

Name of collection

Video 1 - Supervisor

Tyrrell Golding:

Really, what we're looking for is three key areas, really.

One is around whether their proposal is worthwhile. So, what is the relevance of the research being outlined in the proposal, particularly in terms of the professional doctorate, which is where I supervise students? I'm looking to understand what the application is to the individual's practice or area of work and not be covered elsewhere. But I'm looking for something that's thoughtful, that's ethical in terms of and what the student wants to achieve from their doctoral studies.

Another key area that we're looking for is whether the candidate is capable of completing a doctorate with us. So, we're looking for really good engagement with theory, really underpinning kind of what the student is trying to achieve through their research questions. I'm looking for a clarity of writing style as well. So, will the applicant be able to write up a thesis that can be read and understood by a range of audiences?

I want to see the big ideas potentially coming through that they're aware of some of the key thinkers or key writers in the area that they're studying. But I also kind of-- I want to get a sense that the student understands what they're talking about. My personal approach is, if you don't understand it well enough, you can't explain it clearly enough. So it's really important that students don't necessarily use theoretical words that they don't understand and misuse them. So, it's that clarity of seeing the student articulating through their proposal so that we can really understand their work.

And finally, I think it's about the proposal being feasible. Quite often, when people think about a doctorate, they think about that they're going to sort of research a massive area with lots and lots of research questions. And actually, really, it's about a clear sense of your questions and an appropriate kind of size of your research, seeing that it's not too broad, really, that it's coherent.

We understand that when students start with us that their research questions can change as they study the literature further. But their initial proposal has a good coherence to it. And I think within that, it's about not necessarily trying to save the world through your research. You're trying to address a very particular set of questions that you can cover within the research sort of process.

So that's really, broadly, what we're looking for from a good proposal. I think it's also worth really being clear, really reading through what the proposal's asking of you, and making sure that you cover all those bases.