



**Dr Christopher Benwell,
University of Dundee**



Despite the early stages of my PhD journey, the time I have spent collaborating with my supervisor, Dr. Chris Benwell, has been more than enough for me to be able to say that he is an absolutely outstanding supervisor. Chris shines as a supervisor with his contagious enthusiasm about research and science, his always useful and timely feedback, his guidance, and his pro-activeness in getting his students involved with the different research-related opportunities available at the university. With me, he has also been extremely supportive in the difficult process of moving to a new country and rebuilding a life away from friends and family.

My first few months in Scotland were emotionally challenging, as I was feeling homesick and missing my loved ones. However, being able to talk to Chris openly about these feelings was deeply helpful. He heard my struggles, offered me empathy and gave me valuable advice. I want to thank him for making me feel welcomed at the university and for his infectious enthusiasm, one that has kept me motivated throughout these months at the University of Dundee.



**Professor Lesley
McMillan,
Glasgow Caledonian
University**



Lesley epitomises the ethos of “empowered women empower women”. Her unwavering support has been the cornerstone throughout my PhD journey.

She has consistently and diligently gone above and beyond in providing specific and clear guidance for my research every step of the way, enabling me to grow professionally and academically. Thanks to her encouragement, I have been able to undertake a wealth of additional research project and step into several module leadership responsibilities.

Her support has further enabled me to assume a leading role within GCU’s Social, Criminal and Legal Justice Research Group. These opportunities have contributed to my recognition within GCU’s Early Career Teaching Impact Award 2024, the Scottish Institute for Policing Research Best Presentation Award 2023, and being invited by the Justice Analytical Services in the Scottish Government to present my PhD research findings.

Lesley’s reassurance, compassion, patience, and wisdom have been a constant and steadfast source of confidence, allowing me to not just succeed but thrive in every endeavour. She is an exceptional mentor who fosters an empowering environment, making a tangible impact on my academic career and inspiring me to carry forward the same attitude and methods in my own work.



**Dr Martin Kettle,
Glasgow Caledonian
University**



My supervisor has been a continuous support over the last 5 years of my PhD journey and has supported me through a pandemic, project changes, bereavements and new baby. He has always been caring, kind and compassionate whilst providing timely and constructive academic insight that has focussed on improving my academic ability whilst also instilling and building on my confidence, which has remarkably improved under his supervision.

As a parent and first generation university attendee, Martin has always recognised and made allowances for my (sometimes very challenging) personal circumstances and has encouraged me to use my life experiences to my advantage and shown me that they have value to bring to academia. Martin has always gone above and beyond for me - offering extra supervision, attending all my dissemination events and encouraging me to "show off" my work in various outputs. I don't think I would have managed to produce the project that I did without his support.



**Dr Sander van der Jagt
and Dr Sarah R. Payne,
Heriot-Watt University**



I am truly grateful to have them as my PhD supervisors. Their exceptional mentorship blends expertise with understanding, making my academic journey both inspiring and fulfilling. Dr. Sander and Dr. Sarah demonstrate a rare ability to balance professionalism with approachability, fostering a dynamic where I feel respected and supported. They are proactive and encouraging, consistently identifying opportunities for me to grow—whether through workshops, collaborations, or conference presentations.

Their guidance is both comprehensive and thoughtful, yet they also respect my independence, giving me the freedom to develop and pursue my own ideas. What stands out most is their empathy and emotional support. They listen with patience and care, creating an environment where I feel comfortable sharing challenges and exploring solutions together. Their ability to navigate formal and informal interactions so seamlessly adds to their professionalism and makes our collaboration genuinely enjoyable.

Their belief in my potential, combined with their encouragement and thorough advice, has been a constant source of motivation. I deeply admire their intelligence, thoughtfulness, and dedication to helping me thrive as a researcher and individual. Dr. Sander and Dr. Sarah exemplify the very best in mentorship.



Professor Kate Sang, Heriot-Watt University



Kate is the best thing that has happened to me in my journey as an academic. As an international student who had never studied outside her home country before, I was worried about never measuring up with my peers, but having a supervisor who believed in me made all the difference.

In my first year, I really struggled with my PhD and the Imposter syndrome that came with it. My mental health was in shambles, after which I was recently diagnosed with ADHD; Kate was very supportive of me and made allowances for me to flourish and thrive.

I am currently in my data stage, and she has the perfect blend of encouraging me to be better without putting pressure on me.

As a black woman in the UK, having a supervisor who sees me and understands my struggle, even if she can't relate to my unique experience, is such a big deal. Every meeting is like a safe space for me to express myself. I would not trade my supervisory experience with her for anything. I am a better person and a better academic because of her.

