decision to hold a national conference half way through the project, instead of at the end, as initially planned. This decision enabled key stakeholders and experts in the field to participate in the project outcomes, and many attendees have become part of an extended dissemination network.

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Appendix 1: Survey and Interview Questions

BUILDING DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP FOR EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION OF CREATIVE

PRACTICE HIGHER RESEARCH DEGREES

QUT Ethics Approval Number 1200000625

Standard Survey Instrument – Questionnaire for Group A:

Administrators of HDR programs in creative disciplines at partner universities

Instructions for completing the questionnaire:

Please answer the questions by drawing upon formal data sources and institutional reports where available.

- If a question does not have available data or you cannot ascertain an answer, please write NAD.
- If a question is not applicable please write NA.
- If an Answer is approximate write AP.

Please write answers below the questions in the expandable text box. If it is preferable to append a document, such as written report or table please number it as an appendix and refer to it accordingly in the text box.

Terms and Acronyms used in the questionnaire:

HDR: Higher Degree Research

FOE code: Field of Education code

PART A: USE OF TERMS AND APPROACH

1. A recent report entitled Future-Proofing the Creative Arts in Higher Education identified varied terminology for creative practice PhDs. What descriptor/ descriptors are used at your university? (E.g.: practice-led research; artistic research; practice-based research; creative practice as research).
2. What terms are used for the practical component in your institution? (E.g. creative component, practice, creative work etc.)
3. What terms are used for the written component? (E.g. thesis, exegesis, dissertation)
4. Are these terms used consistently across disciplines in your Faculty?
5. What are the relative proportions of practical and written components?

PART B: ORGANIZATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

6. When did your university commence creative practice research HDRs?

7. Have there been periods of high growth since then?

Please identify when and by how much and provide statistical data if available (can be attached as an appendix).

8. What disciplines (in the creative and performing arts, media and design) are engaged in creative practice HDRs?

9. Are these disciplines physically and organizationally co-located (E.g. in the same faculty, on the same campus)?

10. Are there creative disciplines that have not engaged creative practice HDRs?

11. How many candidates are currently enrolled in HDR degrees in your Faculty/ School, compared with undergraduates, and masters by coursework?

Postgraduate Research	Undergraduate
-----------------------	---------------

12. What relative number/percentage are Masters (Research) compared to PhD projects?

MA (Research)	PhD
---------------	-----

13. What number (or percentage) of HDR candidates undertake Creative Practice projects? (If no precise figures are available, please approximate)

Traditional Thesis	Creative practice
--------------------	-------------------

14. Has this number (or percentage) increased over time?

If so please comment on approximate rate, or provide year-by-year figures.

PART C: SUPERVISION CAPACITY

15. How many supervisors of creative practice HDRs are active in your Faculty or School?
(Estimates are acceptable)

Junior (Levels A or B – Associate Lecturer or Lecturer)	Mid-Senior Level (LEVEL C – Senior Lecturer)	Senior Staff (LEVELS D or E – Associate Professor or Professor)

16. What percentage of your supervisors would you classify as:

New supervisors No completions	Mid-experience Supervisors 1-2 completions	Experienced Supervisors or more completions

Comments or definitions:

17. On average, how many practice-led candidates does a supervisor manage? (if this varies with level or experience this can be made evident by drawing a line between the boxes above and the numbered boxes below)

1-2	3-5	5-8	8-12	More than 12

18. How does this compare with traditional supervisions in your faculty/university?

Same or different? If different please identify how?

Comments:

19. How many supervisors of creative practice research in your school/ faculty have completed one or more Creative Practice PhD supervisions?

1-3	4-7	8-10	11- 15	More than 16

20. On average, how many practice-led completions would a supervisor at your university claim?

1-2	3-5	5-8	8-12	More than 12

21. Do you have enough supervision capacity to supervise the number of creative practice research in your school/ faculty? If not how is this managed?

22. Does your university plan to increase capacity in this field of supervision?

If so, how?

PART D: SUPERVISION TEAMS

23. Is the creative practice HDR candidate typically supervised by theorists, practitioners, hybrid practitioner-theorists or a combination of these? (in Principal and Associate supervisor roles)

24. Does your university/faculty require one, or both, or none of the supervisors of a creative practice candidate to be a creative practitioner?

Any other comments on supervisory teams?

PART E: ORGANIZATIONAL GOVERNANCE

25. What University-wide document/s support the administration and regulatory environment? (E.g. QUT has a Manual of Policies and Procedures that outlines the rights and responsibilities of supervisors and candidates as well as the acceptable format for creative practice higher degree research projects).

26. Where does the Research Students Centre or equivalent Research Office process sit within your organizational structure? [E.g. is it an independent body led by a Dean of Graduate Studies or does HDR management function at a Faculty level?]

27. If the student sits at the center of an operational map what managerial and regulatory systems impact on them and how? (E.g. See QUT example in Appendix.)

28. What are the broad processes for students wanting to enter the program? E.g. seek supervisor/ written application/ interview etc.

29. Under what circumstances does a candidate submit ethical clearance application?

30. Are there any particular challenges and concerns around creative practice and this process?

31. What is the maximum length of time **allowed** for a practice-led candidate to complete?

MA	PhD
years	years

32. What is the average length of time taken for a practice-led candidate to complete?

MA years	PhD years
-------------	--------------

34. What percentage of research students complete?

35. Any comments on completion times/rates relative to traditional theses?

36. Does your Faculty or School have a Supervisor Accreditation program?

37. If so how is it structured and is it tiered (E.g. Levels 1 -3)?

38. How is it regulated?

39. Does your university policy state that all supervisors of PhDs must have a PhD?

40. In practice, can a well-established creative practitioner who is a staff member of your organization and does not have a PhD join a supervision team?

41. Can a well-established creative practitioner who is not a staff member of your university and does not have a PhD join a supervision team?

Any comments or clarifications:

PART F: SUPPORT FOR SUPERVISORS

42. Are new supervisors mentored by experienced supervisors?

If so is this a formal or informal process?

Please provide details. For example, a practice of mixed experience supervisory teams.

43. What materials/exemplars/guidelines are published by your University/Faculty/School on postgraduate processes for students? (Please provide links or attachments if possible)

44. What materials/exemplars/guidelines are published by your University/Faculty/School in relation to supervision processes for supervisors? (Please provide links or attachments if possible)

45. What generic academic development opportunities are available to supervisors? [For example online courses, supervisor training seminars conferences, workshops.]

46. Are similar academic development opportunities available to supervisors that focus on creative practice in particular?
47. Are academic development opportunities listed compulsory or voluntary (please mark with a C or V accordingly)?
48. If voluntary, what is the approximate take-up rate of online training?
49. If challenges arise for supervisors, is there a clear support structure/ designated support role to turn to for advice and support?

PART G: CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR HDR STUDENTS

50. Does your university define graduate capabilities for completing PhD students?
51. If so, is this university wide or are specific creative practice capabilities named?
52. Does your university offer career planning and academic development opportunities in Teaching and Learning and Research publication for PhD students? If so are they informal or formal, please describe them. Are there any particular opportunities for creative practice candidates?
53. Are supervisors encouraged/ supported to provide mentoring to students into academic roles? If so how does this occur?

PART H: MILESTONES AND EXAMINATION

54. What milestones do your PhD candidates students complete? Please describe the milestone and when it occurs.
55. Are any variations made to these milestones or their form for creative practice projects?
56. Do students prepare for examination through a final seminar? If so, please describe this process and when it occurs.
57. What is the role of supervisors in supporting the candidate for this process?
58. Who else is involved in the final seminar (for example internal examiners/ panel, review committee) and what are their roles?
59. Does the student submit creative work and an exegesis/ thesis/dissertation for examination? If so what in what proportion are they examined?
60. Are there particular requirements around word counts of the exegesis/dissertation/report and/or what constitutes appropriate 'amount' of

<p>practice?</p> <p>61. Are guidelines provided to examiners? If so please attach them.</p> <p>62. Are experiments/innovations relating to the form and layout of the written component or presentation of the practice encouraged/ supported?</p> <p>If so, please provide descriptions or examples.</p>
<p>63. How many examiners are required for MA and PhD examinations? Are these examiners external?</p> <p>64. Do you require one, or both, examiners to have experience in creative practice?</p> <p>65. Do you require them to have examination experience?</p> <p>66. How do they examine the work? Do they receive documentation or see/experience the work in situ?</p> <p>67. Are there particular challenges in examining location specific submissions?</p> <p>68. How is the examination facilitated [E.g. by conveners, the supervisor, the research office, a combination of these]</p> <p>69. Does a Viva occur? If so, do candidates receive the examiner's reports or questions before a viva, does it happen 'live' or via Skype etc.</p>
<p>Finally: Please select ONE of the following options:</p> <p>I agree to:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> being named,</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> being fully anonymous, or</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> being named except for answers to particular questions, Numbered — — —.</p>

BUILDING DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP FOR EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION OF CREATIVE PRACTICE HIGHER RESEARCH DEGREES

QUT Ethics Approval Number 1200000625

Indicative Questions for Semi-structured Interviews for

Group B: Experienced Supervisors of Creative practice HDR candidates

This is an indicative question list. The questions in this list may be deleted or change slightly depending on the attributes and responses of interviewees, which may require different follow-up questions to be asked.

