

# Doctoral Programmes in Europe

Nice 7/9 december 2006



## WG4: Supervision, monitoring and assessment

### I. Topic

WG4 will explore ways of improving the quality of supervision by developing new innovative supervision practices in doctoral education.

### II. Starting Point

The Salzburg Recommendations (2005) emphasise the crucial role of supervision and assessment: “In respect of individual doctoral candidates, arrangements for supervision and assessment should be based on a transparent contractual framework of shared responsibilities between doctoral candidates, supervisors and the institution (and where appropriate including other partners)”.

The European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (2005) pays attention to supervision, encouraging institutions to clarify duties of supervisors: “Such arrangements should clearly define that the proposed supervisors are sufficiently expert in supervising research, have the time, knowledge, experience, expertise and commitment to be able to offer the trainee appropriate support and provide for the necessary progress and review procedures, as well as the necessary feedback mechanisms” (C&C 2005: 21).

### III. Issues for Discussion

This topic has been discussed and examples of good practice presented in EUA workshops as well as in the European Summer Conference (Florence, July 2006) of the UK Council for Graduate Education. For example, in some countries a signed agreement between the supervisor, the doctoral candidate and the institution with clearly defined research plan of the candidate, and responsibilities and rights of all parties is becoming accepted good practice and a useful instrument to tackle and resolve problems.

Similarly, multiple (team) supervision is becoming more common. There are several models:

- two or three supervisors with one as a principal supervisor;
- one supervisor who is responsible for the overall quality assurance and administration of the doctoral training programme, and another supervisor who is responsible for the doctoral candidate's research progress;
- one supervisor plus the Scientific Board of a Faculty/ Doctoral School.

Such multiple supervision arrangements seek to guarantee transparency of the process and support quality assurance.

There is recognition in some countries that supervisors themselves should be subject to further training to ensure maintenance of the quality of supervision. This can be achieved by informal mechanisms, such as regular dialogue, workshops, debates and exchange of experience among supervisors. The concept needs further development and debate at the national and European level to ensure that it would be understood and accepted.

#### **IV. Workshop Outcomes**

- Areas of consensus
- Areas for further discussion