Kate has been a great and inspiring supervisor in my journey. She has a caring personality and she is so knowledgeable, it does feel sometimes I have won a lottery by having Kate as my primary supervisor !!



**Prof Annelies Kusters,
Heriot-Watt University**



Anyone who has been lucky enough to have Prof Annelies Kusters as a supervisor will agree: "outstanding" is the perfect word to describe her supervision. Her feedback is always constructive, to-the-point and on time. She encourages to explore your research beyond the borders of your discipline - and gently let's you know when you are getting off-track. I cannot imagine a more reliable supervisor.



**Dr Stefanie Van De Peer,
Queen Margaret University**



My PhD supervisor has been a cornerstone of my academic journey, providing unwavering support and encouragement at every stage. From the outset, she believed in my potential and championed my work. She encouraged me to apply for prestigious opportunities such as the BAFTSS Postgraduate Award (2024), which I won, and the SGSSS internship, where I gained invaluable experience. Her insightful guidance helped me redefine my methodology, ensuring my research—exploring the integration experiences of Nigerian migrants in Scotland through film—remains innovative and impactful.

As a Black student, I've found her advocacy within our institution deeply empowering. She has consistently spoken up for me in spaces where my voice needed amplification, creating a supportive and inclusive environment. Her encouragement led me to apply for the Papple Steading Media Prize, which I was honored to win.

Beyond her professional guidance, she has been a mentor who deeply values my vision, holding my hand through challenges and celebrating my successes. Her belief in the power of storytelling has inspired me to embrace film as a transformative medium for social change, shaping my confidence and resilience as a researcher.



**Dr. Uche Iloka,
Robert Gordon University**



Dr. Iloka's mentorship extends far beyond conventional supervision. When I was struggling to connect my research on Agri-Trade Law and Policy with real-world applications, he arranged meetings with three leading international trade law experts. These connections led to valuable ongoing collaborations that have enriched my research perspective. He consistently shares pertinent research papers and policy briefs, often sending them late at night with detailed notes on their relevance to my work on agri- trade policies and their impact on climate adaptation.

His supervision meetings are meticulously prepared, with clear agendas and actionable feedback that have helped sharpen my research focus on international trade law's intersection with small-scale farming.

Through his guidance, I secured a speaking opportunity at the International Law Conference in Belfast, where I presented my findings around legal frameworks on pesticide use by small scale farmers.

Dr. Iloka's dedication to student success is evident in his proactive approach. He recently recommended me for a legal writing consultancy project, which aligns perfectly with my doctoral research on developing equitable international trade frameworks that enhance food security for small-scale farmers in the Global South while promoting sustainable agricultural practices.



**Professor Gearoid Millar,
University of Aberdeen**



Since the beginning of my PhD, I have enjoyed exceptional support from Professor Millar. He has been very responsive, helpful and his guidance has been invaluable. He has very high standards and he has pushed me to work hard and maintain very rigorous academic standard. In my first year, I was challenged to study about 15-20 journals weekly and produce weekly summaries of them. With his motivation and encouragement, I achieved the set goal and produced high quality literature review and other year 1 deliverables.

In my second year, I have continued to be guided by Professor Millar. Despite taking 6 months off for parental leave, he ensured that my return was seamless. We have set workplans for my data collection process and now several months into my second year, I have made tremendous progress. He reads every document I produce and gives very detailed and constructive feedback.

Finally, my supervisor goes above and beyond to make sure that my professional goals are achieved. For example, he reached out to his network to seek out an institution that is most suitable for me to undertake an overseas institutional visit. I feel very lucky to have Professor Millar as my supervisor!



**Dr Flurina Wartmann,
University of Aberdeen**



I am nominating Dr Wartmann on the basis of her consistently thorough, thoughtful and innovative approach to doctoral supervision. She places the current and future needs of her PHD students at the centre of her approach, meaning I feel not only supported now during the course of my research, but I am well equipped for a future career. I would like her strategic thinking to be recognised, which emphasises building competencies beyond an academic skillset and emphasising the real world relevance of our PhD research to build prospects for future employability. Whereas many of my PhD peers are advised to stick to a more formulaic PhD journey (first year literature review, second year fieldwork, third year write up), she recognises there is no one route to achieving a PhD and encourages us to think broadly in terms of possibilities. In particular she encourages her PhD students to put themselves out there and seek early collaboration opportunities.

In my first year I was working with academics at institutions nationally and internationally, and have built a network for the future. I have been encouraged and supported to apply for grants, host workshops, undertake a fellowship and explore opportunities as a visiting researcher. With her expertise and knowledge I have successfully navigated the peer review process and published. Despite the huge workloads and pressure experienced by academic staff, she is consistently available, enthusiastic and providing valuable and timely input. Under her supervision a PhD journey is not undertaken on a treadmill. Her approach is truly refreshing and should be commended.



