

# Developing the Socio-Emotional Intelligence of Doctoral Students

Subjects: Education & Educational Research

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Socio-emotional intelligence is the capacity to consider emotions, intuition, and cognition to identify, manage and express emotions and to respond to social situations with authenticity, openness and fairness. By doing so, individuals will achieve a sense of wellbeing and build meaningful relations whilst having a positive impact on the environment, others and themselves. The term doctoral student refers to a postgraduate researcher completing a doctoral degree. Supervisor is the term used in academia for an academic guiding and supporting the doctoral student. Doctoral supervisions usually include at least two academics as supervisors. A doctoral degree in the UK normally focuses on the in-depth study of a topic; these can be chosen by the doctoral student or sometimes be content-specific if a scholarship is attached.

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A doctoral journey can be isolating and one where doctoral students will have to navigate complex issues, sometimes unknown to themselves. This can affect their confidence and self-esteem, as they doubt their abilities or sense of self. Although doctoral students are normally guided by their supervisor, a lot of their time will be spent by themselves, which can be lonely and negatively impact their wellbeing. Research has shown that the mental health and wellbeing of doctoral students are a growing concern <sup>[1]</sup>.

To support them effectively, early intervention strategies should be considered <sup>[1]</sup>. A focus on developing doctoral students' socio-emotional intelligence (SEI) through a series of interventions and through the relationships they develop with their supervisor/s can be helpful to enable doctoral students to flourish and thrive. This entry explores SEI within the context of doctoral supervision in the UK and the interventions that can have a positive impact on the doctoral student's SEI development.

It will first explore SEI from a theoretical standpoint and then focus on ways doctoral students can develop their SEI whilst completing their doctoral studies. It is important to highlight that SEI in doctoral students is an emerging field of study, and, therefore, there is a lack of research in the subject. Consequently, some of the literature presented in this entry has been collected from other areas of higher education provision, or different fields of study.

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## References

1. Jackman, C.P.; Jacobs, L.; Hawkins, R.M.; Sisson, K. Mental health and psychological wellbeing in the early stages of doctoral study: A systematic review. *Eur. J. High. Educ.* 2022, 12, 293–313.

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