



- Richard Norman
- Dean of Graduate Studies
- PhD (2012) from University of Technology Sydney
- Health Economist (Health Sciences)
- At Curtin since 2014
- Richard.norman@curtin.edu.au



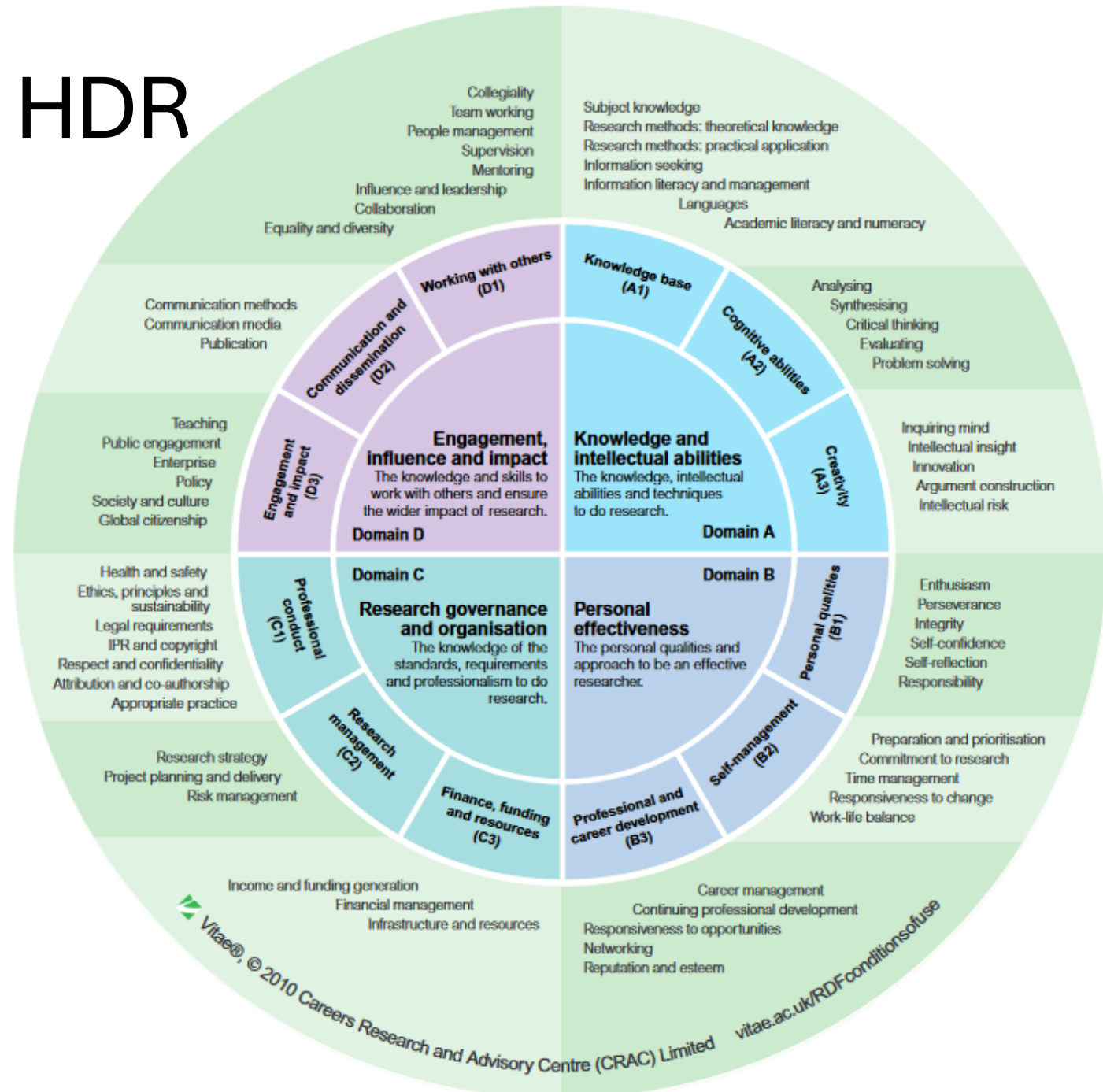
- Gretchen Benedix
- Associate Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
- PhD (1997) from University of Hawaii
- Cosmic mineralogist / astrogeologist (Science and Engineering)
- At Curtin since 2012
- g.benedix@curtin.edu.au

