European doctoral education: Quality enhancement

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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
Growth in European Doctoral Education

- About 50% for the EU as a whole since 2004, with big variations
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
Salzburg Principles and recommendations

• Salzburg Principles from 2005 – outcomes of an EUA-led project and a Bologna seminar
  ✓ The doctorate is research-based
  ✓ Importance of institutional strategies
  ✓ Diversity

• Salzburg recommendations 2010 – from consultations with CDE members
  ✓ Research as the ’basis and the difference’ from the other two cycles
  ✓ Space for individual development
  ✓ Autonomy for the institution to choose mission and strategy and to set up the appropriate structures
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

- Programme level
- Faculty level
- One for the whole institution
- Inter-institutional doc. schools between several universities
- Other (e.g. departmental level, non-university research institutions)

Source: ERA Survey 2013
EUA European Research Area Survey 2013
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maximum number of doctoral candidates per supervisor?</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligatory training for supervisors?</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary training for supervisors?</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirement or recommendation for minimum number of meetings with the supervisor(s)?</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirement or recommendation for supervisory teams?</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written agreements between supervisors, supervisees and/or institution?</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures for dealing with supervisor-supervisee conflicts?</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systematic feedback collected from doctoral candidates?</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ARDE Survey 2011
European Quality Assurance: Overview

• Different approaches when creating national quality assurance systems: (programme or institutional) accreditation, evaluations or audits

• Level of institutional autonomy in creating internal QA systems varies (www.university-autonomy.eu)

• Countries and also institutions are in different phases in implementing institutional as well as national QA systems

-> There does not exist one European QA, but standards and guidelines providing framework for good practice sharing
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
How make most out of external QA?

• When developing processes the starting point should be the institutional mission and profile
• Synergy between internal and external QA
• Ensure the link between strategic management and QA processes
• Adopt quality enhancement approach to QA
• The goal should be an institutional quality culture supported by the QA processes, not the processes themselves
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
Triple i

**Interdisciplinarity**

**Internationalization**

**Intersectoral**
Interdisciplinarity

YES,
along with Triple i approach:

- Internationalisation
- Intersectorial
- Interdisciplinary

sandwich (collaborative)
co-tutelle
joint

...20...
interdisciplinarity

vs

narrowing done to:

- domain specific
- academic only
- local/national
Rational for such approach:

- new dynamic of HE/research, both on European and global level
- new developments in knowledge intertwining of different research fields
- relevance of knowledge transfer
Summary

• European universities are going forward, raising the quality of doctoral education

• We have the principles and the policies

• ... But there are serious challenges to overcome
• and they might not be too different from the global challenges for doctoral education
Thank you for your attention