

# Supporting the Supervisors: Structures; Development and Individual Support

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 @RD531

QAA Scotland - Focus On: The Postgraduate Research (PGR) Student  
Experience

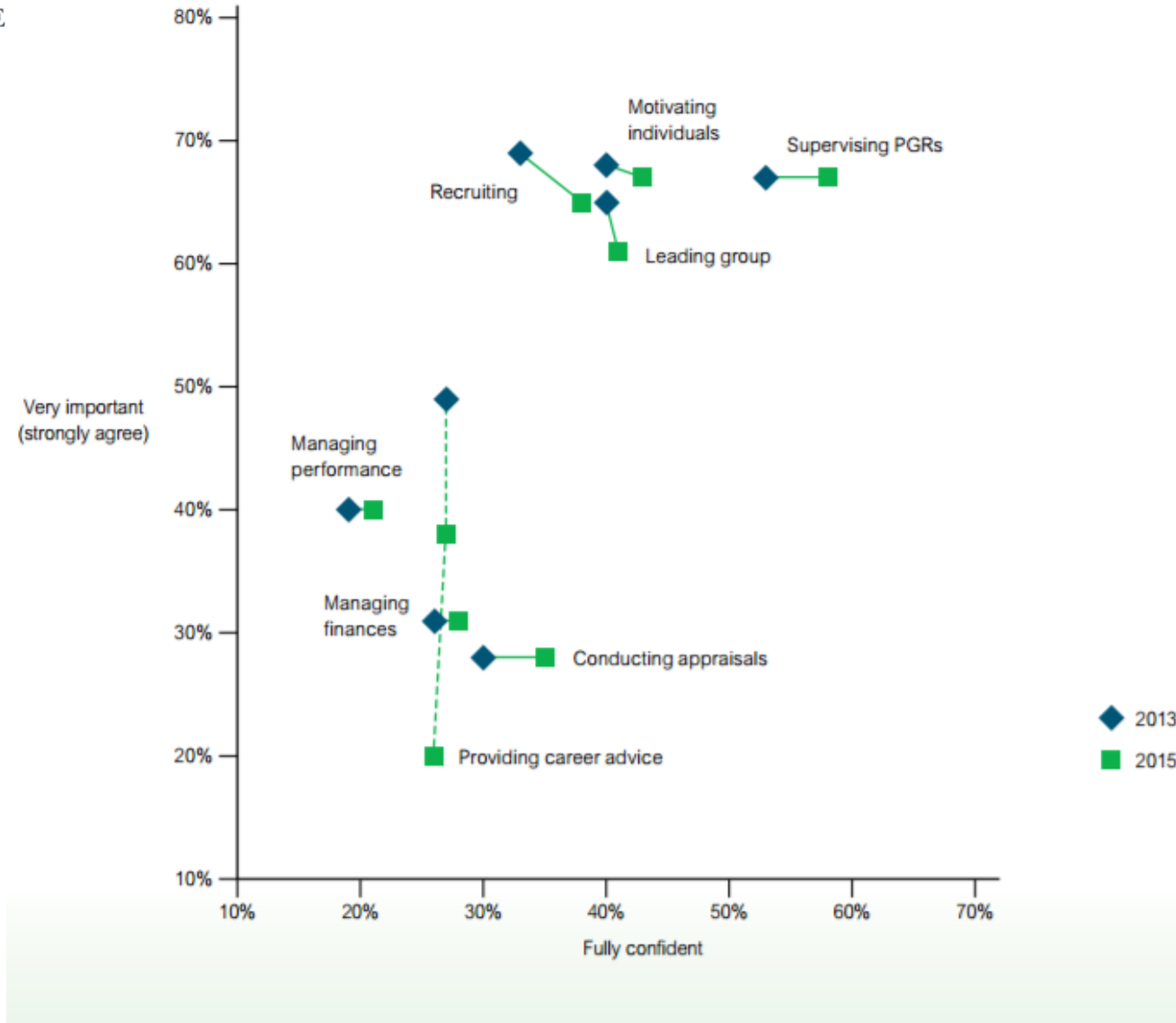
Thursday 18 May 2017, Grand Central Hotel, Glasgow

# PIRLS 2015 UK results

	<b>Fully Confident</b>	<b>Confident</b>	<b>Total</b>
Supervising Research Students	58.3%	34.6%	92.9%
Motivating individuals	43.1%	45.2%	88.3%

(N-Supervision = 4036; N-Motivating = 4017)

# PIRLS 2015 UK results



# PRES 2015 UK results

	All	Year 4+
My Supervisor/s have the skills and knowledge to adequately support my research	92%	89%
I have regular contact with my supervisor appropriate to my needs	88%	84%
My supervisor/s provide feedback that helps me direct my research activities	88%	84%
My supervisor/s help me to identify my training and development needs as a researcher	75%	69%

NB: % is the sum of Strongly Agree and Agree responses (N-all = 50556; N-Y4+ = 11742)

*So what is the problem?*

# What are we trying to achieve?

Doctoral graduates that:

- Complete within a reasonable timeframe
- Have written a good thesis and can defend it
- Are capable of carrying out independent research
- That have achieved publishable research outcomes
- That have a wide range of transferable and career skills (Employability etc.)
- Papers, conference presentations, patents etc.
- Impact (Academic, Economic, Social etc.)
- Do not take up to much supervisor time & energy!

