The landscape of doctoral education in Europe

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Introducing EUA-CDE

- **The largest** European Doctoral Education Network
- **Gathers** a community of academic leaders and professionals from 254 universities in 36 European countries
- **Drives** doctoral education policies and promotes cooperation and exchange of good practices on issues of common interest
- **Organises** regular conferences, workshops, focus groups, webinars and thematic peer groups, addressing fundamental and emerging topics of doctoral education
- **Identifies** and monitors the trends in doctoral education, inside and outside Europe
- **Participates** in policy dialogues on the European and global level
- **Contributes** to strengthening the international dimension of doctoral education and enhancing the visibility and collaboration of doctoral schools and programmes at the European and international levels
Background of reforms of doctoral education in Europe

- Increased importance for the European Research Area
  - Innovation Union 2010
  - Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training 2011
- National legislation
- Much of this is connected to the discourse regarding the knowledge society as a driver for growth
Excellent research as a base for doctoral education in Europe

- The core component of doctoral training is the advancement of knowledge through original research.
- Doctoral candidates must be allowed independence and flexibility.
- Doctoral candidates need to be prepared for careers inside and outside of academia.
- Institutions are responsible for their doctoral candidates.
Let's start with some numbers.
Growing Number of doctoral candidates in Europe

2013: 853,360 | 2016: 884,353

Source: Eurostat
International mobility of doctoral candidates

Source: Eurostat
Gender distribution of doctoral candidates in Europe (2016)
(48% female doctoral candidates)

Source: Eurostat
Survey on doctoral education in Europe
Survey on doctoral education in Europe

Background

• Together with researchers from the Ghent University (Prof. Jeroen Huisman)
• November 2017 – February 2018
• For all European Universities addressing institutional leadership
• 292 valid responses
• 1 response per institution
• Covers 40% of all doctoral candidates in Europe (according to ETER data)
SURVEY

Doctoral education in Europe today: approaches and institutional structures

By Alexander Hugall, Beat Spinn and Ulla Bernt Hansen

Co-authors:
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and Jeron Husman
Diversity of organisation of doctoral education
Institutions establish diverse, often parallel structures for doctoral education …

To what extent is doctoral education in your institution organised as…?

- Doctoral education is organised in programmes
- Doctoral education is managed through an organisational unit doctoral school
- Doctoral education is managed through an inter-organisational unit
- Doctoral education is led by individual supervisors

To a great extent/always
To some extent
Not at all/to a small extent

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... based on the different levels of University governance (university, faculty, discipline)

To what extent is doctoral education in your institution organised at or around …?

- To a great extent/always
- To some extent
- Not at all/to a small extent

Themes or societal challenges

- The disciplinary level
- The faculty level

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Variety of criteria to institutionally evaluate doctoral education

In your institution, to what extent are the following aspects/criteria used to assess/evaluate doctoral education?

- Academic publications by doctoral candidates
- Completion rates of doctoral candidates
- Staff qualifications
- Satisfaction of doctoral candidates
- Qualitative indicators
- Level of internationalisation
- Level of competitive funding received
- Careers of doctoral graduates
- Relevance for society
- Relevance for the economy

Options:
- To a great extent/always
- To some extent
- Not at all/to a small extent
Common goal:
Research Excellence in Doctoral Education
To what extent does an average doctoral candidate in your institution spend her/his time on the following activities?

- Scientific/academic research
- Research related administration
- Teaching
- Teaching related administration
- Science communication
- Internships, workplace training or experience

Options:
- To a great extent/always
- To some extent
- Not at all/to a small extent
and (mainly) seen as future academic and scholars,

To what extent is doctoral education in your institution conceived as preparing the future generation of...

- Academics/scholars
- Researchers outside of academia
- Leaders/managers
- Highly skilled knowledge workers

- To a great extent/always
- To some extent
- Not at all/to a small extent

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but also increasingly seen as the research professionals of tomorrow.

To what extent is doctoral education in your institution conceived as preparing the future generation of...

- Academics/scholars
- Researchers outside of academia
- Leaders/managers
- Highly skilled knowledge workers

- To a great extent/always
- To some extent
- Not at all/to a small extent

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In your institution, how important are the following elements of doctoral training?

- Specific research competencies
- Generic academic competencies
- Knowledge valorisation
- Teaching competencies
- Management and leadership competencies

(Extremely) important: 0% - 20%
(Somewhat) important: 20% - 60%
(Somewhat) unimportant: 60% - 100%
but also acquire transversal competencies

In your institution, how important are the following elements of doctoral training?

- Specific research competencies
- Generic academic competencies
- Knowledge valorisation
- Teaching competencies
- Management and leadership competencies

- (Extremely) important
- Somewhat important
- (Somewhat) unimportant
Supervision
The practice of the supervision is highly diverse even within a single institution.

To what extent are doctoral candidates in your institution supervised by …?

- A supervisory team with members internal to this institution
- A single supervisor
- A supervisory team including member(s) from other universities

Options:
- In most/all doctoral programmes
- In about half of doctoral programmes
- Never/in some doctoral programmes

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Key aspects of the supervisor-supervisee relation are regulated

In your institution, are there rules or guidelines regarding the following aspects of doctoral supervision?

- Appointment of supervisor(s)
- Formal reporting by doctoral candidate on...
- Formal feedback by supervisor(s) to the doctoral...
- Written agreement between doctoral candidate,...
- Supervisor-doctoral candidate conflicts
- Minimum number of meetings with the...
- Voluntary training for supervisors
- Maximum number of doctoral candidates per...
- Obligatory training for supervisors

In most/all doctoral programmes
In about half of doctoral programmes
Never/in some doctoral programmes

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Future priorities
There are multiple strategic priorities within a single institution...

To what extent are the following issues currently considered a strategic priority in doctoral education within your institution:

- Funding of doctoral education
- Research ethics
- Attracting doctoral candidates from abroad
- Career development of doctoral candidates
- Open Access / Open Science
- Gender equality
- Health/wellbeing of doctoral candidates
- Increasing the number of doctoral candidates
- University-business cooperation within doctoral...
- Societal engagement of doctoral candidates

- To a great extent/always
- To some extent
- Not at all/to a small extent

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Conclusions

• The production of knowledge through original research is at the centre of doctoral education.

• The training of doctoral candidates reflects this prioritisation.

• Doctoral education serves to prepare doctoral candidates for a variety of careers.

• An overwhelming majority of institutions has established structures for doctoral education.
Conclusions

- Structures are not exclusive – different structures can exist at the same time and enrich each other.
- Doctoral education is an endeavour for all of the institutions – rooted in the different levels of governance.
- Most institutions have implemented measures to regulate the relationship between the doctoral candidate and supervisor.
- Key strategic priorities of doctoral education are similar to the burning issues of European research policy today.
Thank you for your attention

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