

Cecilia Almlöv

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences/ Royal Institute of Technology

The Doctoral Supervision in Transition: How Co-supervision is Presented in Institutional Guidance on Doctoral Supervision Across Three European Countries

Authors: Cecilia Almlöv, Solveig Cornér, Çiğdem Haser, Irina Lokhtina, & Kirsi Pyhältö

Over the past decade, collaborative forms of supervision, particularly the team supervision model, have become increasingly popular in doctoral education programs worldwide (Robertson, 2017). By collaborative team supervision we refer to a doctoral student who has one or more doctoral research co-supervisors collaborating with the main supervisor. Benefits of team supervision and having co-supervisors might include more timely degree completion, greater access to supervisory support, better research community integration, increased transparency, reduced supervision workload, and the enhancement of supervisory skills vis-à-vis peer learning.

Our research paper draws on research on co-supervision and how co-supervision is presented in institutional guidance on doctoral supervision across three European countries (Finland, Sweden and Türkiye). National rules (laws and ordinances), and local policies (guidelines and recommendations) provide a guidance frame for organising and developing team supervision including co-supervision. At its best, institutional policies, often realised in guidelines regarding doctoral supervision, provide structure and support for implementing and developing co-supervision within the university.

In our comparative study of institutional supervision rules and guidelines in five case institutions were analysed. The exemplary items were selected from: University of Helsinki (UH) in Finland; Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) and Swedish University of

Agricultural Sciences (SLU) in Sweden; and Middle East Technical University (METU) and Boğaziçi University (BU) in Türkiye. In order to understand how co-supervision was defined and regulated, a content analysis of national documents and local guidelines within the five different institutions was conducted.

Our results of the national comparison showed clear similarities and differences between institutional support, requirements, and guidance in co-supervision. In addition, variation in institutional resources and structures for doctoral supervision occurred. The paper contributes to the understanding on how the co-supervisory role is manifested by comparing existing institutional rules and guidelines of supervision across three countries. Our paper concludes with reflections on the results and suggestions for further research.

Keywords: doctoral co-supervision; doctoral team supervision; regulation of team supervision; rules and policies for doctoral supervision

Reference:

Robertson, M. J. (2017). Trust: the power that binds in team supervision of doctoral students. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 36(7), 1463–1475. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2017.1325853>