How to Support Good Quality Doctoral Education: European Perspective

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Growth in European Doctoral Education

- About 50% for the EU as a whole since 2004, with big variations
Increased political attention to doctoral education

• Inclusion in the Bologna Process 2003
• Salzburg Principles 2005 – Salzburg II 2010
• Increased importance for the European Research Area
  ✓ Innovation Union 2010
    • The Commission commits itself to better doctoral training in Europe
  ✓ Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training 2011
    • Triple-i : international, interdisciplinary and intersectoral
• National legislation
• Much of this is connected to the discourse about the knowledge society as a driver for growth
The rise of the doctoral school

• Since 2005, we have seen a ‘silent revolution’ in doctoral education
  ✓ Professional management: The Rise of the doctoral school
    • 30 % of universities had a doctoral school in 2007
    • 65 % in 2009*
    • 82% ARDE 2011
    • Universal 2013**

✓ Move towards a two-layered model of faculty/programme level schools and central, strategic units

* TRENDS V, TRENDS 2010
** EUA European Research Area Survey
Curriculum reform …

- Early reforms targeted modernisation (introduction) of curriculum and pooling research capacity
  - Doctoral schools = doctoral programmes
    - Interdisciplinarity
    - Transferable skills
    - Taught courses (70 % of respondents in TRENDS 2010)
    - ECTS or other credit systems as incentive for varied activities (or as legal ‘Bologna’ requirements)
      - Not a popular or growing phenomenon
... towards professional management

- There is a tendency towards institutions introducing more sophisticated governance structures
  - Doctoral schools = Strategic units at the institutional level (Vice Rectors/Deans)
    - Common rules and guidelines
    - Monitoring, quality management, problem solving (research capacity, completion rates, satisfaction)
    - Strategic planning (capacity and talent development, outreach, internationalisation)
      - Which includes planning curriculum development
Doctoral Schools on many levels - differentiated between institution and programme

Source: ERA Survey 2013

EUA European Research Area Survey 2013
EUA’s policy positions on QA

• Main responsibility for QA lies with the institutions
• Context sensitive (institutional and disciplinary diversity)
• Fitness for purpose approach
• Enhancement oriented
• Internal and external evaluations or QA processes should be complementary
• Transparency and co-operation
Procedures (internal QA) universally implemented

EUA European Research Area Survey 2013
The ARDE Survey 2011

• 112 respondents
  ✓ Mostly large, research-intensive institutions
  ✓ ~ 130,000 doctoral candidates (22% of the estimated total)

• Questions about QA framework for doctoral education as well as specific procedures:
  ✓ Admissions, registration, monitoring of progress, supervision, involvement of doctoral candidates, thesis evaluation

• Results largely confirmed by a larger EUA survey concerning universities in the European Research Area
Satisfaction with procedures

Figure 5: Satisfaction with existing procedures

- Awarding the doctorate: 95%
- Admissions: 84%
- Registration: 81%
- Involvement of doctoral candidates in governance: 81%
- Monitoring progress: 68%
- Supervision: 54%
Supervision - a key issue: rules and guidelines

• **Compliance**
  ✓ **Institutional rules** that specify how to comply with national legislation (many countries have supervision mentioned in national legislation)
  ✓ Internal or external accreditation – for instance requirements for staff qualifications

• **Transparency**
  ✓ **A combination of rules and guidelines**: Documents that specify what is expected or required
  ✓ Individual contracts between supervisor, supervisee and institution
What do rules and guidelines contain?

Figure 8: Content of supervision rules or guidelines

- Maximum number of doctoral candidates per supervisor?
- Obligatory training for supervisors?
- Voluntary training for supervisors?
- Requirement or recommendation for minimum number of meetings with the supervisor(s)?
- Requirement or recommendation for supervisory teams?
- Written agreements between supervisors, supervisees and/or institution?
- Procedures for dealing with supervisor-supervisee conflicts?
- Systematic feedback collected from doctoral candidates?
- Other
What about quality enhancement?

• How can rules and guidelines improve supervision?
  ✔ Hard rules can turn into a tick-box exercise rather than fostering a quality culture
  ✔ Guidelines might not offer protection for doctoral candidates
  ✔ Making a document (rules, guidelines, handbook...) can create a better understanding between management and supervisors through dialogue

• Getting people to talk
  ✔ It is important that supervisors talk and develop good practices among themselves
  ✔ Developing a quality culture that combines the best of individual professionalism and institutional engagement
Employability of PhD holders

- Academia vs non-academic institution (10 to 90%, irreversible)
- Career development: when to decide, how to prepare, degree of satisfaction
- Alumni: data collection, feedback
- Communication with employers: understanding and respecting needs, requirements

In 10 yrs 40% new jobs!

New demands, different expectations from universities!
Thank you for your attention