About you as a supervisor:

1. How long have you been supervising creative practice PhDs?
2. How many creative practice PhDs have you completed?
3. How many candidates do you currently have?
4. Do you tend to take a Principal or Associate role or a mixture of both?
5. What fields do you supervise? (Do you know the FOE (Field of Education) codes? If not, please name of field/s), including any interdisciplinary candidates?
 - a. If the latter, how is this managed?
6. Would you describe yourself as a theorist, practitioner, or hybrid theorist-practitioner?
7. Do you have a creative practice PhD? Is this common or uncommon in supervisors in your faculty?
8. Do you supervise creative practice PhDs only or a combination of creative and traditional academic PhDs?
9. Do you supervise the practice or written component or both?
10. What naming conventions do you use?
Eg: Practice led/practice-based/creative practice research? Exegesis/ thesis/ report
11. Does your university have a supervisor accreditation process? If so, are you accredited? At what level?
12. Are you familiar with the emerging body of literature on practice-led research?
Very/ somewhat/ a little/ not at all

Your views on creative practice research and HDRs

13. Do you consider creative practice research to be different to other forms of research? If so in what ways?
 - a. Do you think it offers particular benefits? For the candidate/ for you as a supervisor?

- b. Can you identify any particular challenges creative practice research degrees raise?
Eg: Institutional/ examination/ supervisory teams/ student and project management, the ethical clearance process?
- c. What do you consider the purpose of the written component/exegesis/dissertation?
- d. What does it tend to contain?

Your supervision practices

14. How would you describe your supervision practice? For example: diverse; individualistic; conventional; bound by regulation; open to innovation

- a. In general, how do you work with students? Eg guiding ideas, editing drafts, providing a road map.
- b. Does your Institution have candidature milestones? If so, how do you help students prepare?
- c. What is your style/ focus of supervision and contribution? Eg: big picture planning, focusing on milestones, responsive to submissions via feedback on the detail.

Interviewer notes should prompts be needed
Christine Bruce describes 3 types of supervisors:

- **Directing roles** emphasise the supervisor's input into the candidacy, for example Manager or Director.
- **Collaborative roles** emphasise supervisors working with students as equals, for example Partner or Colleague.
- **Responsive roles** emphasise meeting students' needs. They are adopted as required throughout the candidature, for example, Mentor, Coach, Advisor, Networker, Supporter, Editor, Nurturer, Counsellor, Intermediary, Parent and Friend (16).

15. Do you think that the supervision of practice-led research needs new models (compared with other fields)? Is there a particular "model" that you have adopted in your supervision?

- a. Are supervisors encouraged/ supported by academic managers to explore new models of supervision?
- b. Is there consensus in your discipline / faculty on supervision processes and practices? Can you describe the dominant practices in your school/ discipline area?
- c. What do you think are the key factors/ principles that you follow that are a key to your successful supervision?

16. Can you give an example of a successful innovative supervision practice that you have developed?

- a. Do you think that your model of supervision is innovative or unique and, if so, would you be willing to share it/ or an aspect of it with others through a case study?

- b. Have you developed resources (eg. a template for an abstract, writing guidelines, tools etc. that you give to your PhD candidates to use)?
- c. If so, have you shared them with colleagues? Are you willing to share them / within your school/ beyond (with attribution)
- d. Have you published any aspect of your supervision practices?

Supporting students into careers

17. Does your university expect HDR candidates to develop graduate attributes? If so, how are these realized?
- a. Does your university/ Faculty offer career planning and training of HDR candidates interested in academic positions? If so do you encourage candidates to take them?
 - b. Do you mentor your HDR candidates in this regard? If so how?
 - c. Do candidates typically gain part time or sessional teaching roles within the school?

Supervision Training, the Acquisition of expertise and Support

18. Do you mentor others?
- a. Were you mentored by more experienced supervisors?
19. What supervision training is provided by university/ faculty/school?
- a. Are supervisor training modules available online?
 - b. Have you been involved in any supervision training either as a trainer or as a participant in a training session?
 - c. Is such training compulsory or voluntary?
 - d. Are supervisors encouraged by academic managers to undertake supervision training?
 - e. What resources can you access that have been provided by your Faculty/ School HDR office? Do you use them?
20. Would you trust resources provided by supervising peers (within or outside your university) more or less than those formally provided?
- a. Are you aware of external resources?
 - b. Are you on any lists or discussion groups?
21. If challenges were to arise with a candidate, is there a local HDR support person from whom you could seek advice? OR do you use other avenues for advice (eg colleagues, discussion groups etc) for:
- ☐ Academic issue?
 - ☐ Risk management?

- ☐ Interpersonal or social issues?
- ☐ Failure to submit timely drafts?

- a. Are these faculty level/ school level; colleagues/ mentors?
- b. Is there a 'community of supervision practice' in your discipline/ school/ faculty? If so how would you describe it and what it does?

Attribution

Given your responses, would you like to be named in any project outcomes?

The options are (i) being named, (ii) being fully anonymous, or (iii) being named except for answers to particular questions.

Wrapping up

Is there anything that you would like to add (on or off the record)?

Effective Supervision of Creative Arts Research Degrees

QUT Gardens Point Campus

P Block Kindler Theatre & P413A

Thursday, 7th February 2013

- Registration
- Welcome
- ▶ Introduction and Overview of the Symposium
- ▶ Presentations: Supervision and Scholarship
- ▶ Afternoon Tea
- ▶ Presentations: Supervisors and Expertise
- ▶ Panel Discussions/Group Discussion
- ▶ Drinks at Botanic Bar

Friday, 8th February 2013

- ▶ Morning Announcements
- ▶ Presentations: Approaching the PhD
- Morning Tea
- ▶ Presentations: Supporting Success
- ▶ Group Discussion
- Lunch
- ▶ Presentations: Presentation, Examination
- ▶ Presentations: Academic Development for Students and Supervisors
- Afternoon Tea
- ▶ Panel Discussion
- Conclusions

Schedule

Thursday, 7th February 2013

12:30pm - 1:00pm	Registration
1:00pm - 1:20pm	Welcome <i>Professor Rod Wissler Executive Dean, Creative Industries Faculty, Queensland University of Technology</i>
	Introduction and Overview of the Symposium <i>Associate Professor Jillian Hamilton and Dr Sue Carson, Queensland University of Technology</i>
1:20pm - 2:45pm	Presentations: Supervision and Scholarship Creative Intersections: Supervision, Practice and the Space Between <i>Dr Liz Ellison, Queensland University of Technology</i> Views from the Frontier: Insights of Supervisors of Creative Practice HDRs <i>Associate Professor Jillian Hamilton and Dr Sue Carson, Queensland University of Technology</i> The Artwork and The Work of Art: Beyond Solipsism <i>Associate Professor Barbara Bolt, University of Melbourne</i>
2:45pm - 3:00pm	Afternoon Tea
3:00pm - 3:50pm	Presentations: Supervisors and Expertise Creative Research: The Importance of 'Know-How' in Creative Arts Supervision <i>Professor Brad Haseman and Dr Dan Mafe, Queensland University of Technology</i> The Ignorant Supervisor: About Common Worlds, Epistemological Modesty and Distributed Knowledge <i>Associate Professor Tina Engels-Schwarzpaul, Auckland University of Technology</i>
4:00pm - 4:45pm	Panel Discussion/Group Discussion Quality of Practice <i>Led by Professor Ross Harley, CoFA, University of New South Wales</i>
5:00pm - 6:30pm	Drinks at Botanic Bar (Not included in registration)
6:30pm	Dinner Location TBA (Not included in registration)

**Effective Supervision of
Creative Arts Research Degrees**

QUT Gardens Point Campus
P Block Kindler Theatre & P413A
Thursday, 7th - Friday, 8th February 2013

Schedule

Friday, 8th February 2013

9:15am - 11:00am

Presentations: Approaching the PhD

The Boundary Riders: Artists in Academia/Artists and Academia

Associate Professor Brogan Bunt and Professor Sarah Miller, University of Wollongong

Re-thinking Risky Business: The Management of Creative Practice HDR Projects

Dr Sue Carson, Queensland University of Technology

The Thesis Statement and Research Questions as Headlights for Research

Associate Professor Estelle Barrett, Independent Scholar

Ethical Clearance Made Easy? Issues and Solutions for Creative Arts RHD Supervisors

Dr Angela Romano, Queensland University of Technology

11:00am - 11:30am

Morning Tea

11:30am - 12:45pm

Presentations: Supporting Success

Systematic and Orchestrated Scaffolding to Facilitate Smooth Student Progress in Design
Higher Research Degrees