Overview

- How might you think about a PhD?
- How does Curtin want to build a PhD program?
- Supervisory relationships – establishing expectations, and mutual respect

The VITAE model of an HDR

- UK developed model
 - Core domains each with sets of example activities
- Awareness of all is sensible; deep engagement with all in a 3-4 year timeframe is extremely ambitious
- Useful way to think about an HDR, but may not exactly fit for you



The Curtin PhD

Curtin's core values are **integrity, respect, courage, excellence** and **impact**

In the HDR space, these translate to three essential areas to which we align our PhD programs

High-quality supervision has to promote and support achievement in each of these three areas

But, every PhD is different, and collaboration between the supervisor team and the candidate has to reflect the needs and skills of each

Mutual respect and consideration



- Traditional HDR/supervisor relationships has been founded on the idea that the HDR candidate is a student to be taught
- The Curtin approach is that, as far as is possible, the candidate be considered a junior colleague
- What might that mean?
 - The candidate should participate and move towards leading research (decision making role, but also e.g. ethics, milestone bookings, external liaisons)
 - Included as members of any larger team/group meetings
 - Offers to collaborate in other projects (but without obligation)
 - Support for dissemination and networking





Research Excellence

- By the end of the thesis, the HDR candidate should be **the** expert in their particular topic.
- However, the supervisory team is an essential guide to each student, particularly in the early stage of their thesis
 - What question is important and can push the field forward?
 - How can the work be planned to ensure timely completion?
 - Where should I disseminate my work?
 - Who can I work with outside of the supervisory team? Or who can I bring into my supervisory team as my work evolves?
 - What new skills can I acquire and demonstrate? Insert shameless plug for library resources 😊



Research End-User Focus

- What do we mean by a research end-user?
- Why is this relevant if I want to stay in the University system?
- What can this mean in practice?
 - Emphasis on questions which have a pathway to real change
 - Opportunities to network and make connections beyond academia
 - Identification and development of methodological and flexible skills to maximise post-HDR job market competitiveness
 - Potential engagement with Curtin's internship program

Wellbeing and a Safe Environment

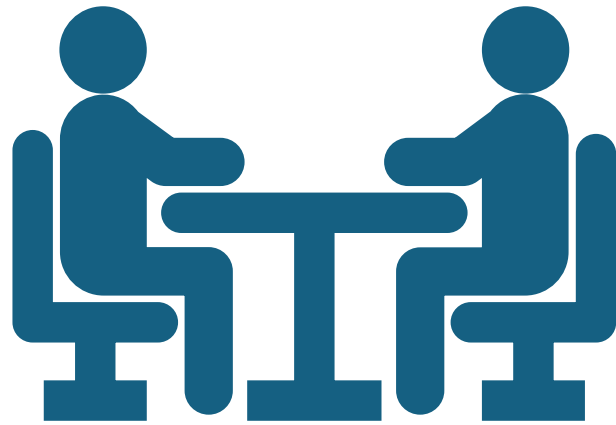
- A PhD is supposed to be hard. But that difficulty should be because the candidate is leading a project which pushes the limits of what is known, rather than because the environment is a barrier to progress
- Multiple layers of rights and responsibilities
 - Candidate
 - Supervisory team
 - Thesis chair
 - School Director of Graduate Research, and Faculty Dean of Research
 - Graduate Research School and Curtin





Some Practical Guidance for Establishing Supervisory Rules of Engagement

- Tailored to each combination of candidate and supervisory team
- Valuable to establish some of the following:
 - Frequency and format of meeting
 - Do all supervisors attend all meetings? Is a F2F meeting best, or not an efficient use of time?
 - Does the student produce an agenda in advance, and circulate minutes and actions?
 - Timeliness of feedback on candidate drafts and queries
 - Preferences for methods of communication
- Meeting your thesis chair and opening lines of communication



General Problem Solving Approaches

- Project-related problems
 - Discuss with supervisors to establish alternative strategies
 - If no resolution is possible, escalate to others (within the School, or at a Faculty/University level) to try to find a solution
- Relationship issues with supervisory team
 - Unusual, but can happen over the life of an HDR
 - Escalation to thesis chair, DGR, Faculty Dean of Research, GRS etc
 - All correspondence with these people can be confidential and informal if you prefer
 - Resolution can involve changes in supervisory team, reconsideration of rules of engagement etc