

ARMS International Travel Award Program

Post-Travel Summary Report

Awardee: Dani Milos

Host Institution: Stellenbosch University, South Africa

Travel Dates: 17-28 March 2025

Summary of Activities and Outcomes

During my two-week visit to Stellenbosch University, I engaged in a series of structured meetings, collaborative discussions, and conference participation focused on doctoral education, supervision, and graduate attributes. The visit was anchored around the *Postgraduate Supervision Conference*, where I presented one 20 minute presentation on innovations in doctoral supervision training and facilitated a one-hour roundtable discussion on the development of employability skills in research degrees, and connected with leading researchers and practitioners in the field.

Curriculum and Supervision Research Collaboration

I met with Prof Liezel Frick and Dr. Nompilo Tshuma, from the *Centre for Higher Adult Education* at Stellenbosch University, who are actively researching doctoral curriculum and supervision. We explored Barbara Grant's concept of the "bothersome curriculum" and discussed the possibility of working together in this space, possibly co-authoring a paper on curriculum tensions in doctoral education. We also identified potential for future joint research projects on reflective practice and technology in supervision.

Graduate Attributes Implementation Insights

Through discussions with Cristan MacLeod, Senior Coordinator, Postgraduate Skills Development Programme at Stellenbosch University, I gained a comprehensive understanding of how Stellenbosch embeds graduate attributes into doctoral training via a national mandate. I reviewed their doctoral skills survey and Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which were interesting pieces that I have taken back for review in our services, and will inform the development of a HDR supervision agreement. I also connected with a number of doctoral students conducting research on the impact of graduate attributes, which will be very valuable in our review of services.

Policy and Assessment Gaps

Conversations with Prof Andrew Leitch, who contributed to South Africa's national doctoral review, highlighted the lack of formal assessment of graduate attributes nationally in South Africa. This insight has prompted a review of how we might integrate graduate attribute assessment into candidature milestones and supervisor training. We are currently looking at co-authoring a piece around this.

Supervisor Development Enhancements

I attended sessions on examiner report writing and supervision pedagogy, which are leading to the development of new modules in our current Supervisor Development Program. These include training on writing examiner reports and embedding graduate attributes into HDR supervision.

International Benchmarking and Strategic Reflection

The visit provided valuable benchmarking against Scandinavian and South African models, particularly around portfolio-based learning in the doctoral space and the role of centralised support structures. These insights are now informing our HDR education strategy review.