Associate Professor Deirdre Barron, Swinburne University of Technology

'This is NOT a Seminar': Creative Research Dialogues

Dr Lyndall Adams and Dr Renee Newman-Storen, Edith Cowan University

Other People's Creative Methodologies A 5 Minute Presentation

Dr Ruth Watson, The University of Auckland

Shut Up and Write

Ms Lindy Osborne and Ms Glenda Caldwell, Queensland University of Technology

Guerrilla Research Tactics

Ms Glenda Caldwell and Ms Lindy Osborne, Queensland University of Technology

12:45pm - 1:15pm

Group Discussion

A Conversation About Writing

Led by Dr Claire Aitchison, University of Western Sydney

1:15pm - 1:45pm

Lunch

**Effective Supervision of
Creative Arts Research Degrees**

QUT Gardens Point Campus
P Block Kindler Theatre & P413A
Thursday, 7th - Friday, 8th February 2013

Schedule

Friday, 8th February 2013 (Continued)

1:45pm - 2:45pm	Presentations: Presentation, Examination <hr/> <p>Architectures of Knowing: New Approaches to Exegesis Design in Creative Practice PhDs <i>Professor Welby Ings, Auckland University of Technology</i></p> <p>Examining the Creative Arts Doctorate in Australia: Supervisors and Their Students <i>Professor Donna Lee Brien, Central Queensland University and Professor Jen Webb, University of Canberra</i></p>
2:45pm - 3:15pm	Afternoon Tea <hr/>
3:15pm - 4:15pm	Presentations: Academic Development for Students and Supervisors <hr/> <p>Beyond Supervision: Academic Development of Postgraduates during the PhD <i>Associate Professor Jillian Hamilton, Queensland University of Technology</i></p> <p>Sharing Effective Practices in Doctoral Supervision in the Creative Industries <i>Associate Professor Cheryl Stock, Queensland University of Technology</i></p>
4:15pm - 4:30pm	Conclusion/s <hr/>

Creative Intersections: Supervision, Practice and The Space Between

Dr Liz Ellison, Queensland University of Technology

Supervision in the creative arts is a topic of growing significance since the increase in creative practice PhDs across universities in Australasia. This presentation will provide context of existing discussions in creative practice and supervision. Creative practice – encompassing practice-based or practice-led research – has now a rich history of research surrounding it. Although it is a comparatively new area of knowledge, great advances have been made in terms of how practice can influence, generate, and become research. The practice of supervision is also a topic of interest, perhaps unsurprisingly considering its necessity within the university environment. Many scholars have written much about supervision practices and the importance of the supervisory role, both in academic and more informal forms.

However, there is an obvious space in between: there is very little research on supervision practices within creative practice higher degrees, especially at PhD or doctorate level. Despite the existence of creative practice PhD programs, and thus the inherent necessity for successful supervisors, there remain minimal publications and limited resources available. *Creative Intersections* explores the existing publications and resources, and illustrates that a space for new published knowledge and tools exists.

Views from the Frontier: Insights of Supervisors of Creative Practice HDRs

Assoc. Professor Jillian Hamilton & Dr Sue Carson, Qld University of Technology

Many Australasian universities now offer higher degrees in research that involves creative practice across visual and performing arts, design, creative writing and media disciplines. They have experienced substantial increase in enrolments since the Strand Report (1998), the recognition of creative outcomes within the ERA framework since 2003, and the recent evidencing of the value of the Creative Industries to the economic and cultural fabric (CCI, 2007). Creative disciplines have embraced the opportunities that practice-based research offers and have responded to the challenges of this rapid expansion, while individual supervisors have taken initiative in developing new strategies for this emergent area of learning and teaching. However, supervision capacity building has so far been approached in an ad hoc way across the sector, with disciplines and faculties responding to local circumstances, rapidly growing cohorts and changing HDR environments. And, so far, there has not yet been a systematic approach to capturing, articulating and sharing effective HDR supervision practices. Supervisors have had few opportunities to share the approaches they have developed. This paper presents an early review of interviews with over twenty experienced and new supervisors of creative practice HDRs. It provides insights into the challenges they face, their attitudes to supervising this relatively new field of research, and the approaches they have developed and adopted to ensure successful outcomes.

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The Artwork and The Work of Art: Beyond Solipsism

Associate Professor Barbara Bolt, University of Melbourne

The research statements required for the ERA assessment exercise mirrors the task required of our RHD students in the meta-discursive element of their thesis. This presentation steps out how the research statement is a tool that can be used to assist supervisors and graduate researchers to understand and articulate the research innovation and new knowledge that emerges in and through the artwork. In the ERA assessment exercise, the writing of the research statements proved to be a vexing task for our peers. Whilst it is relatively easy to cite critical reception, the calibre of the venue or awards as evidence of excellence, one of the clear sources of discomfort for creative arts researchers was the question of *how* to articulate the research contribution without resorting to solipsistic descriptor. This is also the difficulty that faces our RHD or graduate researchers in the research paper, dissertation or exegesis. This presentation draws out the relation between the research statement and the task that is required of graduate researchers. In order to clarify the task, a distinction is made between the artwork and the work of art. Whilst the **artwork** can be defined as the production, that is, the work that is exhibited/presented or performed, the **work of art** refers to the work that art does. In this schema, the “work” that art *does*, is categorically not the object - painting, sculpture, drawing, print and so on - that we have come to call an artwork. It is the “movement” in understanding, thought, material practice, affect or discourse that occurs through the vehicle of the artwork. This presentation will demonstrate how the distinction between the artwork and the work of art enables us to tease out the research innovation and new knowledge that emerges in and through the work.

Creative Research: The Importance of ‘Know-How’ in Creative Arts Supervision

Professor Brad Haseman and Dr Dan Mafe, Queensland University of Technology

This presentation builds on our co-authored chapter, “Acquiring know-how: research training for practice-led researchers” (in Dean, R. & Smith, H. (eds) (2009) *Practice-led Research/Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh). While creative practice is often a deeply immersive experience marked by the uncertainty that accompanies any emergent process, research requires that the practitioner-researcher is able to step back enough to be able to define both their findings and their significance. To do this a reflexive habit of mind is needed for it enables researchers to define a position from which they can refer to and reflect upon themselves and so be able to give an account of their own position of enunciation. How then can such a position of enunciation, a meta-position, be achieved and how can a candidate be helped to achieve it? We believe that to supervise a creative research candidate successfully requires at least one supervisor in the supervisory team to be an artist or creative practitioner. To highlight this we focus in the first instance on our own very different creative practices. The contrast between these two practices offers a broad range of resources, which can be deployed to better understand what is required for nuanced and effective supervision. With this focus we will discuss how supervisors are able to model a sophisticated and practiced approach to uncertainty and reflexivity for our postgraduate students and show how reflexivity, supported as it is by documentation and various reflective tools, can be worked to construct a bridge leading to the candidate’s all-important meta-position in relation to his or her creative research.

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The Ignorant Supervisor: About Common Worlds, Epistemological Modesty and Distributed Knowledge

Associate Professor Tina Engels-Schwarzpaul, Auckland University of Technology

This position paper articulates a knowledge gap, specifically between non-traditional candidates* and their supervisors. When candidates' research concerns lie outside the body(ies) of knowledge their supervisors are familiar with, different supervisory approaches and strategies are called for. More broadly, this constellation brings into focus questions concerning the appropriateness of traditional supervision models (almost invariably involving the knowing-established researcher/ supervisor) in creative practice-led research – which is, more principally than other research areas, concerned with the engagement of new and emerging themes, questions, processes and practices.

My lack of disciplinary knowledge regarding two PhD candidates' projects led me some years ago to question the effects of this lack and to search for effective ways of dealing with it. A subsequent commitment to different modes of candidate/ supervisor collaborations was based on three assumptions:

One, a supervisor is not, in the first instance, a conveyor or purveyor of knowledge.

Two, postgraduate researchers already have substantial and refined pockets of relevant knowledge to draw on.

Three, and very importantly, they are able to activate networks of distributed knowledge, often outside of the University.

The paper will draw on Jacques Rancière and Hannah Arendt's ideas, as well as on those of writers exploring *Mode 2 Knowledge Production* and the role of *Not-Knowing* in Art&Design. Reflections on my experiences of supervising PhD and Master of Art&Design candidates will be brought into dialogue with ideas offered by authors contributing to a book I am currently editing, *Of Other Thoughts: Non-traditional Approaches to the Doctorate* (to be published in 2013).

* "the majority of students in Western universities until about twenty years ago: male, white, middle-class and fit" (Taylor & Beasley, 2005)

The Boundary Riders: Artists in Academia/Artists

**Effective Supervision of
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Associate Professor Brogan Bunt and Professor Sarah Miller, University of Wollongong

This paper seeks to explore the challenges and the rewards of supervision from two perspectives: artists who are employed as lecturers within the academy and mature artists returning to the academy to undertake a higher degree by research.

The University of Wollongong introduced its Doctorate of Creative Arts (DCA) program in 1986. As one of the earliest doctoral programs in the country, this apparent perspicacity was arguably more to do with Creative Arts as a resident faculty within the University, and the need to work within a university framework. This is in contradistinction to the forced marriages undertaken between many art schools, vocational training institutions and the university sector during the Dawkins era (1987 – 92). From the outset, UOW's strong multidisciplinary emphasis on supporting experienced artists to undertake high-level creative research through higher degree study has been a distinguishing characteristic of its postgraduate programs. The challenges involved in supervising highly experienced artists, who often have extensive teaching experience themselves, to undertake a doctoral qualification are quite distinct from the supervision of younger practitioners who have typically undertaken early research training through their Honours programs.

