

Structure, Functions and Output of Doctoral Training in Europe

Doctoral Programmes in Europe:
Achievements and Challenges

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Overview of Presentation

- EUA Profile
- Doctoral Training: Linking 'Bologna' and 'Lisbon' objectives
- Emerging issues, trends and challenges
- Funding, Legal and Regulatory Frameworks
- What next? EUA Council for Doctoral Education

The European University Association (EUA) in Brussels: Independent Voice of Universities

- Created in 2001 (as a result of the merger of the Confederation of European University Rectors, CRE, and the European Union University Rectors Association)
- Non-governmental Membership-based Organisation
- 780 Universities in 46 countries (individual members), 34 National Rectors' Conferences (collective members) and university networks (affiliate members)
- Policy Focus: ERA and EHEA
- Support to Members: projects, workshops, conferences, web-based newsletters, targeted information etc

Doctoral Education in the EU context

- Doctoral education - main link between the EHEA and ERA
- Doctoral education in Europe – in a process of major transformation
- Drivers of change:
 - ✓ challenges of the fast changing global labour market
 - ✓ policy objectives of the EU (especially ambitious Lisbon objectives)
 - ✓ Bologna Process

EUA Work on Doctoral Programme Reform: Linking the Bologna and Lisbon Objectives

- Salzburg Conference (Feb 2005) “10 Basic Principles” for Doctoral Programme Reform relating to organisation, supervision and quality assurance, innovative practices and financing
- Starting point: Doctoral research is the first formative stage of a research career (both problems and opportunities have to be addressed here)
- End Point: Employability – careers in both academic and non-academic sectors and intersectorial mobility
- Meeting Lisbon Objectives: fulfilling the need for more highly skilled professionals
- Fostering “Joined-up” Government thinking (across the European Institutions, national ministries, research councils etc) on doctoral programme financing and career development
- EUA projects on Doctoral Programmes and Doctoral Careers
- EUA provides independent input to the Intergovernmental Bologna Process “3rd Cycle” (London Communique, May 2007)
- EUA publishes results of its 3rd cycle activities (September 2007) ‘Doctoral Programmes in Europe’s Universities: Achievements and Challenges

The 10 Salzburg principles

- The core component - the advancement of knowledge through original research
- Embedding in institutional strategies & policies
- Achieving critical mass
- The promotion of innovative structures
- The importance of diversity
- The crucial role of supervision and assessment
- Duration: 3-4 years full time as a rule
- Doctoral candidates as early stage researchers
- Increasing mobility
- Ensuring appropriate funding

Emerging Issues, Trends and Challenges

(1) Organisation and Structures

- Trend towards **structured programmes** and **doctoral/ research/ graduate schools**:
 - ✓ master students & doctoral candidates & provide admin and transferable skills development support
 - ✓ doctoral candidates only, organised around a discipline or research theme & may involve several institutions
- TRENDS V survey (920):
 - ✓ 30% of institutions in Europe have established doctoral / research/ grad schools
 - ✓ only 5 of 46 countries have solely individual-based programmes

(2) Access and Admission

- Flexibility in admission, and institutional autonomy - important to keep (growing diversity of university missions and increased interest in lifelong learning) provided **fairness and transparency** is ensured.
- The Master, with its growing diversity: the main, but not the only entry point to doctoral training.
- Greater attention has to be paid to **social dimension** of the third cycle (equality of access to the third cycle)

(3) Supervision

- Supervision – a major topic of debate, closely related to quality:
 - ✓ Arrangements based on a **contract** btw PhD candidate, supervisor and institution with rights and responsibilities
 - ✓ **Multiple supervision** encouraged
 - ✓ Supervision should be recognised as a part of workload
 - ✓ Increased need for **professional skills development** for supervisors (training of supervisors)
 - ✓ **Assessment of the thesis** – objective and transparent, done by university expert committee (pref. with international rep) without the supervisor as a member – needs further discussion; public defense

(4) Transferable Skills Development

- Transferable skills training should be an integral part of all three cycles
- The aim at the third cycle: to **raise awareness** among doctoral candidates of the importance of recognising and enhancing the skills that they develop and acquire through research, as a means of improving their employment prospects & career development inside & outside academia
- Adequate **funding** of transferable skills training – crucial
- Teaching transferable skills should be recognised in evaluation of academic staff involved.

