

# Introduction

The aim of this book is to take a close look at the supervision process from start to finish. There are other books on supervision but I hope that this one offers new perspectives on supervision, bringing in both the student's and the supervisor's points of view.

Some of the questions the book addresses are:

- Who is supervision important for ... and why?
- What ground rules need to be negotiated at the start?
- What are the delicate checks and balances needed in a successful supervision relationship?
- What phases are there in the supervision journey?
- Which ways of workings can facilitate progress on this journey and what are some of the barriers?
- What are the vitally important interactions in the supervision process, whether face to face, online or both?
- What could – and should – supervisors and students expect from each other when it comes to the business of writing?
- How should examiners be chosen ... and who by?
- What are the key criteria for a 'good thesis'? What do examiners actually look for?
- What is meant by 'originality'?
- How can students, with their supervisors, prepare and be prepared for the viva?
- After the viva, is there a role for your supervisor? Why publish your work ... and what puts people off?

The book has been written primarily for students from any part of the world, but it is also intended to be of value to supervisors, new or experienced.

The book includes a range of voices on the supervision process, from both students and supervisors. These are included at various points in the book, especially in the earlier chapters. I am not pretending that they are representative or generalisable in any way (is there such a thing as generalisability?);

## MAKING SUPERVISION WORK FOR YOU

but I can say that these were views actually expressed to me in face to-face-interviews, audio-recorded, transcribed my me and sent back to the interviewees for their approval.

This book is based on a range of foundations. Firstly, my writing is based on my own experiences as a student, a supervisor, an internal examiner and an external examiner. I have lost count of the number of vivas I have been part of, but I estimate that the number is approaching a hundred. Secondly, the book is based on my own research and studies of the literature over the last twenty years or more – some of these sources are listed in the References and suggested in the Further Reading sections at the end of each chapter. Finally, the book has been influenced by the excellent interviews I mentioned above. I am very grateful to all who gave up their time to have those dialogues with me.

I hope that the book is interesting, thought-provoking and useful to those who read it. If you have any criticisms, praise, suggestions or comments on its chapters please direct them to me at: [j.wellington@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:j.wellington@sheffield.ac.uk).