In their discussion, Bunt and Miller will consider the following strategies that have evolved over the past few years in particular, and which seek to facilitate the progress of mature practitioners through a higher degree by research, acknowledging the tensions that may exist between the professional demand for higher qualifications and the desire of mature practitioners to reflect on their practices to date; the institutional demand for timely completions, the sometimes awkward fit between artists' expectations and the structure of doctoral research; the supervisory effort to provide adequate support and advice; and the institutional capacity to support the creative component of the work in a fiscally constrained environment.

Re-thinking Risky Business: The Management of Creative Practice HDR Projects

Dr Sue Carson, Queensland University of Technology

The role of creative practice in postgraduate research is at the centre of some of the most interesting debates around research trajectories, funding, university management and planning. While the number of creative practice HDRs have increased dramatically in the past decade in Australia there has been a reduction of resources for aspects of such programs and a changing mind-set about the role of the PhD in particular. In this environment interesting tensions have developed as staff feel the pressure to produce timely completions and students are exhorted to produce advanced internationally competitive creative work in timelines that echo traditional models of research. This discussion considers the role of risk management in the selection and supervision of practice-led PhDs especially in relation to ideas about pre-admission processes and the way in which attention to the creative practice is thought to unfold throughout the research program. In this context the work of Lyn McAlpine (2012), Eva Bendix Petersen (2007), Ruth Neumann (2007), and Lesley Johnson, Alison Lee and Bill Green (2000) is pertinent. The discussion considers a wider set of principles at play that has to do with identity and subjectivity within the academic framework.

The Thesis Statement and Research Questions as Headlights for Research

Associate Professor Estelle Barrett, Independent Scholar

Articulating the thesis statement, main and subsidiary research questions and understanding the relationship between these elements is crucial both in early stages of candidature for designing the research project, and later, for structuring the research writing. Experience has shown that students most likely to struggle during HDR candidature are those who are unable to adopt a critical stance with regard to their research topic and from this, to pose cogent questions that would allow the development of an appropriate research method to test their hypothesis(es). Using a simulated case study, I will illuminate how these elements operate as useful tools within supervisory and broader research contexts.

Outside of the context of a specific research project, it is difficult to say which should come first, the thesis statement or the research question. This is because the two are derived from each other. The thesis statement is a provisional statement of argument or hypothesis. It is the declarative form of the main research question. Conversely, the main research question is the interrogative form of the thesis statement and relates to a problem that needs to be addressed in order to shore up or demonstrate the thesis argument. The example below demonstrates this relationship:

Contemporary Australian cinema challenges the myths and archetypes that have traditionally influenced the formation of Australian identity and in doing so, articulates a more fragmented and heterogeneous society and sense of identity.

How does Australian cinema perpetuate myths and archetypes that influence the formation of contemporary Australian identities?

The researcher will need to have done some background reading and research of extant practice before being able to articulate either of these.

This presentation will illuminate how the thesis statement:

- emerges as a hunch,
- allows the researcher to refine the main research question
- provides a headlight for evaluating literature and practice in the field
- allows the researcher to adopt a critical stance from the outset of the research

The second part of the presentation will explain how establishing a close relationship between the thesis statement and main research question provides a springboard for developing the sub-questions that will then act as a template for designing the research method and appropriate analytical and approaches. The framework to be elaborated is not only useful for assisting early researchers in staging their research, but provides the architecture for the writing up of the exegesis/thesis.

Ethical Clearance Made Easy? Issues and Solutions for Creative Arts RHD Supervisors

Dr Angela Romano, Queensland University of Technology

This paper explores common problems faced by Creative Arts RHD supervisors and students when negotiating the ethical clearance processes of their universities. Numerous scholars have observed that research ethics procedures in Australian universities are based on the traditions and needs of the medical and health sciences. The 2007 National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research helped to modify ethical review processes to better encompass the needs of disciplines outside the medical and health sciences. However, the processes still do not fully encompass the traditions, standards and research methodologies of Creative Arts disciplines, particularly for practice-based research.

Some scholars have suggested that arts and humanities style disciplines should be exempt from ethical clearance requirements, or that the ethics of practice-based research should be evaluated by professional bodies rather than University Human Research Ethics Committees. This paper takes a different approach, instead looking for ways in which ethical clearance processes can assist Creative Arts RHD supervisors. The paper provides a summary of strategies and approaches that Creative Arts researchers can draw upon when designing ethically sound research projects. It focuses on outcome-focussed strategies that draw from the traditions of various disciplines in the arts and humanities, while also meeting the institutional requirements for ethical review of Australian universities. The paper also provides insights into the roles and responsibilities of RHD supervisors in steering students through ethical clearance processes.

Systematic and Orchestrated Scaffolding to Facilitate Smooth Student Progress in Design Higher Research Degrees

Associate Professor Deirdre Barron, Swinburn University of Technology

We present a program which employs systematic and orchestrated scaffolding by a community of scholars as part of mentoring to optimise all candidates' access to knowledge and skills required for successful and timely completions of their doctoral Design studies. We take the position that the supervisory role is not the only relationship in doctoral supervision where such scaffolding may occur. We present an instance of scaffolding by a community of practice, as suggested by Lave and Wenger, that provides a depth and breadth of expertise that one person is unlikely to be able to provide. Doctoral Design undertakings with a high proportion of international students, particularly from Taiwan and Malaysia. It also included domestic undergraduates who had not had research methods as part of their background upon entering doctoral studies. The program had also attracted candidates who were already practising designers but who did not have any background in research methods.

An identified gap in education concerns for three groups of candidates who did not have the research grounding provided by a traditional research honours degree. This raised a set of issues relating to students undertaking Design research, not only in relation to English as a Second Language (ESL), but more importantly, also in relation to questions of what Design research is and ways in which that research may be conducted as being acceptable to industry and the academic community. Our Aim: to address the problem of low rate of completions; provide a basis for ongoing planning of a program that would address the lack in candidate research knowledge; and do so on the basis of pedagogical considerations and scaffolding of new learning and understanding as far as Design research is concerned.

Taking Legitimate Professional Practice (LPP) as a form of mentoring by drawing on a breadth of knowledge that a community of scholars can provide, a dynamic process of inducting the candidates through a series of staged processes, starting from outsider positioning and moving through to being positioned as independent researchers at the centre of a community of practising researchers. The LPP model provides for a group of experienced Design academics and practitioners to investigate Design research issue or issues by establishing what is and is not known about an area of inquiry, areas of controversy or limitation in the field, and appropriate research methods. Adding a teaching component to this facilitates their induction to the community of Design academics. Outcomes provide evidence of positive influences on timely completions through a program of cohort mentoring that goes beyond reliance on individual supervisors.

'This is NOT a Seminar': Creative Research Dialogues

Dr Lyndall Adams and Dr Renee Newman-Storen, Edith Cowan University

This Is Not a Seminar (TINAS) is a multidisciplinary forum established in September 2012 at Edith Cowan University (ECU) to support practice-led/based Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students. The Faculty of Education and Arts (FEA) at ECU includes cohorts of HDR students in, for example, performance, design, writing and visual arts. The TINAS program was established to assist HDR students in connecting their creative practices to methodological, theoretical and conceptual approaches while establishing a context of rapport across creative disciplines. The program comprised dialogues with experienced creative researchers; critical reading sessions on practice-led theory; and workshops in journaling, ethics and copyright.

The Faculty of Education and Arts (FEA) at Edith Cowan University (ECU) consists of three schools, two of which contain predominantly practice-led/based Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Post Graduate students. The School of Communication and Arts and the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts include numerous HDR students engaged in creative research. Within FEA, several reading and writing groups exist to support post-graduate research in its many forms.

The weekly creative research forum, TINAS, emerged to provide an alternate forum to discuss the relationship between theory and practice across disciplines. The intention of TINAS has been to dissolve the silos of disciplinary thought and practice, and to equip HDR students with specific research skills. The forum facilitators' questions include: How can we develop creative research skills across a range of disciplines? How can practice-led/based HDR students benefit from a transdisciplinary learning environment outside of the University's discipline-specific offerings? What are the problems that practice-led/based creative researchers often experience and do these issues related to feelings of isolation and inadequacy in relation to the academy?

The 2012 TINAS program comprised a Conversation Series with experienced creative researchers designed to cover specific practices and processes; critical reading sessions on practice-led research theory; and workshops in journaling, ethics and copyright specific to creative research. The Conversation Series involved three practitioners across disciplines who discussed their methods, methodologies and processes in order to begin a conversation with the group.

Initial findings indicate heightened rapport and a greater sense of community amongst HDR students across creative disciplines; a broader acknowledgement of the range of work that constitutes practice-led/based research; confidence in the development of documentation, communication and methodological skills; an appreciation for the modes through which creative practices can be theorised and contextualised in academic terms; and a stronger representation of practice-led/ based researchers in the University environment.

