

# **The “PhD Competences – Labor Market Nexus”**

Hans Sonneveld

Netherlands Centre for Research Schools and  
Graduate Schools

**Agenda for Action – Priority topics selected by  
participants of CDE launch conference, June 2008  
(selected by more than >50% of participants)**

- **Quality criteria for doctoral programmes**
- **Quality control**
- **Institutional cooperation**
- **Supervision requirements & training of supervisors**
- **Joint doctoral programmes**

**Sample of topics selected by participants of CDE  
launch conference (selected by more 35 – 50%)**

- **Generic skills training**
- **Study periods abroad**
- **Doctoral candidates' mobility**
- **Career development**

## **Selection of topics with lowest priority**

- **Attrition rates and time to degree**
- **Student progress**
- **Transition to labour market**

# **Necessary improvement of Finnish PhD Training in view of working life**

- *Source: Taloustutkimus Oy, in: PhDs in Finland, Academy of Finland, 2003*
- **More orientation on practice**
- **More focus more on the real world of business and working life**
- **Development of ability to put knowledge into practice**
- **The degree should be broadly-based and multidisciplinary**
- **International experience**
- **Closer interaction between universities and business and industry**

# **Intermediate results of the 2008 Netherlands Survey of Doctorate Recipients I**

- **Two-thirds of PhD recipients who have a job at the time of the defence stay employed within academia**
- **11,2% are not working and seeking for employment, at the moment of the defence**
- **6% are employed in government**
- **6% are working for a non-profit organization**
- **11% are working in industry or business (for profit)**
- **Three-fourths consider their post-PhD employment to be closely or partly related to their PhD degree**
- **Three-fourths of respondents rate the overall satisfaction with their principal job as “very satisfied” or “satisfied”**

## **Intermediate results of the 2008 Netherlands Survey of Doctorate Recipients II – most important work tasks at post-PhD. labour market**

- **Research, basic and applied**
- **Development - using knowledge gained from research for the production of materials, devices**
- **Design of equipment, processes, structures, models**
- **Computer applications, programming, systems development**
- **Managing or supervising people or projects**
- **Professional services (e.g. health care, counselling, financial services, legal services)**
- **Teaching**

## **Six questions**

- 1. Which PhD competences and skills are under-developed in view of the PhDs' future labour market positions?**
- 2. How do we accommodate PhD independence in skills development and labour market preparation?**
- 3. What are the responsibilities of universities, graduate schools and supervisors in view of labour market preparation?**
- 4. What are the fundamental topics in skills and competence development?**
- 5. Should we think in terms of generic skills or discipline specific skills?**
- 6. How do we balance the skills-workshop-machine with the serious acquirement of extra experiences during the PhD trajectory?**