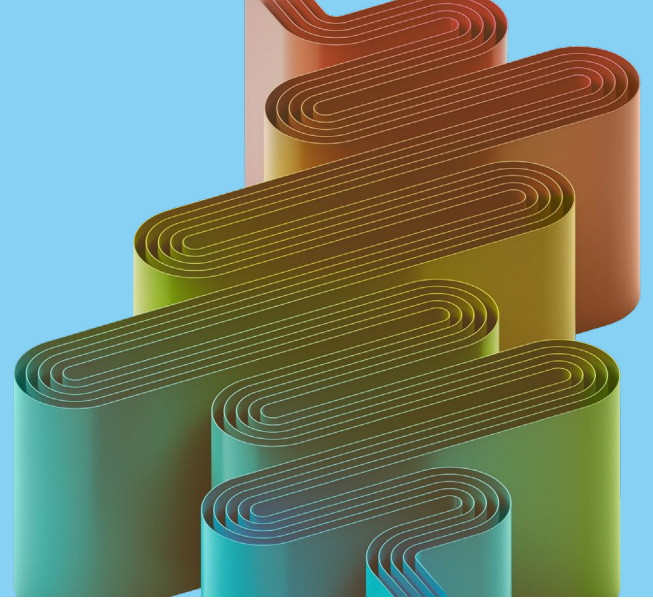


Transforming higher education training



Case Study – Research Skills Toolkit, Supervising Doctoral Studies, Research Integrity, Research Impact and Flinders University

As a modern, research-intensive university, Flinders supports around 1,100 HDR students and 800 HDR supervisors. The university currently subscribes to four of Epigeum's programmes – *Research Skills Toolkit*, *Supervising Doctoral Studies*, *Research Integrity* and *Research Impact: Creating Meaning and Value*. Dr Dani Milos is responsible for guiding the training and development of HDR students and supervisors. Her role involves shaping the structure of their training, ensuring its integration into their academic journey, and overseeing compliance and completion. We discussed how Flinders embeds, uses, and promotes its programmes to ensure a consistent approach to training across the institution.



Who did we speak to?

Dr Dani Milos, HDR Education Coordinator



What kind of subscriptions do Flinders have?

Research Skills Toolkit, Supervising Doctoral Studies, Research Integrity & Research Impact accessed via Canvas.



Highlight

"One of the main reasons we liked Epigeum was that it wasn't just created by one person, but a collaboration with leading experts in the field coming together to create a comprehensive and engaging training programme."

Implementation

Flinders has subscribed to Epigeum's programmes for several years, integrating each one in different ways.

Epigeum's *Research Skills Toolkit* is a core part of their doctoral development framework embedding *Research and Employability Skills Training (REST)* as a compulsory, structured training program for all HDR students. The content is mapped to eight attributes and 22 different skills (modules). Hosted on Canvas, graduate learners can access each skill, with Epigeum's *Research Skills Toolkit* modules embedded into relevant sections alongside university-specific content.

The decision to subscribe to *Research Impact* was driven by a discussion on industry engagement and how researchers can demonstrate their value during industry placements. As a result, the skills section has evolved to address this need, incorporating the *Research Impact* modules.

Students and researchers register on the site and choose modules based on their individual situations and backgrounds. HDR students have access to a skills dashboard to track their completed activities and a skills needs analysis system, which helps students to assess their knowledge and provides tailored learning suggestions.

Onboarding includes a mandatory induction and registration to the *REST* site. This induction introduces them to the *Research Skills Toolkit*, and *Research Impact* modules. Some modules from *Research Integrity* – also part of this induction – must be completed within two months of arrival. Students are then encouraged to explore the rest of the programme for further learning on research integrity.

Promoting user engagement

To maintain engagement, Dani's team sends out a weekly HDR development bulletin, promoting a different module each week. These emails are also converted into blogs for students to revisit.

Flinders University has formalised supervisor training by developing a points-based program where supervisors can complete and update their training and earn points as they progress.

To ensure consistency, Flinders subscribed to the *Supervising Doctoral Studies* programme and integrated it into Canvas, alongside other university-specific content. This integration allows supervisors to access Epigeum modules and refer to university-specific policies and procedures seamlessly, providing the flexibility to complete training anytime and anywhere.

To become a supervisor at Flinders, new academic staff members must first complete the HDR Supervisor Development Program, which includes the *Supervising Doctoral Studies* modules as well as some other bespoke modules. Supervisors are required to complete modules of their choice every two years to stay updated with the latest practices.

As part of the assessment, supervisors must write a 200-word reflection at the end of each module. Dani's team manually reviews these reflections to evaluate what the supervisors have learned and how they engage with the material and provide feedback.

"One of the main reasons we liked Epigeum was that it wasn't just created by one person, but a collaboration with leading experts in the field coming together to create a comprehensive and engaging training programme."

Another key factor in their decision to subscribe was the global perspective. As Dani explained, ensuring supervisors could access these resources whenever necessary was essential, as HDR students start throughout the year and supervisors need to complete the training before they take on new students. The flexibility of Epigeum's programmes aligned with this need, allowing for a seamless 'tap in and tap out' approach, where supervisors can engage with topics of interest to them at a time that is relevant to them.

Outcomes & Future

Flinders are exploring new ways to promote the Epigeum resources. They currently send out a monthly reminder of upcoming networking and in person sessions, highlighting the online resources in these to *"keep it fresh in their mind."* Dani is hoping to run more workshops and follow-up sessions, leaning more on the blended learning resources to develop the hybrid delivery mode.

Overall, the feedback and engagement have been very positive, including over 850 online module completions and 80% of registered supervisors engaging in training throughout 2024. For *Supervising Doctoral Studies* specifically, Dani highlighted that *"even the [learners] who we found difficult to engage, they are engaging with it really positively and learning from it."*

"Through completing this module, my understanding of the doctorate and my role as a supervisor has evolved. I now perceive the doctorate not just as an academic pursuit but as a comprehensive journey that intertwines intellectual growth, skill development, and personal transformation. This holistic view has reshaped how I see my role: from a guide focused solely on academic rigor to a mentor fostering overall development." – Supervisor feedback

"I can't say enough how fabulous the program is, I've done training at each institution where I have been employed but honestly nothing comes close to being as effective as this program. Thank you for making this a really positive experience" – Supervisor feedback.

Dani highlighted the benefits of having *"a variety of topics and design elements"* in each programme, which helps keep people engaged. She also described that *"what people are finding really useful is having the content there, but also the direct links to the policy all in the same package"* and the time-saving quality of subscribing to programmes means *"we don't have to focus on developing all the content [...] because a team of experts has already done that for us."*

A final highlight Dani noted was that by subscribing to Epigeum, she's been able to join the Community of Practice events run by the implementation team, which she has 'really enjoyed' and has given her the opportunity to connect with her peers: *"it's really good to be able to learn from others and share my learning with others."*

Get in touch

To find out more about any of our programmes and what Epigeum can do for your institution, please get in touch.

