

*The Role of the Doctorate in the
Junior Research Career
- Developments in the UK*

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*Early Stage Researchers in English Higher
Education Institutions
A Study for the Higher Education Funding
Council*

- *Context: Fears about skills shortages in key fields*
 - *Demographic factors*
 - *Expansion of the HE sector*
 - *Losses through external and internal brain drain*

- *Focus on improving the 'attractiveness' of research careers*

Dealing with Diversity

- *Is it possible to begin to develop a common operational definition as the basis for national or European policy?*
- *National diversity*
- *Disciplinary*
- *Sectoral*
- *institutional*

Defining the Early Stage?

- The Role of the Masters Qualification?
 - Is it a precondition to PhD entry?
 - Is it part of research training at all in some fields?
Or a form of income generation and therefore devalued?
- The Doctorate?
 - UK – Roberts Review – First five years (post doctoral)
 - European Commission – First four years (including doctoral research)

Defining the 'Early Stage'- The role of the Doctorate?

- Is doctoral research part of *pre-career* training or part of the early stage of a research career?
- Assumption that it is part of pre-career training based on the 'science' model – based on presumption of *linear* career progression
- Linked to issue of contractual status of doctoral candidates: students or employees?
In practice this is highly complex and hybrid status is increasingly common

Aspects of Diversity in the UK

Only 41% academic staff in the UK have a doctorate
Staff at new universities and in some disciplines are much less likely to have a doctorate

Non-linear transition

The majority of entrants into UK HE move from other forms of employment (and not directly from a doctorate)

70% PhD graduates in arts/humanities worked before registering for a PhD – same for business schools

66% biologists moved directly onto a PhD (linked to funding – the majority of doctoral scholarships (over 70% are in science)

Men are nearly twice as likely to follow a linear route (18% compared to 10%)

Linearity and Career Change

- Only one third of academic staff in the UK are recruited directly from studying (inc doctorates)
- DFES study – 61% academic staff had previously held a non-academic position
- 36% considered themselves to have made a 'career change'
- (most common in business and allied studies – 81% and least common in biology and physics -15 and 13%)

Part Time

- Little mention of part-time doctorates – a significant proportion of UK doctorates are registered part time
- In 2001/2, 11,340 fulltime PhDs were awarded in the UK and 3,535 part time Phds (about a third)
- More women than men
- 2001/2 58% UK doctorates awarded to home students so about 42% doctoral candidates are ,foreign'
- Part time candidates are more likely to be home students.

- In many disciplines recruitment into permanent lectureships takes place prior to doctoral completion or even registration
- Significant institutional variation (the new or less research intense universities are more likely to recruit people without doctorates – eg Sunderland)

Research Positions

- What kinds of positions do doctoral candidates in the UK occupy?
- What are the trends and how might this affect moves to harmonise programmes?

Systemic factors in England: New and Diverse 'entry points'

- Massification of HE – increased UG recruitment
- Research Funding Mechanisms
 - Pressure to generate external income
 - The Research Assessment Exercise (and its link to HEI income)

Further growth in the proportion of people on fixed term contracts

The types of positions doctoral candidates might increasingly find themselves in:

Lectureships – completing conventional doctorates/ undertaking doctorates by publication (academic staff only!)

More common in less research intense institutions and some disciplines

Big increases in the number of fixed term teaching-intense positions (to cover research buy-out; support sabbaticals and additional student numbers)

Casual (hourly paid) teaching assistants

temporary lectureships

teaching fellowships – more teaching hours than above graduate teaching assistantships (linked to Phds)

Growth in research-only positions

- Significant year on year growth in the number of contract research positions
- 96% of staff in such positions are on temporary contracts (24% increase in last ten years)
 - May be completing doctorates
 - May be used to enable people to register for a doctorate
 - (many institutions waive fees for staff working more than 50% FTE)
- Research Fellowships
 - Usually but not always post-docs
(depends on discipline and institution)
 - Many of these people are BOTH students and employees – an increasingly common and flexible hybrid.

LAW

- Few law undergrads progress into MAs or research
- Law Masters are predominantly populated by foreign students and are not linked directly into research careers.
- It is common to appoint new lecturers into permanent positions before they complete, or without, doctorates
- Publications are more important on the CV than a doctorate
- It is increasingly common for those who enter without a doctorate to register for a doctorate by publication

- There is little funding for Masters or doctorates in law. Those that do register thus use a combination of methods to support their research.
- These include temporary lectureships, teaching fellowships or casual teaching positions
- Graduate teaching assistantships – big increases
- Contract research staff – less common in law than other disciplines. May waive fees
- Mobility is rare and not expected or rewarded but law attracts people from abroad.

Approached me about taking an MA

I advised against it – no funding and no need

Decided to do PhD but no funds.

Started in a clerical post for me and law paid her part-time PhD fees. She also did some (paid) teaching

We applied for project grants together.

We got one and she started working full-time as a researcher on the 18 month project (so no fees necessary)

We applied for a research council CASE award – specifically links her into an ,industrial' partner (3 months there over 3 years)

To keep her employment continuity and links in the research groups work we continued to pay her 1 day per week (the max allowed) to write up the project findings for publication

Last term she worked on a consultancy basis on this HEFCE project.

To enable her to focus on writing up she has decided to take 3 months unpaid leave – maintains contractual continuity (and rights etc.)

Only the first clerical position was advertised!

No mobility was involved but she spends a lot of time abroad at meetings etc

A Common Programme?

- The level of diversity in approaches is enormous and increasing and, in some key respects very positive
- Is it possible or desirable to attempt to regulate or control these processes at national or EU level
- Is the apprenticeship model inherently exploitative or can it be seen as a form of partnership?
- Is there a risk of 'levelling down' (reduce bad practice at expense of innovation and excellence)
- Might redulation potentially reduce the supply?
- Can we restrict regulation to outcomes but not the process?