Continuing Challenges: (1) Research Careers

- Universities together with public authorities share a **collective responsibility** for promoting attractive research careers for doc and postdoc researchers.
- **Status** of doctoral candidate= ESR (out of 37 countries responding in survey in 24 countries status is mixed; in 10 countries candidates have status of a student, in 3 countries – status of an employee)
- Whatever the status is, it is crucial that the candidate is given all **commensurate rights** (healthcare, pension, social security)

(2) Internationalisation and Mobility

- Universities encouraged to support **mobility** at doctoral level as **part of their institutional strategy** (joint programmes, co-tutelles, European doctorates, transsectoral mobility, internationalisation inside universities such as recruiting more international staff, organisation of int. events; using new technologies for e-learning or teleconferences, etc.)
- Mobility has to be **recognised as an added value for career development** of ESRs.

(3) Development of New Doctorates

- A range of **innovative doctoral programmes** are emerging as a response to the changes of the global labour market (professional doctorates, industrial doctorates, European doctorates etc.)
- Diversity of doctoral programmes reflects diversity of European HEIs that have autonomy to develop their missions and priorities
- Consensus: **original research** has to remain **the main component of all doctorates**
- Further debate on new doctorates as well as new vision of the doctorate is needed.

(4) Funding, Legal & Regulatory Frameworks

EUA Funding Survey 2006 sent to ministries (46)

- Doctoral Education is under major reform in many countries with new national legislation only recently in place – hence responses incomplete in many cases: few provided funding information
- Survey data demonstrate **varied jurisdictions and responsibilities** for the funding of doctoral education (between ministries, research councils and other funding agencies).
- **Funding support is moving towards more structured doctoral programmes** on a competitive funding basis.
 - ✓ 17 countries reported on the increase of funding levels in recent years
- **Substantial gap** btw the Bologna 3rd Cycle “policy push” and the limited availability of data on essential issues, eg funding, employment outcomes, necessary to develop evidence-based policy
 - ✓ only 18 countries monitor completion rate

DOC-CAREERS Project

- **EUA Project DOC-CAREERS** (From Innovative Doctoral Training to Enhanced Career Opportunities, 2006-2007)
- Objectives:
 - ✓ Focuses on Non-Academic Careers
 - ✓ Development of transferable skills and competences in the context of employability and career perspectives in private and public sectors
 - ✓ Nature and extent of university and industry collaboration in doctoral programmes
 - ✓ Mobility strategies for doctoral career development (cross-border, inter-institutional, inter-sectoral)
 - ✓ Requirements for more systematic collection of data at the university level to provide the basis for analysis of doctoral candidate's career paths

EUA/CGS/Transatlantic Dialogue - common challenges

- Consciously addressing interdisciplinarity and teamwork in doctoral training
- Continuing to address transferable skills development as a component of doctoral training
- Time-to-degree (TTD) requires more attention.
- Finding the appropriate role for non-academic partners in the dialogue about doctoral training, given their increasing importance as employers of PhDs
- Addressing the changing role of the master and the question of the professional doctorate in response to a changing labour market
- Considering 'anchor points' for measuring excellence? The importance of completion rates (US)

EUA Council for Doctoral Education

- **EUA Council for Doctoral Education** – a new planned activity of EUA. This initiative builds upon continuous efforts to provide a forum for cooperation and exchange of good practices among doctoral programmes and schools across universities in Europe.
 - ✓ Main objectives: to contribute to the development, advancement and improvement of doctoral education; to represent the interests of doctoral education across all disciplines at European universities; to act as a partner in international cooperation on doctoral education
- **Time Schedule: Launch planned for 2008**

Relevant Recent EUA Reports

- *Doctoral Programmes for the European Knowledge Society (2005)*
- *Doctoral Programmes in Europe's Universities: Achievements and Challenges (2007)*
- *TRENDS SURVEY V (2007): Universities shaping the European Higher Education Area*

Download from www.eua.be



Thank you for your attention

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