Other People's Creative Methodologies

A five-minute presentation

Dr Ruth Watson, The University of Auckland

The provisional year review for a PhD requires a section on methodology, a requirement that some students from creative disciplines find problematic. At The University of Auckland, if the PhD has creative components, this section must address the relationship between the theoretical and the creative aspects of the thesis. The Creative Methodologies workshop aims to help students in a variety of disciplines identify their own approach through working with hypothetical cases, followed by each others' topics, before developing their own section outline.

The Creative Methodologies workshop was one in a series of sessions designed by Faculty to aid all Doctoral candidates across varied disciplines. At that time, the PhD with CP was relatively new after nearly two decades of a professional practice doctorate, which did not require the emphasis on methodology at the end of first year review stage. Helping students with this new requirement was therefore made a focus. Students were self-selecting for all these series of workshops and around 15 came to this particular session.

The session had three parts, all of which were interactive. After a brief overview a hypothetical case was introduced, using a clip from a television programme – American film director Martin Scorsese discussing how he represented a character based on pre-existing models. This was used as an icebreaker, as the group together made a series of verbal proposals for how Scorsese could develop his (fictional) PhD methodology. Next, students worked in pairs to develop a methodology for a film director of their choice (film was chosen as it is a creative discipline but outside our Faculty). Each pair gave the wider group a brief account of the methodology they outlined for their chosen director. This section was kept very fast.

The second, more important part of the workshop involved the pairs working on each other's thesis. Students were given a few minutes to describe their thesis and then both worked on each others methodologies independently – i.e., when delivery time came, there were many surprises and new approaches to think about. The final quarter hour was left for each student to write notes and volunteers made comment on what they had found new to use or consider for their own methodology sections. A handout with a short bibliography of useful readings was also supplied.

Shut Up and Write!

Ms Glenda Caldwell and Ms Lindy Osborne, Queensland University of Technology

This case-study exemplifies a 'writing movement', which is currently occurring in various parts of Australia through the support of social media. A concept emerging from the café scene in San Francisco, 'Shut Up and Write!' is a meetup group that brings writers together at a specific time and place to write side by side, thus making writing practice, social. This concept has been applied to the academic environment and our case-study explores the positive outcomes in two locations: RMIT University and QUT. We believe that this informal learning practice can be implemented to assist students in developing academic skills.

Research students spend the majority of their time outside of formal learning environments. Doctoral candidates enter their degree with a range of experience, knowledge and needs, making it difficult to provide writing assistance in a structured manner. Using a less structured approach to provide writing assistance has been trialled with promising results (Boud, Cohen, & Sampson, 2001; Stracke, 2010; Devenish et al, 2009). Although, semi structured approaches have been developed and examined, informal learning opportunities have received minimal attention.

The primary difference of Shut Up and Write! from other writing practices, is that individuals do not engage in any structured activity and they do not share the outcomes of the writing. The purpose of Shut Up and Write! is to transform writing practice from a solitary experience, to a social one. Shut Up and Write! typically takes place outside of formal learning environments, in public spaces such as a café. The structure of Shut Up and Write! sessions is simple: participants meet at a specific time and place, chat for a few minutes, then they Shut Up and Write for a predetermined amount of time. Critical to the success of the sessions, is that there is no critiquing of the writing, and there is no competition or formal exercises.

Our case-study examines the experience of two meetup groups at RMIT University and QUT through narrative accounts from participants. These accounts reveal that participants have learned:

- Writing/productivity techniques;
- Social/cloud software;
- Aspects of the PhD; and
- 'Mundane' dimensions of academic practice.

In addition to this, activities such as Shut Up and Write! promote peer to peer bonding, knowledge exchange, and informal learning within the higher degree research experience.

This case-study extends the initial work presented by the authors in collaboration with Dr. Inger Mewburn at QPR2012 – Quality in Postgraduate Research Conference, 2012.

Guerrilla Research Tactics

Ms Glenda Caldwell and Ms Lindy Osborne, Queensland University of Technology

This case-study explores alternative and experimental methods of research data acquisition, through an emerging research methodology, 'Guerrilla Research Tactics' [GRT]. The premise is that the researcher develops covert tactics for attracting and engaging with research participants. These methods range between simple analogue interventions to physical bespoke artefacts, which contain an embedded digital link to a live, interactive data collecting resource, such as an online poll, survey or similar. These artefacts are purposefully placed in environments where the researcher anticipates an encounter and response from the potential research participant. The choice of design and placement of artefacts is specific and intentional.

This case-study assesses the application of 'Guerrilla Research Tactics' [GRT] Methodology as an alternative, engaging and interactive method of data acquisition for higher degree research. Extending Gauntlett's definition of 'new creative methods... an alternative to language driven qualitative research methods' (2007), this case-study contributes to the existing body of literature addressing creative and interactive approaches to HDR data collection.

The case-study was undertaken with Masters of Architecture and Urban Design research students at QUT, in 2012. Typically students within these creative disciplines view research as a taxing and boring process, distracting them from their studio design focus. An obstacle that many students face, is acquiring data from their intended participant groups. In response to these challenges the authors worked with students to develop creative, fun, and engaging research methods for both the students and their research participants.

GRT are influenced by and developed from a combination of participatory action research (Kindon, 2008) and unobtrusive research methods (Kellehear, 1993), to enhance social research. GRT takes un-obtrusive research in a new direction, beyond the typical social research methods. The Masters research students developed alternative methods for acquiring data, which relied on a combination of analogue design interventions and online platforms commonly distributed through social networks. They identified critical issues that required action by the community, and the processes they developed focused on engaging with communities, to propose solutions.

Key characteristics shared between both GRT and Guerrilla Activism, are notions of political issues, the unexpected, the unconventional, and being interactive, unique and thought provoking. The trend of Guerrilla Activism has been adapted to: marketing, communication, gardening, craftivism, theatre, poetry, and art. Focusing on the action element and examining elements of current trends within Guerrilla marketing, we believe that GRT can be applied to a range of research areas within various academic disciplines.

Architectures of Knowing: New Approaches to Exegesis Design in Creative Practice PhDs

Professor Welby Ings, Auckland University of Technology

This paper considers new approaches to the structure and presentation of advanced research degree exegeses in graphic design. It places specific emphasis on PhD submissions in 2011 and 2012 but contextualises these with reference to innovative approaches taken by current PhD., M. Phil., and MA theses in the same discipline. In considering these exegeses the paper discusses specific examples including the use of information graphics in describing research design, negotiated relationships between image and text, approaches to the positioning of the researcher, and digital and print examination formats.

Examining the Creative Arts Doctorate in Australia: Supervisors and their Students

Professor Donna Lee Brien, Central Queensland University and Professor Jen Webb, University of Canberra

A significant role of the research higher degree supervisor is to assist students prepare their dissertations for examination. At a time when there is increasing interest in how the academy manages the transition of creative arts HDR candidates from apprentice to peer, there is also concern about the processes, practices and policies associated with this area of research training. In a recent OLT-funded project we investigated policy expectations, expert and peer beliefs and expectations, and examiners' practice, and canvassed the creative arts academic community for their recommendations on best practice in the examination of creative arts doctorates. This paper presents our findings with special reference to the role, understandings and aspirations of RHD supervisors.

Beyond Supervision: Academic Development of Postgraduates during the PhD

Associate Professor Jillian Hamilton, Queensland University of Technology

Candidates undertake PhDs for many reasons: to deepen their practice, extend their professional expertise, explore new territory, and contribute new knowledge to the field. At a pragmatic level they undertake a PhD to help achieve their aspirations: to become creative professionals, long-term researchers, or academics (or a combination of these). For those who aspire to become academics, the opportunities for employment at Australian universities are better than they have been for a generation due to the 'aging demographic' in academia and the generational renewal this necessitates. At the same time, however, the increase in graduates from postgraduate courses means that the competition from applicants with a PhD has never been as strong.

This presentation proposes that, on its own, having a PhD is therefore no longer a ticket to academia and goes on to consider ways in which we can think beyond supervision to help our PhD students to develop academic 'readiness' during their candidature. At QUT, a highly sessionalised academic workforce means that most postgraduates have the opportunity to gain some level of teaching experience. And centrally offered academic development opportunities support them to build effective approaches to teaching and research, as well as to develop a competitive academic portfolio. To complement such institutional level training, supervisors can also help their candidates to position themselves as early career academics by the time they graduate. This presentation involves a case study, which illustrates a model of academic mentoring that I have developed as a supervisor to help my PhD students build teaching and research experience. As a stepped approach, it supports students to incrementally develop academic attributes and to build a teaching and research profile over the course of their candidature. So far the model has helped several PhD students to achieve academic positions soon after or during their candidature.

Sharing Effective Practices in Doctoral Supervision in the Creative Industries

Associate Professor Cheryl Stock, Queensland University of Technology

This case study extrapolates two areas of discussion of particular relevance to creative arts doctorates; the supervisory team and mentorship. This case study of a day-long Supervisory Retreat for the Creative Industries Faculty was based around a series of 'dialogue vignettes' in which experienced supervisors and novice supervisors shared their experiences around 6 major themes as a catalyst for group discussions. These themes encompassed strategies for attracting quality students; communication styles between students and supervisors; developing a well balanced supervisory team; timing, pacing and organisation of candidature; managing relationships with diverse cohorts; and supervisor mentoring.