**Dr Susan Levy,
University of Dundee**



My supervisor has been an incredible source of support and inspiration since the start of my PhD journey. She has consistently gone above and beyond to ensure my success. One of the most impactful ways she has helped me is by offering books that are directly related to my research topic. These resources have exposed me to new concepts and ideas that have significantly enriched my work.

Additionally, she regularly checks in on me to see how I am coping, especially since I am funding my research independently. Her genuine concern for my well-being and progress has been a tremendous source of motivation. Her mentorship has not only guided my academic pursuits but also provided emotional support, making this challenging journey much more manageable.



**Dr Alicia Davis,
University of Glasgow**



My PhD supervisor, Alicia, has guided me throughout my academic journey. From the very beginning, she helped me shape my PhD proposal, offering inspiring insights that refined my research questions and connected them to broader academic debates. Her extraordinary support extended beyond academics—when I secured a fee waiver but struggled to find a sponsor for my stipend, Alicia went above and beyond to connect me with potential funders. Her relentless efforts gave me the financial support I needed to pursue my studies.

Adjusting to life in Glasgow and the demands of a PhD as an international student could have been overwhelming, but Alicia made the transition seamless. She supported me in navigating academic challenges, offered invaluable advice, and created a nurturing environment where I felt encouraged to grow. Alicia has a rare ability to ignite the best in others, with a heart that shines brightly and lights the path for those around her. Her mentorship has shaped my research and enriched my life in countless ways.



Prof Anna Morgan-Thomas
University of Glasgow



I am honored to nominate my supervisor for this recognition. Her exceptional support and compassionate guidance continue to profoundly shape my academic and personal life. During a challenging period in my PhD, she not only encouraged me to prioritize my well-being but also reinforced the importance of self-care as the foundation for future success. Insightful guidance does not always appear in thesis drafts but also in heartfelt words emphasizing her full support, prioritizing my well-being over deadlines and giving me the strength to focus on recovery while feeling valued and understood. She never hesitates to spend hours solving problems and discussing related with my research. Her beliefs in my potential and her commitment to my academic growth inspire me every day.

A PhD pathway is more than doing research and publishing papers. Effective supervision only works if you are really interested in the person behind the candidate. My supervisor's empathy and understanding have gone beyond academic mentorship, creating a safe and nurturing space where I feel valued as a person. She provides me an environment that is supportive with particular attention to mental health and work life balance. She exemplifies what it means to be an inspiring and supportive supervisor.



**Dr Sarah Hopkyns,
University of St Andrews**



My PhD supervisor has supported and inspired me throughout my academic journey. Her exceptional knowledge and expertise as a top scholar in her field have provided invaluable guidance, helping me navigate complex research challenges and refine my ideas. Despite her impressive accomplishments, she remains approachable and deeply invested in my growth as a researcher. She has fostered a collaborative and nurturing environment, always encouraging me to push boundaries while being available to offer advice or reassurance when needed.

Her caring nature is evident in how she celebrates my achievements, big and small, and consistently motivates me to confidently pursue my goals. She has also been a role model, demonstrating how passion and dedication can lead to impactful work. Thanks to her unwavering support and mentorship, I have grown as a researcher and person.



**Professor Greg Mannion
and Dr Sharon Kessler,
University of Stirling**



My PhD supervisors are an incredible source of support and inspiration for me. Their mentorship goes above and beyond expectations from an academic advisor. I feel so lucky to have come into academia amongst my supervisory team's blend of collegiality, friendship, and academic guidance that is both invaluable, deeply thoughtful, and so appreciated. We have fun in our supervisions too.

They work to create a supervision environment where I feel encouraged, listened to, and supported to share all manner of questions, challenges, and (sometimes ambitious and growing arms and legs!) ideas. I can always trust that their responses will be honest, trustworthy, and constructive.

Greg and Sharon have invested countless hours into my supervision, and I am always so grateful for their willingness to engage deeply with my ideas. I think this reflects their genuine interest in my research and academic development. In a world of high external pressure, low time resources, and increasing demands on academics, I am so grateful to have them as mentors. Their steadfast belief in my potential provides motivation during challenging moments, while their rigorous but compassionate feedback helps me continually refine my work.

I want to celebrate their dedication and thoughtfulness. Thank you both- you have inspired another ECR to continue on an academic journey!



**Professor Paul Lambert,
University of Stirling**



I'm certain I wouldn't be where I am today - loving my PhD, inspired, productive, and growing in confidence - if it wasn't for my supervisor, Paul. From the beginning, even before I applied for my studentship, he has encouraged me to ask hard questions and to trust in own my ability to find the answers. When I am stuck, he is available, and I know I can check-in between supervisions. He is proactive in pointing me towards the right sorts of personal and professional development, but also gives my head when I find opportunities of my own. He allows me to aim high, but also helps me learn to understand the world of academia and know when and where it's wise to invest time and effort. All of this is done kindness, and with sensitivity towards my feelings and my level of understanding, so that I always feel supported and never intimidated.

