

The EUA Doctoral Programmes Project (2003-2005)

EUA's Doctoral Programmes Project arose from a need to contribute to the debate on research training in the European Higher Education and Research Areas by demonstrating examples of good practice and preparing recommendations for action based upon the pooling of experience of its members.

Since the Berlin Ministerial meeting in September 2003, doctoral programmes have been included as the 'third cycle' in the Bologna process and constitute the crucial link between these two processes. In the context of the ambitious Lisbon and Barcelona goals to increase investment in research to 3% and the need to increase significantly the number of researchers, it is also important to have a closer look at existing doctoral programmes and to consider if and how their structure, functioning and quality could be enhanced in order to meet the different challenges identified.

Given the essential importance of doctoral training for the fulfillment of the university mission it is similarly important that universities themselves take the initiative and assume ownership of this task. In carrying out their central role in the training of researchers universities increasingly have to face the challenges of a changing labour market for young researchers and need to prepare them for a wider variety of careers than in the past, i.e. not only in the academic environment, but also in industry, non-profit organisations, private companies, private and public independent research centres, etc.).

It is for these reasons, and, looking forward to the continued discussion on doctoral programmes within the Bologna process and more widely on researcher careers, that EUA proposed the project to the European Commission. The Association is grateful for the financial assistance provided by Directorate General Education and Culture through the Socrates Programme, and the more general support of Directorate General Research.

Project Objectives

The main objectives of the Doctoral Programmes Project are:

- to identify essential conditions for successful doctoral programmes across Europe taking account of the changing environment;
- to identify and exchange good practices in various organisational, administrative, educational and qualitative aspects of doctoral programmes;
- to contribute to the enhancement of the universities participating in the project;
- to promote cooperation and mutual learning in the development of joint doctoral programmes at European level.

The project aims to draw together and analyse information and to prepare recommendations targeted at a wide range of groups, principally:

- European universities and other academic institutions training young researchers
- Employers of PhD graduates
- PhD candidates and young post-docs
- Higher education and research policy-makers at national and European levels.

The project will examine in detail following aspects of doctoral programmes through work done in six different networks:

- (1) Structure and organisation of doctoral programmes
- (2) Financing of doctoral programmes
- (3) Quality of doctoral programmes
- (4) Innovative practice for doctoral programmes
- (5) Comparative overview of all the these aspects (“control network”)
- (6) Joint doctoral programmes established between different universities (“network of networks”)

Project Participants

Universities were selected in an open call for applications among EUA member universities. EUA received 143 applications from universities offering doctoral programmes in 32 countries. 49 universities were selected and 6 networks were formed. The work of each network is coordinated by one institution selected as a network coordinator.

Network 1 (Structure and organization of doctoral programmes)

Pierre et Marie Curie University (UPCM) Paris 6 (FR) – coordinator
J.W.Goethe University Frankfurt am Main (DE)
University of Tartu (EE)
University of Granada (ES)
Kingston University (GB)
University of Crete (GR)
Warsaw School of Economics (PL)
University of Wroclaw (PL)
University of Latvia (LV)

Network 2 (Financing doctoral programmes)

Universite des Sciences et Technologies Lille (FR) – coordinator
University of Catania (IT)
University of Tilburg – Graduate School (NL)
Cracow University of Economics (PL)
Universite Aix-Marseille 3 (FR)
University of Aveiro (PT)

Network 3 (Quality of doctoral programmes)

University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne (GB) – coordinator
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (ES)
University of Bournemouth (GB)
University of Jyväskylä (FI)
Hacettepe University (TR)
University of P. J. Safarik Kosice (SK)
Law University of Lithuania (LT)
University of Miskolc (HU)
Czech Technical University Prague (CZ)
University of Belgrade (CS)

Network 4 (Innovative practice for doctoral programmes)

University of Bergen (NO) – coordinator
University of Strathclyde (GB)
Universite Jean Monnet Saint-Etienne (FR)
Institute d'etudes politiques de Paris (FR)
University of Salford (GB)
K.U. Leuven (BE)
University of Göttingen (DE)

European University Institute Florence (IT)
University of Ljubljana (SI)
University College London (GB)

Network 5 (Overview of all themes)

Karolinska Institutet (SE) – coordinator
University of Girona (ES)
University of Aegean (GR)
University of Warsaw (PL)
Politecnico di Milano (IT)
Universita Degli Studi Roma Tre (IT)
University of Leeds (GB)
University of Wolverhampton (GB)

Network 6 (Network of networks – joint programmes)

Universita degli Studi di Roma – La Sapienza (IT) – coordinator
Technical University of Eindhoven (NL)
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (ES)
Technical University of Dresden (DE)
University of Maastricht (NL)
University College Dublin (IE)

Expected results:

Preliminary findings were and will be discussed at the EUA Maastricht conference on the training of researchers (28-30 October 2004) and the Bologna Seminar on Doctoral Programmes for the European Knowledge Society in Salzburg (3-5 February 2005).

Final project report and recommendations are expected in May 2005. They will be published and disseminated widely and are intended to feed into both institutional thinking and policy making at European level.