Supervisors discussed the value of a unified supervisory team with differentiated but overlapping skills and guided collaborative student cohort meetings re methods and processes of practice to guard against the self-referentiality which may occur in creative arts doctorates. It recommended coursework with aligned supervisory support in 'translating' the language of practice into an academic setting, especially in articulating an original contribution to knowledge. This 'translation' is particularly challenging in embodied and time-based work such as physical performance. The value of supervisor mentoring was reinforced as a dialogue between peers, with fresh voices and different perspectives providing a dynamic and effective partnership. The participants discussed ways to maintain the collegial feel to the retreat especially inclusion of both traditional and practice-led supervisors in joint discussions where crossovers and interrogation of approaches proved beneficial to engender mutual understanding.

Support for the production of this symposium has been provided by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching. The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching.

Appendix 3: Call for Papers



ACCESS

Critical Perspectives
on Communication,
Cultural & Policy Studies



Executive Editor Professor Elizabeth Grierson, ACCESS, RMIT
University, GPO Box 2476, Melbourne, 3001, Australia
<http://www.rmit.edu.au/art/research/publications>

ACCESS: Critical Perspectives on Communication, Cultural & Policy Studies

ERA Ranked A Quality Journal

CALL FOR PAPERS: SPECIAL ISSUE

Supervising Practice: Perspectives on the Supervision of Creative Practice Research Higher Degrees

Guest Editors: Associate Professor Jillian Hamilton and Dr Sue Carson

Executive Editor of ACCESS, Professor Elizabeth Grierson, is pleased to announce a call for papers for a Special Issue of ACCESS journal to build on the successful Effective Supervision of Creative Arts Research Degrees (ESCARD) conference at Queensland University of Technology in 2013. Papers should engage with themes:

- Assisting students in developing the relationship between theory and practice in the structure and/or form of the thesis/exegesis/dissertation;
- Solving challenges encountered in the supervision of creative arts research degrees;
- Designing strategies, tools, resources to facilitate smooth student progress in creative arts higher research degrees;
- Supporting the academic/professional development of PhD students;
- Academic development for supervisors of creative arts research degrees.

About ACCESS Journal:

ACCESS Journal is ranked A in the ERA journal rankings due to its international standing. For 30 years this scholarly publication has advanced critical perspectives on communications, cultural practice and policy, issues in aesthetics, philosophy of education and knowledge politics. With Professor Elizabeth Grierson as Executive Editor, the journal will be published by Routledge and managed by PESA Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia (www.pesa.org.au/) from 2014. Papers are subject to an international blind review process.

Submission of papers:

Papers must follow the attached style guide and include:

- Title and 200 words Abstract
- Number of images (B+W, up to 4 per paper)
- Keywords
- Text: Access Journal Papers are normally between 3000 and 6000 words.

Abstracts and papers should be deidentified for the purpose of peer review. In a separate document include:

- Author Name/s
- Bionote and full contact details
- University affiliation.

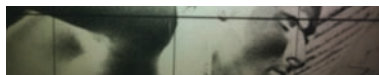
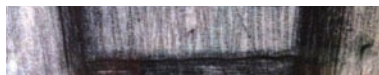
Abstracts should be sent by 5th August with full journal article submission by 30th October, 2013 to:

Associate Professor Jillian Hamilton jg.hamilton@qut.edu.au & Dr Sue Carson sj.carson@qut.edu.au

Project leaders: Building distributed leadership for effective supervision of creative practice HDRs: OLTLE12- 2264.

Support for this call for papers is provided by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching. The views expressed in this call for papers do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching.

Appendix 4: A booklet for supervisors:



12 Principles for the Effective Supervision of Creative Practice Higher Research Degrees

Developed through the Office of Learning and Teaching grant:
*Building distributed leadership for effective supervision of creative
practice higher research degrees.* LE12-2264

<http://supervisioncreativeartsphd.net>

This booklet was developed as an outcome of the Office of Learning and Teaching grant **Building distributed leadership for effective supervision of creative practice higher research degrees (LE12-2264)**

Project leaders: Associate Professor Jillian Hamilton and Dr Susan Carson

A joint project led by:
Queensland University of Technology

with project partners:
Auckland University of Technology,
Victorian College of the Arts and Melbourne Conservatorium of Music,
College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, and
University of Western Sydney.



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2013

In late 2012 and early 2013 we interviewed 25 experienced and early career supervisors of creative practice higher research degrees. This journey spanned five universities and a broad range of disciplines including visual art, music, performing art, new media, creative writing, fashion, graphic design, interaction design and interior design. Some of the supervisors we interviewed were amongst the first to complete and supervise practice-led and practice-based PhDs; some have advocated for and defined this emergent field; and some belong to the next generation of supervisors who have confidently embarked on this exciting and challenging path.

Their reflections have brought to light many insights gained over the past decade. Here we have drawn together common themes into a collection of principles and best practice examples. We present them as advice rather than rules, as one thing that the supervisors were unanimous about is the need to avoid proscriptive models and frameworks, and to foster creativity and innovation in what is still an emergent field of postgraduate supervision.

It is with thanks to all of the supervisors who contributed to these conversations, and their generosity in sharing their practices, that we present their advice, exemplars and case studies.

The interviews were designed by Jillian Hamilton and Sue Carson and conducted by them, along with Liz Ellison, in November 2012 to June 2013. Transcription and content mapping was conducted by Liz Ellison. The booklet was compiled in collaboration. All direct quotes have been attributed anonymously. A full list of interviewees appears at the end of the document.

1. Adopt a student-centred approach

“student focused, student led”

Experienced supervisors agree that there are many aspects that creative practice higher research degrees have in common—fostering creativity, supporting the integration of theory and practice, and promoting the generation of new knowledge in the creative arts, for example. However, they also recognise the need to embrace diversity and a ‘tailor made’ approach for each student and their individual project. Experienced supervisors also appreciate that students have varied experience and skills, which are an integral aspect of their candidature. They therefore recognise that each student may need different forms of support around the written and practical components of the research.

A student-centered approach involves recognising each student’s unique attributes, needs and capacity. The lynchpin of this principle is support with respect—for the research student and their ideas and creative passion; for the integrity of their research question(s); for their chosen mediums of expression and how they approach their work; and for their capacity as practitioners and researchers. Supervisors emphasise the importance of providing space for questioning, and it is worth noting that many supervisors are reluctant to determine what a student’s thesis should look like in form.

“Some candidates ask you to lead them; others don’t like you interfering ... I have yet to find a single student I have ever taught who doesn’t have something to offer; the question is how do you bring that out?”

“I think I can help find a way for students to get excited about what they’re doing – with respect for the student, the question, and trying to empower the student to be really confident with what they’re doing within the academy.”



2. Embrace diverse projects, practices and working methods

“all projects are different”

Because creative practice research is a relatively new area of postgraduate supervision, and it has been necessary to build momentum and the capacity of universities, many early supervisors have supervised beyond their own field. As one notes, “I was only one of a few people in the university who had actually supervised to completion [when I arrived]. And so ... if anyone wanted to do a PhD, I was supervising.” This involves advising PhD students who are working outside of a supervisor’s own principal research domain, practicing in different mediums, or following conventions that are fundamentally different to the PhDs they undertook themselves. Far from finding this daunting, many convey that it has invigorated their practice, teaching and outlook; and it has required them to focus on core principles of research design, while being attuned to the unique attributes of every individual project and candidate.

Agility in supervision expertise continues to be important in the creative arts because of the many forms of PhD outcomes that constitute viable and valuable contributions to the field, because interdisciplinary projects are commonplace, and because supervisors continue to face shifts in the field in terms of form and practices. As an emerging supervisor explains, “I have a sense of how to do a PhD, and I see the work of the creative and match it in standard. The candidate is happy to be guided by that”. While the core principles of research design are central to PhD supervision, it is also important to acknowledge the differences in methodologies and processes of different fields and not seek to impose familiar approaches across disciplines and projects.

“Working across discipline fields is fine. I usually try to have someone in the pocket of the discipline area as an Associate Supervisor, or as close as possible... [It is often] managed by having two [supervisors] in this way with me taking charge of the ‘PhD-ness’ of it. It’s about how to go through and what’s required [in terms of scholarship] – not always about being an expert in the precise field.”

“With creative practice, they’re always working across borders. I like to think that at PhD level the practitioner is innovating or renovating the question of what the field is. They’re bringing something that’s fundamentally questioning to the field, truly asking this question: ‘can we easily now define what performance is?’ – so they’re kind of pulverizing a discipline rather than saying, ‘I’m going to hold in check the notion that there are two nodal points and I’m going to be shuttling between them’.”



3. Ensure your students believe in the validity of creative practice research and its experimental nature

“we need rigorous research degrees that explore art”

While some supervisors are very confident in the validity of creative practice as research (indeed some of those we interviewed were fundamental in establishing and defining it), others raise concerns that differences between traditional frameworks and creative practice as research may still be misunderstood and its value questioned by both universities and candidates. As one supervisor notes, “There’s a potential anxiety about not seeming as big as cancer – that’s legitimate but that’s not a reason to not do it. We need rigorous research degrees that explore art.” In addition, some supervisors noted that when a candidate is an established and well-known practitioner with a ‘public face’ they may experience anxieties about translation of their practice into a scholarly form.

