

## Supervising the Games Doctorate

### *Overview*

Supervision of doctoral students is both challenging and rewarding. That work takes many different forms, depending on the discipline (or multiple disciplines) where study takes place, program specificities regarding coursework, time to degree, work expectations, and supervisor expectations. Yet games doctorates can add additional layers to that workload. Those layers can include practice-based components, a lack of committee expertise in the area, varying student expectations for life beyond the degree, and administrators who may not see the value in a games-related PhD.

This workshop is a chance for doctoral supervisors to come together and discuss the challenges they face along with best practices for managing students, committee members, as well as institutional administrations. It will be led by faculty who have overseen multiple students across North America, Europe, and Asia, who can offer a variety of perspectives on how the work is done and the challenges they have overcome in their work.

### *Workshop Conveners:*

Mia Consalvo

Mia Consalvo is Canada Research Chair in Game Studies and Design at Concordia University. For more than two decades she has taught and done research in the field of game studies. Mia has supervised multiple games-related doctoral students through their degrees at institutions in both the US and Canada. That work has been in both traditional academic departments and in interdisciplinary programs, with students completing both traditional and creative-practice based dissertations. She has also served as a graduate program director and in other university-based administrative roles.

Rilla Khaled

Rilla Khaled is a Strategic Hire in Digital Media, Learning and Games at Concordia University, and is an Associate Professor in the Department of Design and Computation Arts. She is also director of the Technoculture, Art and Games (TAG) Research Centre, which was established to incubate and facilitate interdisciplinary research on games and playful media, and is the primary research affiliation for approximately 50 graduate students spanning multiple faculties at Concordia University. She has supervised PhD and Masters students in Denmark, Malta, and Canada, has served as external PhD

examiner for games-related doctoral candidates from Canada, Belgium, New Zealand, Australia, Hong Kong, and Italy, encompassing primary disciplines including Game Studies, HCI, Computer Science, Design, Architecture, Information Systems, and Public Health.

Souvik Mukherjee

Souvik Mukherjee is assistant professor of Cultural Studies at Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta and one of the early game studies researchers from South Asia. He completed his PhD from the United Kingdom on videogames and storytelling and has subsequently taught in the UK, the USA and India. Mukherjee is the author of *Videogames and Postcolonialism: Empire Plays Back* and supervises PhD and MPhil research on topics related to games and South-south discourses.

Hanna Wirman

Hanna Wirman is an Associate Professor at the Center for Digital Play at the IT University of Copenhagen and previously worked at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and Chinese University of Hong Kong. She is currently the Head of Study Program for ITU's MSc in Games. Hanna has supervised multiple PhD students working towards their degrees in Hong Kong, Finland, Sweden, and Norway. Her own PhD is from the UK. She has served in the departmental PhD Committee in two universities. Her students have all built interdisciplinary projects, some with practical design components and often including ethnographic studies.

### *Workshop Schedule*

This is a half-day workshop that will include the following elements. Participants will need to register as some reading materials will be circulated prior to the session taking place.

10:00-10:30 Welcome and overview of the session. Each of the four leaders makes a short presentation, discussing their prior work as doctoral supervisors (and/or committee members) and outlines some of their central challenges as well as best work practices.

10:30-11:00 Participants brainstorm key issues for discussion. Possible topics can include:

- ensuring an adequate background (theory, literature) in both course and non-course-based programs;

- what actually constitutes an adequate background in a game studies or game creation doctorate;
- selection of committee members;
- explaining a games phd to non-games members;
- establishing daily work routines and supervision practices;
- supporting work related to publishing research, especially for article-based theses;
- best documentation practices for creative works;
- other topics identified by participants

11:00-12:00 Depending on the size of the group, we will hold either breakout groups discussing various topics, or one central group. Beyond the sharing of ideas with the group, we aim to identify best practices to write up, and share later with the wider DiGRA community.

12:00-12:15 Sharing of ideas, identification of next steps for the group (whitepaper, working group, blog post, journal special issue, etc).

12:15-13:00 Conclusion of the workshop, thanks, and final housekeeping matters.

### *Participants*

No submission is required to attend the session, but we will ask that participants register and be currently active supervisors of doctoral students.