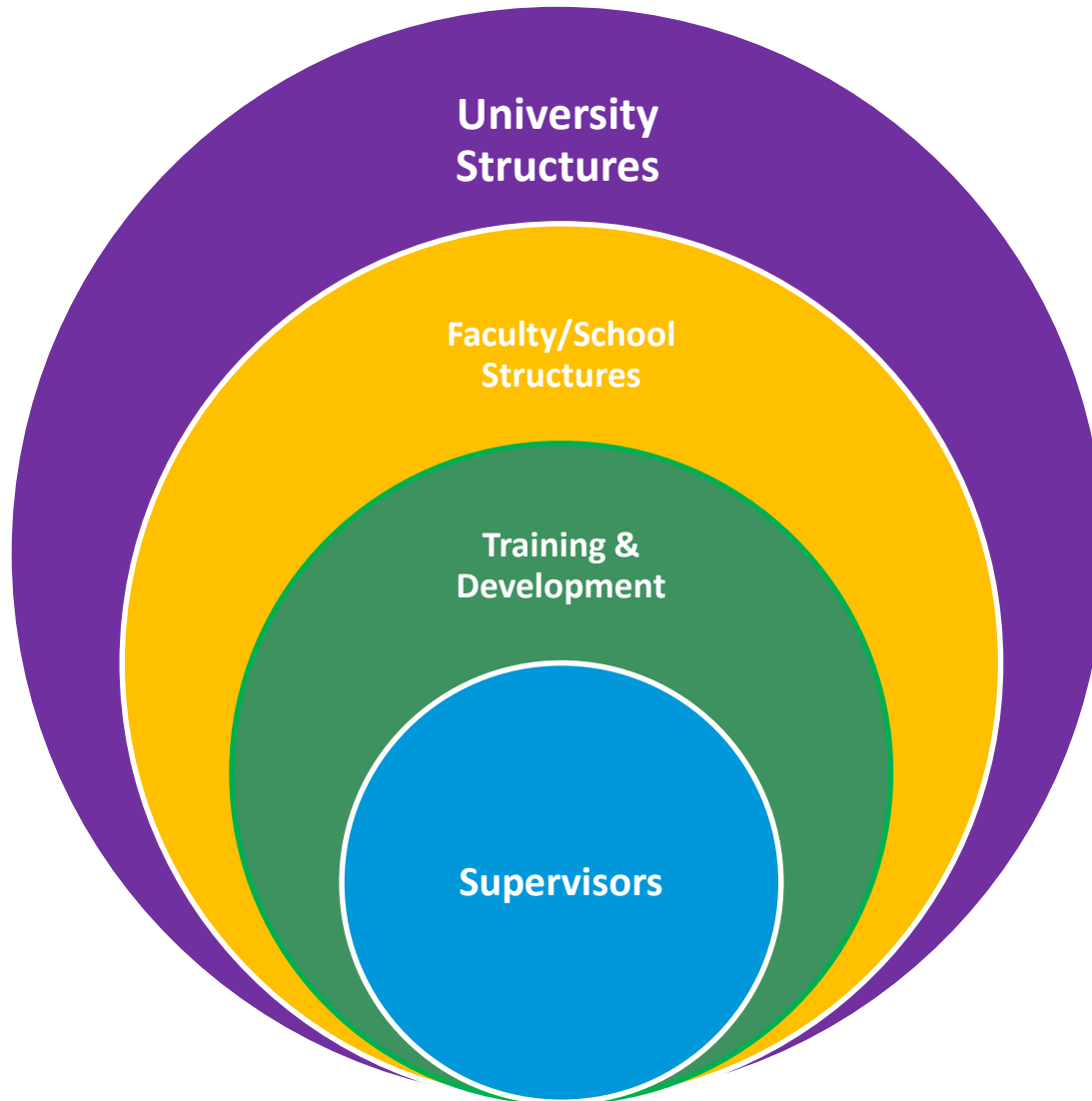
**Supporting research students is an institutional responsibility that all too often falls mainly (or entirely) on supervisors.**

## How can we best support supervisors?

- The fewer issues their research students encounter the more the supervisors can focus on supervising
- We need clarity on what is expected of supervisors and on who else has responsibility in supporting research students
- We need supervisors to be clear where their support is and where the student support is.



# Dimensions of Supervisor Support



## University Structures

Single senior post with overall responsibility

Clear policy and oversight

Good guidance for students and supervisors

Good student support and advice

Recognition that things will go wrong with appropriate structures to deal with this

Appreciation of diversity of PGR contexts

Supervisory teams

## Faculty or School Structures

**Single senior post with overall responsibility**

**Clear local policy and oversight**

**Good local guidance for students and supervisors**

**Good local student support and advice**

**Recognition that things will go wrong and be prepared for this**

**Appreciation of diversity of PGR contexts**

## Supervisor Development

**Initial development (Mandatory?)**

**Follow-up sessions with different topics**

**Generic vs Discipline specific**

**Online development and support**

**Mentoring and Coaching skills**

**Individual support**

## Supervisors

**Supervisory teams**

**Student focused**

**Understanding of how development will help**

**Willingness to ask for help**

**Synergy between supervision and staff management and leadership**

**Peer-Support**

- 1 year working group
  - Supervisors views on main reasons for delays in completion
    1. Writing Skills
    2. Student time management
    3. Student project management
    4. English language skills
- Lack of supervisor time highlighted as a perceived factor

**THANK YOU!**