The fact that creative practice is different to other forms of research, as well as to other forms of practice, is viewed in positive, exciting ways by supervisors. As one supervisor notes, “It allows you [as a candidate] to immerse yourself in your practice. It’s an incredible privilege”. Supervisors describe creative practice research as a ‘different modality’ or way of thinking, as a type of ‘performativity’, and as ‘experiential communication’. Many supervisors argue that it has advantages for the discipline (and more broadly) because it allows for a different mode of answering the same question that a traditional research project might pursue, and because it necessarily produces different outcomes—not just in form but also in new knowledge.

While establishing rigor around methodologies, outcomes and new knowledge creation, supervisors need to be confident in the validity of creative practice research as well as comfortable with its undefined boundaries and continued experimentation. After all, rigorous experimentation is integral to creative practice research.

“There is an exciting but troublesome idea that there is a sense that anything goes, [which is] worrying for students, and I can say this from my personal experience. Students are still experiencing it – we found last year that there were students constantly asking ‘is this research, can I write like this?’. There are a lot of unresolved issues there. But the difficulty in pinning it down is that this goes against the grain of what we were doing.”



4. The theory and practice need to speak to each other

“together the theory and practice make the thesis”

Although naming conventions may differ across institutions and local contexts, there is broad agreement amongst supervisors that the written component/exegesis/thesis/explication is an integral (if sometimes difficult) component of the higher degree by research. There is consensus that its role is to articulate the research problem and creative practice methodology and to contextualise the outcomes in relation to them. To this end, experienced supervisors advise that the exegetical/written work must engage with relevant theory as well as with the existing field (through a contextual and/or literature review). Some supervisors, though not all, argue for the inclusion of reflection on the practice. Supervisors agree that some form of interweaving or integration of the practice and the writing is necessary to best articulate the contribution of the research.

It may be helpful to see the written component as some supervisors do, as “another performance or modality of the research, which helps to clarify [the practice] in a more familiar and intelligible way for the examiner” or, as another supervisor puts it, “[both] expressive forms are a way of pursuing important questions – the evidence is in the work itself and in the written component”. Either way, supervisors tend to see them as absolutely integral to each other.

*“They can’t sit separately; **together** the theory and practice make the thesis. [They can be seen] separately – practice can be exhibited, research can be published without the exegesis; but the exegesis can’t sit alone without the practice. And the practice is enriched by the research. We can consider the practical outcomes by themselves ... It might be very high value work without that written component but it’s not a thesis. It’s a symbiotic relationship.”*

“The purpose of the written component is to help the student come to an understanding that’s deeper and richer: not just about [the work’s] reception but also about its production. Its purpose is two fold.”



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”

Supervisors overwhelmingly agree that the theoretical and practical work must be of a similarly high standard and they recognize the importance of their integration. However, they also recognise the tension between theoretical and practice processes, and acknowledge that it is often difficult to work on them simultaneously. Some supervisors suggest that the practice should lead while others propose that theoretical and contextual research drives the practice (this depends largely on their discipline perspective). However, none suggest that continuously working on both simultaneously is crucial, and supervisors are often acutely aware of the difficulties of balancing creative and theoretical progress.

It is important that supervisors encourage students to progress both theoretical and practice aspects overall, while acknowledging this difficulty. To assist them, it may be useful to consider the student’s primary mode of expression and to help them use it to form a bridge between theory and practice.

“Both [modalities] can be creative and both can be analytical; often the student is involved in the ‘making’ of the work and this can often be a physical and processural expression of the research question and of the answer/outcome of the research. There are some things that can’t be expressed in words, hence the creative practice is a form of expression and a way of remunerating a particular idea, argument, position.”

“You can get further ahead if you consciously look for ways to remove the anxiety of presentation of the ideas so you can get back to the thinking of the ideas. We’ll come in here and have food, and the whiteboard and there’s no writing. There’s only talking and drawing and food. This relies purely on thought, and not the formatting of thought ... as diagrams or narrative or conversation. Generally what happens is that they will take a photo of the whiteboard: a landscape of the thinking they’ve gone through in a strategically guided journey to find the essence of what it’s after. There’s always a residue there of someone’s journey.”



6. Balance the big picture and attention to the detail

“zoom in and zoom out”

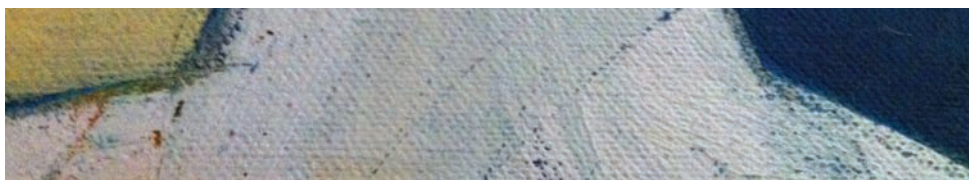
With an eye on timely completion and the rhythms of candidature, supervisors emphasise the importance of a student-tailored approach that combines a sense of routine and regularity but also allows students who prefer to work independently to be able to do so (within the constraints of the degree). To generate a routine for the student, most supervisors believe that regular meetings and shifting between the big picture and attention to detail are crucial. Meetings may take place in either the studio or the office, but two particular purposes are clear: to discuss the direction of the project (at a macro level) and to provide constructive feedback on the detail of the practice and the writing (at a micro level). An emerging supervisor speaks of having two ways of looking at things: “one is a microscope and one is a telescope to rise above [the project] and what it says about this, and will it interest people who aren’t in your little case study”.

Besides helping to ensure relevance, ‘zooming in and zooming out’, as one supervisor describes it, helps to contain scope and maintain momentum. Some supervisors provide a roadmap for completion, with clear points of focus along the way, some keep an eye squarely on the central research goal and question, and others encourage a gradual ‘resolution’.

“They keep going outwards, but I keep pulling them in at different points to explore the centre of where the research is.”

“I will work with [the candidate] quite explicitly around budgets, timing, importance of getting things to conferences and exhibitions, making stuff, writing stuff, meeting deadlines. So all the planning things are quite explicit. So every six months they draw out timelines for the next six months. The most explicit part is around planning of time resources.”

“It’s almost like making an art work – unformulatable [sic], but there’s a point of resolution.”



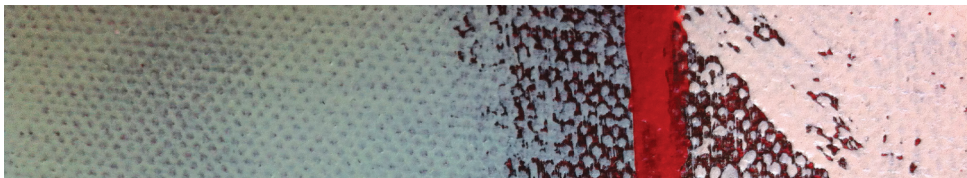
7. Provide frequent, constructive feedback

“climb inside their drafts”

Concern about quality and integrity often prompts discussions on the role of academic writing in creative practice higher degrees by research. Supervisors –both new and experienced – acknowledge the importance of the written component in “helping the student do justice to the work they have done.” However, academic writing is an area in which support may be needed. An experienced supervisor discusses “working with candidates who have a very damaged belief in their ability to write”. He comments that, “with them I’ll work immersively. I’ll climb inside their drafts and we might sit at the computer here and work extensively on three paragraphs”. Supervisors also acknowledge the importance of feedback on drafts and the iterative development of the written component in shaping the PhD outcomes. However, editing drafts is a time-consuming activity and this raises concerns for many supervisors.

It is sometimes necessary to provide a great deal of academic writing support and it is always necessary to interrogate the writing at a close level. Some supervisors offer strategies for managing it. An emerging supervisor says clear deadlines are crucial for some of his students and so is an efficient process: “he hands in one section, I review it while he works on the next section”. An experienced supervisor describes a similar approach through a ‘three draft process’:

“For confirmation of candidature, for example, I’ll see three drafts. Two weeks between each draft for me to look at it and then time for them to make changes. The first draft is concept and content – what do they have? Are they missing anything or, on the other hand, have they gone off on tangents? I only look at these aspects. The second review is structure – is it structured in a way that makes sense of what they’re doing and in a way that is most persuasive as an argument? There are major and minor structural changes – lots of arrows. The third draft is the final editing, looking at the sense of sentences. Its like making a sculpture. You’d get all of the materials on site and then create an armature—a structure. That might just be a contents page. Then you put all the bits on the structure and move it to produce the right shapes. And then you begin to refine it.”



8. A supervisor should also attend to the practice in the studio

“sit with the work”

Some supervisors reflect that the focus of their attention can tend to be pulled towards the written work, particularly when candidates are established practitioners and are less familiar with academic writing requirements. As an emerging supervisor notes, “there is a broad assumption sometimes that the practice will take care of itself. The thing that needs most attention is the document. Students have a compulsion to make art and be creative—it’s harder to do the writing. It makes them more anxious. It is easy to respond to that anxiety and deal with the thesis, and then spend less time on consultation in the studio”.

