

Practical advice for supervisors for developing knowledge and understanding of wellbeing and mental health of doctoral candidates

Do you feel confident in signposting doctoral candidates to the appropriate university support services if you had concerns about their mental health?

Take a look at (*insert name of institution*) web resources/counselling pages (*link to relevant institutional pages*) to gain advice about student wellbeing and support

Do you have a good understanding of the wellbeing and mental health concerns facing doctoral candidates and researchers?

Take a look at the **Vitae Researcher Wellbeing and Mental Health leaflet**

Do you feel equipped to deal with wellbeing matters of doctoral candidates that you supervise?

Investigate what in-house training provision might be available at your institution

Would you like to learn more about supporting doctoral candidates' wellbeing and mental health?

Take a look at the **University Mental Health Advisers Network** web pages

Do you feel that you and those you supervise have similar expectations of the supervisory relationship?

Use these Vitae tips to help agree both your expectations of the supervisory relationship

Have you discussed post-PhD career planning with the doctoral candidates you supervise?

Signpost them to the (*insert name of institution*) careers service at your institution

Share the downloadable **Vitae career-wise researcher booklet** and the **Vitae Researcher Intersectoral Mobility leaflet** with them

Do the doctoral candidates that you supervise have access to an adequate support network?

Discuss this with them at an early supervision

Are you confident in your ability to support doctoral candidates with disabilities?

Check what your institution can provide to help support you and those you supervise with disabilities (*insert relevant institutional links*)

Take a look at the Vitae information around **resources and support for researchers with disabilities**

Resources for maintaining wellbeing

Do you have low level concerns or worries about the wellbeing of the doctoral candidates that you supervise?

Find out: – How they are feeling
– How things are going outside their PhD
– Do they have other people they can talk to if they are struggling?
– Do they know where to go to get help?
– Consider if there are issues in their personal life

Do they have interactions with other doctoral candidates?

Signpost them to this handy **advice from Mind**
Put them in touch with the relevant representative for their department

Do you have regular meetings with the doctoral candidates you supervise?

Try to ensure that you meet regularly for supervisions in person or by video
Familiarise yourself with supervisory policies at your institution

Are you concerned about the work/life balance of the doctoral candidates you supervise?

Have a conversation about this at your next supervision and share the **Vitae Balanced Researcher booklet** with them, which contains some handy tips

Do you see signs of struggling with motivation amongst those you supervise?

This Vitae resource has some good advice on **overcoming challenges and staying positive during the PhD**

Do you feel that any of those you supervise are lacking in confidence?

Talk to them and consider ways you could boost their confidence through positive reinforcement
Signpost them to this informative webpage about raising **low self esteem**
Show them these Vitae resources from the Vitae Researcher Development Framework around the **importance of self-confidence** and developing it

Are the doctoral candidates who you supervise making the level of progress you would expect?

Check any reporting processes in the university supervision policy documents (*insert relevant link to your institution*)
Consult Vitae advice and resources on **supporting researchers as they progress and keeping them on track**

Supportive wellbeing interventions

Do you have mild to moderate concerns about the wellbeing and mental health of the doctoral candidates that you supervise?

Do you think that they are feeling isolated?

Share with them the webpages about the many clubs and societies there are at the university (*insert relevant institutional webpages*)

Are you concerned that they are over-working on their doctoral research?

There are some useful tips in the **Researcher Wellbeing and Mental Health leaflet**, on the **Vitae mental health and wellbeing pages** and in this **wellbeing for researchers #vitaehangout**

Have you noticed any change in the behaviour of those you supervise?

Take a look at this YouTube recording about supervising doctoral candidates and **wellbeing for researchers #vitaehangout**

Are you concerned that the doctoral candidates that you supervise may be experiencing unusually high levels of stress?

Signpost to this NHS page for guidance on **dealing with stress**

Do you think that the doctoral candidates that you supervise, need additional support with their academic writing?

The **Wellbeing when writing** resources include a booklet, facilitator's manual and Powerpoint slide sets pertaining to each year of a doctorate
These popular tips on **writing up your thesis** are a good place to signpost to

Do any of those you supervise ever fail to turn up to supervisions?

Check any reporting processes in the university supervision policy documents (*insert relevant link to your institution*)
Discuss with them any underlying concerns

Do those you supervise appear to be experiencing periods of low mood?

This **NHS information about low mood and depression** is helpful to read as well and these quick tips on **staying happy during your doctorate**