Thank you Paul!



**Dr Dominic Aitken,
University of Strathclyde**



My supervisor though relatively new to the academia has been very supportive to my research journey. He readily provides constructive and detailed feedback that have been beneficial for my academic development. His hands-on approach to supervision has significantly contributed to my academic growth. It has helped me to identify specific areas for improvement to enhance the quality of my work. This practical approach has given me confidence and helped me to make steady progress in my research.

I also find his proactive attitude in sharing relevant resources and materials that are beneficial to my research very valuable. This demonstrates both his engagement with my research topic and his commitment to supporting my academic growth. His willingness to pass along useful references and information on relevant conferences has helped me in advancing my work by discovering new opportunities, perspectives and methodologies that I might have otherwise missed.

Though his career is still at the early stage, his enthusiasm for mentoring and his practical approach to supervision have created a supportive and productive research environment for me, helping me to advance my research work.



**Professor Marion Henderson,
University of Strathclyde**



My PhD journey as an international student from Malawi has been shaped by the kindness, guidance, and unwavering support of my supervisor, Prof. Marion Henderson. Transitioning to a new country was intimidating. Prof. Henderson welcomed me with open arms. She offered me a place to stay for a month until I received my stipend and secured my accommodation. This act of generosity set the foundation for an inspiring and supportive relationship.

Now in my second year, I reflect on a successful first year marked by notable milestones achieved with Prof. Henderson's guidance. For example, I won Three-Minute Thesis competitions two times, with her support while in the first year. She meticulously walked me through the early stages of my PhD, providing a clear roadmap and ensuring a structured start. When personal challenges arose, she showed immense understanding, allowing me to return to Malawi to reunite with my family and begin afresh with a six-month plan firmly in place.

Prof. Henderson's mentorship has been transformative. She nurtured my growth with patience, supported my initiatives, and connected me to a network of relevant seminars that expanded my knowledge and perspectives. Her encouragement and belief in my potential have been instrumental in shaping my journey, making her an invaluable part of my success so far.



**Dr Charles M. Pigott,
University of Strathclyde**



From my initial contact with him while I was still in Los Angeles, Charles has provided unwavering support and guidance throughout my PhD journey. My interdisciplinary research focuses on my Indigenous Garifuna language and culture in the Caribbean, and Charles' expertise in Indigenous languages and cultures makes him an ideal supervisor. This has proven true time and again.

From the moment I shared my research proposal in 2022, Charles demonstrated his dedication by providing feedback within two days and organizing an introductory meeting with me shortly after my acceptance. His commitment to my growth is evident through our monthly meetings, which he has never missed, even during my fieldwork in Guatemala from November 2023 to February 2024. As the only full-time PhD student in Modern Languages - Spanish, he ensures I am integrated into departmental and interdisciplinary research clusters, fostering a strong sense of belonging.

Charles has greatly influenced my academic confidence, particularly in refining my research questions and analysing participant data. His encouragement and hands-on mentorship have been instrumental in my personal and scholarly development.



**Dr Clare Daly,
University of Strathclyde**



As an international student, navigating a new country with a vastly different culture from mine was daunting and intimidating. Before coming to the UK, I hesitated to pursue my studies here. However, my supervisor's unwavering encouragement and support made all the difference. She secured a second supervisor for my interdisciplinary research and played a vital role in helping me settle in.

From the beginning, she went above and beyond her academic role to ensure I got all the help I needed. Recognising the challenges I faced, including seasonal depression brought on by the weather, she referred me to mental health and pastoral support services, ensuring I felt cared for and supported. Her encouragement has been a constant motivator. She tirelessly pushes me to step out of my comfort zone, attend conferences, present my work, and network with influential figures in my field.

During the riots against immigrants in the UK, her care stood out. She regularly checked in on me, reassured me of my safety, and created an environment where I always felt secure. Her empathy, guidance, and commitment to my personal and academic growth have inspired me.



**Professor Aileen Kennedy,
University of Strathclyde**



Unfamiliar with the PhD terrain, Professor Kennedy continues to patiently guide me in navigating my writing, my thinking, and my ability to articulate my PhD to myself and my broader audience. While she has moved to the University of Glasgow, she has committed to mentoring me at Strathclyde, hoping that no disruption in our supervision relationship will impede my progress. Although I have not personally performed well in the past couple of years, with the last year due to family bereavements, she has committed to supporting my well-being and keeping me back on track.