It is important to remember however that, regardless of a student’s ease or enjoyment of it, the practice requires full attention. As an experienced supervisor advises, “Be very involved with the creative product as well as the exegesis”.

“[You] involve yourself, go to exhibitions, talk to the work. [I am] very much involved with the creative product as well as the exegesis. You have to be quite generous with your time – and the more one’s able to do that, the better.”

“My general style would be to be very intimate with the work and then make sure the student is one with the work and conveys that synthesis.”

“Respond to where the work is, always. Sit with the work and out of that engagement – not without an awareness of milestones – you must respond to the work. Have faith. Experience tells you.”



9. Provide support while managing interpersonal relationships

“a strategically guided journey”

As yet, there are few formal processes for managing creative practice higher degrees by research and the supervisory ‘relationship’ (unless there is an escalating problem). Some institutions have candidate-supervisor agreements, but some supervisors reject this ‘management’ because it is important to consider the candidate as a newcomer to the field with individual working styles, strengths and support needs.

Supervision necessarily involves a tailor-made approach to support each candidate. Candidates are often balancing other stresses in their lives alongside (or exacerbated by) their degree. However, supporting a student through milestones and supporting them through their life are distinct concepts. Support involves balancing pragmatic support like frequent meetings, being attentive to the work, modeling rigour and honesty in feedback.

“You have to turn up. There are a whole lot of good pedagogical things to do: your phone switched off; not be harried; don’t make the student feel as if they are imposing on you. You need to read and think about what they have written; you need to read the emotional intelligence; you need to be supportive when they are facing their greatest fear; and you need to be tough.”

“It’s creating a supported environment, but also one that’s enlivening and inspiring. You can’t be just nice... The most important tool a supervisor has is the ability to ask and formulate the question.”

“It is managing the psychosocial aspects; in practice-led research this is heightened due to candidates dealing with ambiguity. It is also proactively advocating for the study. This is not injecting a level of advocacy with criticality; it is saying the student might need extra money and you support the student to go through the process.”

It may be important to maintain a balance between personal and professional relationships.

“I have to make a demarcation. I have a part of my life that is not accessible to students, otherwise it would take over your life.”

“During the course of a PhD students can have major crises – as a supervisor where is the line beyond which you’re not helping ... sympathizing but not helping? It’s almost better to say, okay, let’s just talk about the PhD.”



10. Milestones are time consuming, but ultimately rewarding components of the journey

“it helps get into the academic space”

While the terminology, processes and timing of PhD milestones are not consistent across the sector, their role is fundamentally similar – to ensure progress, rigour and timely completion. Of particular importance to supervisors is the confirmation of candidature (which may be otherwise named). It usually comes in the first 9–12 months. Some supervisors believe that milestones need to be carefully managed in order to be useful. As an emerging supervisor notes, “Now there’s tons of milestones and coursework to support people to get from A to B: coursework; progress reports – these are all distractions to the actual work.” Many others see them as fundamentally important to progress and an opportunity to pull together components of the research and practice. As an experienced supervisor suggests, “Being indeterminate [in creative practice] doesn’t mean sitting around for a few years. For me the milestones are very important”.

It is important to ensure that students understand the necessity of milestones in the institution, and for supervisors to assist them to utilise them in the most practical and meaningful way. One experienced supervisor for example uses them to help their students to “get into the academic space”. And others believe that, through critical engagement, milestones can become a fundamental part of strengthening the final product before examination.

“I try to help them shore the project up from different directions so that when they get [to the milestone] they don’t experience criticisms at that point. I try to anticipate issues and gaps and any potential barrages from all angles. We do rehearsals of their confirmation presentation and discuss potential questions [from the panel] and think about responses. We try to anticipate trouble and it’s really to make sure that [the student] strengthens their work and gets through fine.”



11. Don't feel limited by boundaries as a supervisor, but be aware of regulations

“be tolerant of ambiguity”

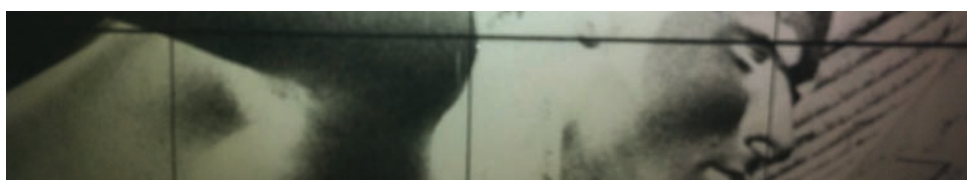
Supervisors are conscious of formal institutional requirements and that the candidate's work must conform with PhD regulatory frameworks in order to ensure smooth entry, milestones and examination. As one experienced supervisor counsels, “With the shrinking timeframes, as supervisors we are more aware of our responsibilities to the candidate and the way we report it as research to our school.” On the other hand, supervisors emphasise that they enjoy their students having freedom to experiment and want them to be able to shape their projects according to their individual goals and contexts. Supervisors – particularly experienced ones – are reluctant to feel bound by certain forms of ‘management’ or ‘proscriptive models’.

Perhaps what is most important then – as a supervisor – is to assist candidates to navigate their way through process, while being open to experimentation; and to support them to reach a balance between allowing the work to find its own performativity and identity and conforming to the requirements of the degree. Instead of prescriptions or models, supervisors advocate using case studies and exemplars. Many supervisors use the works of previous students to model a range of possible routes to success.

“[It’s about] not trying to impose any sort of artificial overlay that takes the colleague away from what their core passion is. What I hope at the end is that the student becomes more and more energized by the work they’re doing, rather than being drained because there’s a sense of having to please me or conform to an academic requirement or be burdened by the weight of what they think the academic thing is.”

“[The] key for supervisors of practice-led research is they need to be highly tolerant of ambiguity.”

“As a newer supervisor you tend to hang on to the guidelines. As you are more experienced you are less anxious.”



12. Reflect, discuss and share your practices with colleagues

“the best academic development is talking things through”

One of the most pronounced, yet unanticipated, outcomes of the interviews was the effect on supervisors who participated in the process. They embraced the opportunity for reflecting upon and discussing their practices in detail, with enthusiastic and often frank and detailed discussion. Supervisors saw the interviews as a form of academic development. As one supervisor remarked, a questionnaire would not have resulted in the same depth of response: “I would not think on my feet; I would have generic and polite answers. But in interviews you’re responding to questions, words, phrases on the fly and it is very useful [and] allows us to learn”. It brought to light a wealth of tacit knowledge that has been hard won, but rarely articulated. For some supervisors it had a profound impact in terms of confidence in their position, willingness to progress conversations with other supervisors in their school, and to present at conferences.

The value of providing supervisors of all experience levels with an opportunity to articulate their process and practices, their concerns, and their experience and strategies for success is clear. It suggests that reflective practice is of considerable value to supervisors and, given the broad resistance to ‘generic’ central training, participating in dialogue with other supervisors is an important component of supervisors’ professional development.

“This is professional development ... we don’t get the chance to talk. The best academic development is talking things through.”

“I found it quite interesting to answer questions. A supervisor’s role is such a cloaked affair compared to other contexts. It makes you realise that whole degrees are without a lot of training or consensus.”

“I enjoyed the conversation. I have found answers that I may not know how to repeat. It is fantastic that you are interviewing supervisors across the board because the debates and ideas are pushed through by a handful of the vocal, argumentative. It is fantastic to capture the view of the lurker.”

“There’s a sense of peer sharing that works for me - a multiplicity of voices, keeping things open rather than closed.”



**With thanks to the supervisors
who participated in the interviews**

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University of New South Wales

Ross Harley
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Caleb Kelly
Simon Hunt
Susan Danta

The University of Melbourne

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Bernhard Sachs

University of Western Sydney

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Christina Rocha
Mridula Chakraborty
Rachel Morley

Queensland University of Technology

Rod Wissler
Brad Haseman
Susan Carson
Jillian Hamilton
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**Building distributed leadership for effective supervision
of creative practice higher research degrees**

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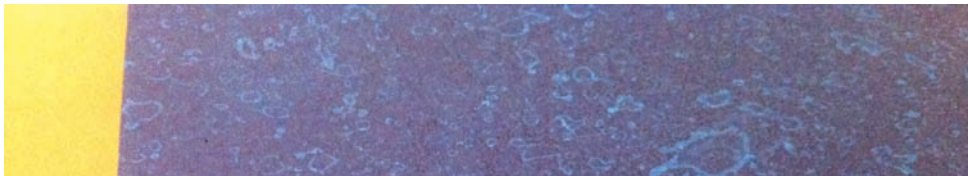
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Professor Ross Harley,
College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales

Dr Claire Aitchison,
University of Western Sydney

Dr Elizabeth Ellison,
Creative Industries, Queensland University of Technology
(Research Assistant)



**More resources for
supervisors and examiners**

<http://supervisioncreativeartsphd.net>
Hamilton, J., & Carson, S. (2013),
Effective Supervision of Creative Arts PhDs.

http://aawp.org.au/files/Examiners_booklet_final_0.pdf
Webb, J., Brien, D., & Burr, S. (2013),
Examining Doctorates in Creative Arts: A Guide.



