

**Bologna Seminar Helsinki 30 September – 1 October 2008**

**3rd cycle degrees: competences and researcher career**

**Outcomes of the seminar and future steps  
perceived**

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## Doctoral Studies: Process or Outcome?

*“Have Itaca always in your mind,  
arriving there is your target,  
but, do not hurry the journey.*

*It is better that this extends for long years  
And in your old age you arrive into the island  
With all you have gained in the way,  
Without expecting that Itaca will enrich you”*

**Konstantinos Kavafis**

## Provisional conclusions 1

1. From universities' perspective the EHEA and the ERA are interrelated. This is most visible in doctoral studies. Doctoral studies should be based on original research.
2. Today's reality requires that not only first and second cycle programmes, but also doctoral programmes should be “student” centered. In the case of doctoral studies we should speak of doctoral candidates instead of students.
3. Doctoral candidate centeredness has consequences for the way doctoral studies are organized and perceived.
4. The quality of doctoral studies is enhanced when organized in a structured way.

## **Provisional conclusions 2**

5. If doctoral programmes are organized in doctoral schools, research centers or graduate schools, those entities should develop a strong profile. This profile should reflect the mission and expertise of the school or center and its academic staff, as well as its research agenda and identified regional needs when appropriate.
6. It is thought important for universities to take notice of and discuss different models and approaches for organizing doctoral studies as developed in an international context. This will stimulate good practices and might stimulate international cooperation. University partnerships or the membership of the recently established EUA Council for Doctoral Education seem to be a good instrument in this respect

## **Provisional conclusions 3**

7. To facilitate the ERA and to identify rights and obligations for researcher the European Charter for Researchers as well as the Code of Conduct need to be brought explicitly to the attention of HE institutions and their individual researchers.
8. Doctoral programmes should be organized in such a way that they offer personal satisfaction to the individual researcher and at the same time prepare for careers in and outside academia and develop good citizenship.
9. Public authorities and institutions share a collective responsibility in promoting and facilitating attractive research careers for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers. As an effect these researchers should be offered realistic and competitive contracts in terms of length and conditions.

## **Provisional conclusions 4**

- 10. It is thought absolutely necessary to collect more data about the success rate of doctoral programmes as well as the career development of their participants. This is seen as a responsibility of national authorities as well as institutions. US experience in this respect could serve as an example and source of inspiration.**
- 11. Public authorities as well as HE institutions should stimulate and facilitate international mobility of doctoral candidates, post docs and senior researchers / academics.**
- 12. HE institutions should be encouraged to develop integrated international doctoral programmes which lead to a double or joint degree.**

## **Provisional conclusions 5**

13. Among doctoral candidates awareness should be raised that doctoral programmes prepare for employability inside but also outside academia.
- 14 The development of identified sets of generic competences or transferable skills should be part of every doctoral programme. These competences or skills can be trained by using different models. One of these is tailor made workshops.
15. Doctoral studies should be based on a set of appropriate learning outcomes. It might be useful to reflect these learning outcomes in a Diploma Supplement linked to the doctoral degree.
16. Institutions should guarantee the competence of the supervisors for doctoral studies.

## **Provisional conclusions 6**

17. It is thought necessary to raise awareness and understanding among supervisors of doctoral programmes that participating in an up-to-date training programme to develop supervision skills, is in their own interest and will probably enhance the success rate of doctoral studies.
18. Institutions, doctoral schools, research centers, graduate schools and their supervisors should only offer or accept proposals for doctoral studies which are feasible in the given timeframe.
19. Public governments and HE institutions should facilitate the portability of (national, regional or institutional) grants to participate in a doctoral programme offered (partly) outside the country.



