

# Conclusions from Working Group 3:

## Quality of doctoral programmes

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# Main issues discussed

Very rich summary of the Quality Network (Doctoral Project) by Prof. Ella Ritchie who stressed the wide diversity of:

- Institutional types, disciplines, legal frameworks, educational hierarchies
- Definitions of the doctorate – is it the research thesis or the research process; high-level skills?
- Types of doctorate (professional, collaborative, practice-based, etc)
- Definitions of quality (touches all aspects)
- The research environments (supervision, support)
- Types of students/young researchers (younger/older)
- Monitoring and assessing progress
- Etc.

**Need to ensure quality despite the diversity**

# Key issues

## 1. Institutional level

- Develop institutional policies for:
  - ✓ Supervision / support arrangements / evaluation
  - ✓ Preparing supervisors for their responsibilities
  - ✓ Skills development and assessment (combination of subject specific and generic skills), taking into account the employability requirements of young researchers
  - ✓ Monitoring and assessment of doctorates

# Key issues

## **2. National level – Quality Assurance**

Institutional policies and responsibilities regarding doctoral studies take into account the national QA and legal frameworks

# Key issues

## 3. European level – mobility and international collaboration

- Agreement that the doctorate develops leadership and high-level skills for different sectors of activities, including academia
- The Dublin descriptors for PhD studies form a good starting point for further discussion
- Not much support for a European doctorate: it is confusing
- Could the “European Charter for Researchers” constitute a basis for a reflection of quality standards at doctoral level?

# Conclusions and recommendations

- More discussion is needed around the requirements for a doctorate because of disciplinary differences => importance of having bottom-up discussions at institutional and disciplinary levels
- Very constructive discussion that showed strong commitment to improve the quality of the young researchers' experience