

# Doctoral Education in the European Higher Education Area from a University Perspective

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‘3rd Cycle Degrees: Competences & Researcher Careers’

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## Structure

- I. Doctoral Education in Europe
- II. EUA and Doctoral Education
- III. Key Trends & major challenges
- IV. EUA Council for Doctoral Education (CDE) – a university response
- V. In conclusion – doctoral education & Bologna post 2010

## I. Doctoral Education in Europe

- Doctoral education - main **link between the EHEA and ERA**
- Doctoral education in Europe – in a **process of major transformation**
- **Drivers of change:**
  - ✓ Bologna Process
  - ✓ EU policies: meeting the Lisbon objectives - ERA Green Paper, Modernisation Agenda for universities
  - ✓ challenges of global competition & changing labour markets
- **A major priority for EUA** since 2003: developing the new vision for Doctoral Education in Europe along with our members

## II. EUA and Doctoral Education

- **Berlin Communiqué (2003):** Doctoral Programmes = the third cycle
- **EUA Doctoral Programmes Project 1 (2004-2005):** aim to link its activities to policy debate and to feed into recommendations for Bergen 2005 (Salzburg Principles, Report 2005)
- **Bergen Communiqué (2005):** BFUG invites EUA to prepare a report on the further development of the Salzburg Principles, to be presented to Ministers in London 2007
- **EUA Project 2: Doctoral Programmes in Europe (2005 – 2007, Nice conference 2006, Report to Ministers in 2007)**
- **London Communiqué (2007):** EUA asked to continue to support the sharing of experience among HEIs on doctoral programmes & ESR career development
- **DOC-CAREER Project (2006-2008)**
- Launch of the **EUA Council for Doctoral Education, EUA-CDE (2008)**

### III. Key Trends: Organisation and Structures (1)

- Trend towards **structured programmes & doctoral/ research/ graduate schools**
  - ✓ “Doctoral/ graduate/ research school is an independent organisational unit with a clear effective administration, strong leadership and specific funding supporting this structure”
- **Different models:**
  - ✓ master students & doctoral candidates, with crosscutting administrative support & transferable skills development
  - ✓ doctoral candidates only, often organised around a discipline or research theme, may involve several institutions
- **Advantages:**
  - ✓ achieves critical mass & provides a stimulating research environment,
  - ✓ Enhances interdisciplinarity & interinstitutional collaboration,

### III. Access and Admission (2)

- Importance of flexibility in admission procedures – provided fairness and transparency is ensured - a question of institutional autonomy
- The Master level, with its growing diversity, remains the main, but not the only entry point to doctoral training (fast track possible for excellent students)
- Greater attention should be paid to the 'social dimension' of the third cycle (equality of access to the third cycle)

## III. Supervision and Assessment (3)

- Supervision – a major topic of debate – an important aspect of quality:
  - ✓ Arrangements based on a contract btw PhD candidate, supervisor and institution with rights and responsibilities = good practice in many HEIs
  - ✓ 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;



## Transferable Skills Development (4)

- Transferable skills training should be an integral part of first, second and third 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



## IV. Challenges: Funding & Regulatory Frameworks (1)

### EUA Survey 2007 sent to ministries (46)

- Major reforms underway in many countries – hence responses often incomplete: little info on funding provided
- Data showed **varied jurisdictions & responsibilities** for funding - ministries, research councils & other funding agencies
- **Funding support is moving towards more structured doctoral programmes** – more focus on doctoral schools, on a competitive basis
  - ✓ 17 countries reported on the increase of funding levels in recent years
- **substantial gap** between the Bologna 3rd Cycle “policy push” and the limited availability of data on essential issues, e.g. only 18 countries monitor completion rates

## IV. Research Careers (2)

- Universities & public authorities share a collective responsibility for promoting attractive research careers for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers.
- Status of doctoral candidate= **Early Stage Researcher** (survey results: in 24 countries mixed status; in 10 candidates are students, in 3 employees)
- Whatever the status, it is **crucial that doctoral candidates is given all commensurate rights** (healthcare, pensions, social security)

## Internationalisation and Mobility (3)

- Doctoral programmes - an increasingly important element of the international attractiveness of European universities
- Promoting international cooperation & mobility at doctoral level - becoming an integral part of institutional strategies
  - ✓ joint doctoral programmes, co-tutelles, European doctorates, etc.
  - ✓ More transsectoral mobility (collaboration with industry)
  - ✓ internationalisation inside universities (more international staff, more international summer schools & conferences; new technologies used for e-learning or teleconferences, etc.)
- Challenge: ensuring that the added value of different forms of mobility is recognised for the career development of ESRs

## Development of 'New' Doctorates (4)

- A range of innovative doctoral programmes are emerging as a response to the changes of a fast-growing 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**
- No consensus on new doctorates in Europe & further debate is needed.

## V. EUA Council for Doctoral Education

- **EUA Council for Doctoral Education (EUA-CDE)** – a new membership service of EUA
- The policy framework is in place – major reform taking place across Europe
- A means of sharing best practice & learning from each other – a forum for cooperation and exchange for European universities
- Launched in June 2008 in Lausanne

## EUA-CDE Aims and Objectives (1)

***EUA-CDE will contribute to the development, advancement and improvement of doctoral education and research training in Europe, by:***

- Promoting cooperation and exchange of good practices on issues of common concern;
- Encouraging and supporting the development of institutional policies within member institutions;
- Identifying & monitoring the trends in doctoral education, inside and outside Europe;

## EUA-CDE Aims and Objectives (2)

- Improving the availability of data and information on doctoral education in Europe;
- Acting as a representative voice for doctoral education in European universities & in dialogue with stakeholders;
- Contributing to strengthening the international dimension of doctoral programmes & enhancing the visibility of doctoral schools & programmes, in Europe and internationally.



## In Conclusion - Looking forward to Bologna post 2010

- Reaffirm the links between HE & research & between the EHEA & the ERA - a defining factor of European HE & crucial for its visibility & international attractiveness;
- Maintain the momentum in advances in doctoral education
- Universities & governments must work together to offer better career opportunities for young researchers – possible follow up of the results of the 2007 BFUG survey:
  - ✓ More coordination among government to ensure support & funding structures take account of the changes taking place in universities
  - ✓ Career structures for young researchers & their compatibility, the role of the post doc?
  - ✓ Even more urgent to address obstacles to mobility – recruitment, pension rights etc..