Such a supervisor like Professor Aileen (and my gratitude as well to my second supervisor, Dr. Rebekah Sims) is very hard to find. And I am glad that despite my struggling situation, they are helping me and guiding me to complete this tough journey.

As I write this, I cannot think of any words other than "Thank you!" and "One day, I will get to complete this journey and make everyone, including myself, very proud!"



**Professor Louise Ritchie,
University of the
West of Scotland**



One of the qualities of Louise's supervision that makes her outstanding is her kindness and care. I appreciate her ability to guide, advise and support me: Me as a new researcher, me as a successful PhD student, me as a person. She has always ensured I feel valued and appreciated for who I am and the qualities I have, whilst supporting me to learn, develop and improve. She suggests the challenges I need and asks the questions that need answering, while also supporting me to feel clever, capable and able to crack on.

I must have given her many headaches over the last three and a half years, for which I am very sorry. So much of what she's said to me I have internalised and will stay with me. I repeat her words to others and always try and give her credit as I borrow her wisdom. I have so much yet to learn, and as I wrestle with bringing my thesis together I try and remember her advice that good enough is good enough. But she is well beyond good enough, and I will be grateful always to have benefitted from her time, energy and patience.



**Dr Nicola Hay,
University of the
West of Scotland**



I feel incredibly privileged to have Dr Hay as my lead supervisor over the last 2 years of my PhD. Her expertise in the field of my research has been invaluable but most of all, I'm grateful for her unyielding support and encouragement. Over the last 2 years the level of her professionalism and commitment to my research despite her own personal circumstances has been unwavering. Her personal commitment to social justice is inspiring and I've learned so much from how she supports undergraduate and masters students in our university too.

Dr Hay has guided me through my first publication, put me forward for opportunities to teach, brought me into networks and been my biggest cheerleader. She brings so much warmth, understanding and knowledge to my supervisions. She has made me feel valued as part of a community at UWS and for that I'm grateful. My PhD journey has been the most supported and confident I've felt in my abilities and it is because of her.



**Dr Chloe MacLean,
University of the
West of Scotland**



My supervisor is a source of admiration and inspiration. Chloe's knowledge and expertise, personal skills and mentorship have made my PhD experience enjoyable and exciting.

Knowledge

She gave me supportive and constructive feedback on all pieces of my writing, which highlights her expertise. The feedback was always kind and clear. This gradually built my confidence. She expertly guided me through the ethics process. I always felt I could discuss my ideas openly and critically.

Personal skills

Chloe showed me genuine kindness, empathy and understanding. I had to take a study break due to my mother having a stroke. She was so supportive and understanding, and with her support, I managed to easily catch up once I returned to my studies, meeting every milestone.

Mentorship

Chloe always encouraged (but never pressured) me to take advantage of opportunities to develop my academic experience. Thanks to her support, I got involved in teaching, facilitated events, submitted an abstract for the BSA conference (which got accepted), and helped to organise a conference, all in my first year of PhD.

This is all a testament to Chloe's care, thoughtfulness, and expertise, which she brings to her supervisory role. I am grateful to work alongside her.



**Dr Dario Luis Banegas,
University of Edinburgh**



Dario is always supportive. He always efficiently and effectively provides positive and critical feedback in our supervision meeting. Also, he gives us opportunities of other academic activities (e.g., editorial roles for journals; co-authors' position of articles). Furthermore, he always cares about his students' well-being and life, too. I really appreciate his supervision and support.



**Dr Markus Ketola,
University of Edinburgh**



I respect and admire Dr Ketola's dedication to his PGR students. He is always available for further debates, reading suggestions, making connections with other academics, and very attentive even to admin issues of the students. I think he provides full support to the students and in my case he has been an inspiration to progress with a specific methodology and engage with a particular stream of critical theory. I can see how he really invest time in his students, and takes very seriously his job.



**Dr Omolabake Fakunle,
University of Edinburgh**



Under Dr. Omolabake Fakunle's guidance, I was honored to receive the prestigious Estelle Brisard Award from the Scottish Educational Research Association (SERA) in 2024. This recognition would not have been possible without her encouragement and invaluable insights.

I am delighted to nominate my primary supervisor, Dr. Omolabake Fakunle, for her exceptional support and guidance throughout my PhD journey. Dr. Omolabake Fakunle's mentorship has been transformative, not only in shaping my research but also in fostering my growth as an independent researcher. Her expertise in international higher education and internationalization has profoundly influenced my work, and her thoughtful feedback has continually pushed me to refine my ideas and methodologies.

What sets Dr. Omolabake Fakunle apart is her unwavering belief in my potential, even during challenging times. She creates a safe and inclusive space for intellectual growth, empowering me to think critically and consider the broader impact of my research.

