



EUA

European University Association

EUA Report on Doctoral Programmes

BFUG Meeting, Berlin, 5 March 2007

I. Methodology

- Starting Point: Bergen Communiqué – promoting synergies between higher education and research – importance of doctoral programmes & researcher careers
- Steering Committee: EUA, Austria, France, ESIB, Eurodoc
- Goal to organise a broad debate – workshops, seminars and conferences targeted to different groups
- Efforts concentrated mainly on three main areas
 - ✓ Programme issues, e.g. supervision & monitoring; transversal skills
 - ✓ Institutional & structural issues, e.g. MA/PhD links, doctoral schools, the European dimension
 - ✓ Funding of doctoral candidates, programmes, institutions

II. Programme of workshops & seminars - Chronology

- Workshops
 - ✓ EUA I - Supervision and Generic Skills (23/24 March 2006)
 - ✓ Ö Presidency/EUA/DG RES Conf : doctoral candidates as young professionals: funding & support mechanisms (1-2 June 2006)
 - ✓ EUA II- Focus on Master/PhD & on graduate schools in Europe
- Study commissioned on financing doctoral programmes – questionnaires received from 36 countries
- Bologna Seminar hosted by the University of Nice, 7/9 December 2006 – 420 participants
- Recommendations: “Matching Ambition with Responsibilities and Resources”
- Report takes account of all these elements

III. Main Conclusions of the Report -1

- High quality doctoral programme & career opportunities for young researchers are even more important for strengthening research capacity & improving the quality & attractiveness of European HE than before
- Hence linking the higher education and research agendas is crucial
- The Salzburg Principles remain the basis for discussion of doctoral programmes
- Doctoral programmes are unique as driven by their research component but the implementation of the 3 cycles needs to be seen as a whole

III. Main conclusions of the Report - 2

- The main responsibility lies with the universities: in accepting their responsibility for embedding doctoral programmes in institutional strategies & structures:
 - ✓ Doctoral/research/graduate schools
 - ✓ Supervision & assessment arrangements
 - ✓ Transferable skills development
 - ✓ Enhancing internationalisation
- New developments are emerging in response to changes in labour market demands, e.g.
 - ✓ Professional doctorates
 - ✓ Inter-sectoral mobility

III. Main conclusions of the Report - 3

- Status & career development issues: a joint responsibility of HEIs and governments
 - ✓ Shared responsibility for creating career paths & opportunities for doctoral & other early stage researchers
 - ✓ Working conditions & rights both in academia & other sectors
- Funding –questionnaire results from 36 countries
 - ✓ One way of mapping expectations for the third cycle against the realities of funding
 - ✓ Great diversity in funding sources, channels & modes identified, expected to be an irreversible trend
 - ✓ Will require more cooperation across funding agencies nationally & internationally
 - ✓ Insufficient data available

IV Recommendations - 1

- More structured doctoral programmes & better status, career prospects & funding for young researchers are essential in boosting the research capacity of HE & improving its quality & international competitiveness – this is important for the success of the Bologna Process
- Universities need to reinforce their efforts to embed doctoral programmes in institutional strategies & policies
- Further sharing of experience is needed among universities on innovative doctoral programmes & practices emerging across Europe
- Together with public authorities they need to take responsibility for creating appropriate career paths & opportunities

IV Recommendations - 2

- To create a shared vision of doctoral education in the EHEA that is attractive & globally competitive:
 - ✓ more information on funding mechanisms & funding levels of doctoral candidates & doctoral programmes/schools should be made available
 - ✓ increased consultation & coordination at regional, national & European level between ministries, funding councils & other funding bodies is required.
- Underline once more the importance of strengthening the links between HE & Research & of improving the synergies between HE, research and innovation as a pre-requisite for a properly functioning knowledge triangle
- Emphasis the attractiveness of researcher careers is essential to increase the number of researchers and in responding to changes in the labour market, thus as an employability issue