Dr. Omolabake Fakunle exemplifies what it means to be a supportive and inspiring supervisor, and I am deeply grateful for her supervision.



**Dr Vander Viana,
University of Edinburgh**



My supervisor has been a pillar of support and inspiration throughout my ongoing PhD journey. His feedback is always meticulous, offering both clarity and motivation. Every comment he provides is not only insightful but also encourages me to think more critically and deeply about my work. When I felt blocked or uncertain, he was consistently patient, taking the time to walk me through complex points until I fully understood them. His ability to explain difficult concepts using simple, clear language made even the most challenging aspects of my research feel manageable.

What truly sets him apart is his willingness to address every question I have, no matter how trivial or "silly" they might seem. He never skips over these questions or dismisses them, which has significantly boosted my confidence and understanding. He answers with great detail and thoughtfulness, ensuring I gain a thorough grasp of the subject.

His balanced approach of being both strict and kind has been instrumental in shaping my growth as a researcher. While he holds me to high standards, he also considers my perspective and tailors his advice in a way that feels both professional and empathetic. He provides not just technical or academic guidance but also practical suggestions that help me navigate the challenges of the PhD process. Even though my PhD journey is still in progress, I feel incredibly fortunate to have such a dedicated and understanding mentor.



**Dr Jasmin Wertz,
University of Edinburgh**



Dedication, empathy, and generosity encapsulate the outstanding mentorship I receive from Jasmin and the entire supervision team. Jasmin has extended herself to open doors for a first-generation PhD student like me, providing the confidence, insights and resources I need to step into the academic world.

Despite her demanding schedule, Jasmin dedicates time to our weekly meetings. Her “empowerment-through-knowledge” approach fosters my independent growth by encouraging me to think critically rather than simply providing answers, shaping me both academically and personally.

Jasmin bridges cultural differences with remarkable empathy and understanding. As a German supervisor mentoring a Chinese student in Edinburgh, her willingness to learn about my background creates an inclusive environment where I feel supported and valued, even far from home.

Above all, Jasmin’s generosity is transformative. She actively shares her academic resources, networks, and opportunities, equipping me to thrive. Whenever I struggled with my studies or felt overwhelmed, she was always there to listen, encourage, guide, and support me throughout. This mentorship goes beyond the individual, embodying the spirit of academic collaboration and continuity. I feel truly fortunate to be part of this journey with Jasmin and the entire supervision team.

Though early in her career, Jasmin has earned increasing respect as a supervisor, scholar, and leader. Being her first PhD student is a privilege, and I believe this acknowledgement marks only one of the beginnings of the recognitions she will continue to receive as an outstanding scholar and supervisor.



Professor Kay Tisdall, University of Edinburgh



Pursuing a PhD can be arduous and if you have been on a unique journey as I have, you would appreciate the importance of having a remarkable person like Prof. Kay Tisdall on your academic boat. Kay has unwaveringly been of immense support from the beginning of my programme until now. As a final year PhD student, I cannot discount the support of Kay in reaching this stage. From navigating the unpredictable course of academia to managing sponsorship setbacks, Prof Kay has been offering indispensable support to address my challenges.

Regarding academic support, Prof Kay is the leader of a strong team that directs my academic journey with her expertise. Her commendable good sense of teamwork is the reason she effortlessly worked with a new team member to ensure I achieved a smooth transition and progress into a new school and subject area after changing supervisor and school. Together with her team, they provide constructive criticisms, helpful suggestions, and insightful comments that address the gaps in my research. I receive feedback on time and references to academic materials, workshops and conferences. Through her guidance, I successfully presented papers at four impactful international and local conferences and received funding for these in the previous academic year.

In addition to the above, she extends her professional duty by showcasing empathy and patience when addressing student welfare issues. She steps in to address the array of welfare issues I encounter on this programme by signposting me to University Support Services and offering personal/private help sometimes. Her receptive and affable demeanour creates a positive, inclusive and supportive environment for me as an international student. I have reached this stage of my PhD as a result of her unmatched work ethic, professionalism, intelligence and empathy. I, therefore, nominate Professor Kay Tisdall as an outstanding supervisor.



**Professor Ailsa Niven;
Professor Marie Murphy;
Dr Claire Fitzsimons,
University of Edinburgh**



First and foremost, they genuinely respect my independence, valuing my decisions and choices. They've also been instrumental in helping me shape the direction of my research, always reminding me that I'm the one in charge—the one “behind the wheel”—while they offer guidance and advice from the sidelines, encouraging me to take ownership of my work.

Their support in this regard has been invaluable. Beyond that, they've gone out of their way to help me build a strong academic network, opening doors for me to connect with others and showcase my work on a wider stage.

Finally, we share a great rapport on both a professional and personal level. They've been more than just mentors—they've been friends—and I'm truly grateful for their unwavering support.



**Dr Hui-Chuan (Jane) Li,
University of Edinburgh**



My supervisor has been an exceptional source of guidance and support, demonstrating remarkable organization and care. From the very beginning, she established a structured approach to my PhD journey. We hold meetings every three weeks, during which we set clear writing goals. At the end of this period, I submit my work, and she provides incredibly detailed and constructive feedback. For a new PhD student like me, this level of clarity and direction has been invaluable.

Given the interdisciplinary nature of my research, she has also gone above and beyond by arranging meetings with academics from other fields, ensuring I receive diverse perspectives and expertise to strengthen my work.

Her academic support extends beyond the big picture to the smallest details. She has provided me with invaluable guidance on methodologies, pointed out ways to refine my citation formatting, and even introduced me to citation management tools available within the university. Her meticulous attention to detail and unwavering commitment to my success truly inspire me. I feel incredibly fortunate to have such an outstanding and dedicated mentor guiding me through this journey.



**Professor Mary Holmes,
University of Edinburgh**



It is maybe a good thing that this entry has a word limit, because I could go on and on about what a fantastic supervisor Mary is! Mary always provided me with thoughtful feedback on my work, she shared with me funny personal stories and helpful metaphors to guide me through the different stages of PhD studies and our conversations were both stimulating and reassuring. In this way, Mary helped me push my intellectual thinking forward and better my research project.

Equally, or maybe more importantly, Mary's empathy, optimism and levelheadedness, kept me grounded and enabled me to successfully face the rocky road of PhD journey. During this journey, there were many instances where I felt unsure and lost my confidence, but Mary always believed in me and showed this. I know that I can always count on her support and I still cannot that I not only got to know this amazing scholar and person, but that she is my supervisor.

Thank you for everything Mary!



**Dr Niamh Moore,
University of Edinburgh**



I am so so lucky to have Niamh as my supervisor! She opened me up to new ways of thinking about and doing research, to embracing its messiness, surprises and beauty and to be intellectually curious. Literally everyday stage of my PhD studies – designing the research, conducting fieldwork and analysing the data – was made better because of Niamh’s guidance and brilliant feedback. Niamh taught me to listen to the different voices that emerged in my PhD project yet also to feel confident in my own voice and what I had to say as a scholar.

Throughout the challenging road of the PhD journey, Niamh helped me separate the important things from the nonsense and prioritise my wellbeing and the things and people in my life that give me strength. I can always count on her understanding, empathy and support, and her delicious cooking! Niamh made me the scholar I am today and I am forever grateful to her.

Thank you Niamh!



**Dr Deborah Holt,
University of Edinburgh**



Deb is a phenomenal mentor. She is responsive, supportive, and incredibly thoughtful. More than anything, however, she has helped me develop a new way of thinking. When I am writing or looking at data, I think about how she would approach it, how she would coach me to think through a difficult challenge, and I feel much less alone in the work. I am deeply grateful for her in my work but more importantly in my life.



**Professor Cristina Iannelli,
University of Edinburgh**



Cristina's guidance and feedback are always very detailed and constructive, and this clarity helps me to move forward with my PhD. I appreciate that Cristina always ensures that my PhD is on track, for example, she suggested reducing teaching activities and focusing on completing my thesis. She also makes sure that my collaboration with The Scottish Government is a balance between academic interests and policy interests, which then helps me to set my priorities.

Cristina is very supportive of my non-PhD activities. For instance, she came to support me in my 3-Minute Thesis Competition. She also provided full support to my study visit to The Netherlands, where she is always fast response in responding to any requested documents. Because of the nature of the project, at the start of my PhD, I struggled to see this research as "my" research. However, Cristina gives a lot of space to be creative in working with this research. Slowly, I have built my sense of belonging, and this would not have been easy without Cristina's continuous encouragement.



**Professor Lindsay Paterson,
University of Edinburgh**



Lindsay's feedback on my work is always very thorough, constructive, and rigorous, which helps me to move forward with my PhD. Lindsay inspires me to add some analysis of my research or to see different views in my research, which trains my creativity and develops my critical thinking.

I appreciate Lindsay's dedicated time to support my research and answer my technical questions, which makes the research life much easier. Lindsay also always reminds me to be cautious in interpreting my research findings and communicating them with policymakers. I believe this came from his tremendous experiences in academic research and policy engagement, which is inspiring to me. I feel like I am lucky to have the privilege to work with Lindsay in my PhD, and absorb his knowledge and experiences for my future career.



**Dr Emma Davidson,
University of Edinburgh**



Emma is an endlessly positive and kind presence in a supervision team. She has always made it clear that there is not a single kind of "success" from a PhD, and that I should explore the ideas and projects that I care about. She is an incredible critical collaborator and provides an invaluable perspective for ensuring that my research stays grounded in my substantive context. Emma always gives detailed and thoughtful feedback to my work, even when it is half-finished or meandering. There have been times when my PhD has been difficult or I felt lost. However, when I left supervision sessions or even smaller interactions with Emma, I always felt like the weight on my back was lessened. Emma is often thinking of ways for me to get involved in the wider research community and has a great talent for bringing people together and making them feel comfortable contributing to the discussion. The SGSSS should recognise her as an outstanding supervisor, mentor, and researcher.

Emma is the second of three supervisors to my mixed methods research project. It has been a pleasure working with her from the start, not only because of her kindness and enthusiasm but also because of her incredible expertise. She has been very supportive and curious of my methodological approach to the project. Together we have been explored potential tools, topics, and methods, all avenues that I might not have 'travelled' without her. Emma encourages her students to grow as researchers not only by providing opportunities to be involved in some of her multiple projects, but also by valuing their lived experiences and the expertise they bring with them at the start of the programme. After every supervision meeting and interaction with Emma I'm reminded of how lucky I am to have her as advisor to my project.



**Professor Kay Tisdall and
Dr Marlies Kustatscher,
University of Edinburgh**



Both of my supervisors are kind, supportive, loving, and caring. They consistently show enthusiasm, encouragement, and understanding toward all my needs and concerns. They are not only professional in academic matters but also excel as supervisors. As a PhD student, there are times when you might feel down or confused about your academic work, but supervisors like them can truly help you navigate through those challenges.



**Dr Valeria Skafida,
University of Edinburgh**



Valeria strikes the perfect balance of supporting me to follow my own interests and make my research truly "mine", while still providing constant guidance and expertise to ensure that I stay on track. She has always encouraged me to not take methods or prescribed approaches for granted, but to interrogate them and develop my own perspective. I am aware that this freedom is not always so robustly supported in all PhD projects, and I feel very lucky to be carving my own path under her guidance. Her approach to research is critical, creative, and always grounded in a commitment to a mission of positive change. This has been a consistent source of inspiration for me as her student.

Responding to the isolation that many of my fellow PhD students were feeling from the changes to research environments, Valeria has worked hard to connect me with other students and support us to create our own research communities. On a personal level, she has supported me through setbacks, frustrations, and times of self-doubt during my PhD journey. I feel incredibly lucky to have her as a supervisor.

Valeria has watched over my entire PhD journey since 2019 with guidance, care and wisdom without ever imposing or being negative. Always there to listen, offering objective advice. She has shared many valuable stories from her own work and career and has given me space during the entire PhD process which helped me pivot gracefully towards new pathways within my thesis, during certain methodological conundrums, enriching it in the process. I am delighted that I got so lucky with Valeria, the empowering role model!



**Dr Valeria Skafida,
University of Edinburgh**



My supervisor, Valeria Skafida, has been an incredible source of support and inspiration throughout my PhD journey thus far. I have been incredibly fortunate to have her guidance and mentorship.

Valeria has been instrumental in providing me with the skills and knowledge needed to undertake rigorous data analysis for my research. She has patiently walked me through complex statistical techniques, always taking the time to ensure I fully understand the concepts and helping me out with the code. Her expertise has been invaluable in helping me produce and understand results for my Master's dissertation.

Beyond the academic, Valeria has also been a key source of emotional support. The MSc/PhD process can be isolating and overwhelming at times, but Valeria has consistently checked in on my wellbeing, offering a listening ear, and provided words of reassurance when I've needed them most. Her unwavering belief in my abilities has given me the confidence to push through challenges and remain motivated, even when finishing my Masters degree seemed like an insurmountable challenge.

Valeria has played a pivotal role in my development as a researcher and scholar, and I know her guidance will continue to shape the rest of my PhD journey and beyond.



**Dr Valeria Skafida,
University of Edinburgh**



I'm working on a supervisor-led project and Valeria is my lead supervisor. I considered applying for a PhD for several years and had two offers in America before deciding to decline them and come to Edinburgh to work with her. I have not regretted that decision once.

Not only did Valeria take the time to upload a video and meet with potential applicants to answer questions -something I did not see with other projects-, but after being accepted took the time to help me during the transition to this new role (and city and country) with support, encouragement and plenty of practical information. When I started in September I felt oriented and ready to go from day one.

Working on the project with her has been great, not only because she has lots of experience with the same dataset and in similar topics, but also because she has a unique capacity to adjust to the level and type of support you need. We have had conversations about publications, statistical analyses, teaching, course design, collaboration with colleagues and more. I hope to one day be as good of a supervisor to my students as she has been to me.