

The Development of the Doctoral Cycle of the Bologna Process and Quality Issues

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Designing and Implementing a 'Bologna' Doctoral Cycle

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Presentation will briefly cover

- The evolution of the Doctoral cycle of Bologna
- Principles for the Doctoral cycle
- The Quality Framework of Bologna
- Designing a Code of Practice
- Supporting Doctoral students
- Designing a Training Programme
- The Challenges of Implementation

The Evolution of the Doctoral cycle of Bologna

- Launched in 1999 with 29 countries ...by 2015 47 countries
- Aim was to shape a pan-European higher education system to support economic growth and competitiveness in the global economy
- Bologna is not legally binding but has led to major restructuring of degree programmes and institutional structures across the participating states
- Doctoral cycle was added in the early 2000s as a means of strengthening Europe's research base and to make its labour force more competitive

Doctoral cycle based on;- Ten Salzburg principles

- The core component of doctoral training is the advancement of knowledge through original research. At the same time it is recognised that doctoral training must increasingly meet the needs of an employment market that is wider than academia
- Embedding in institutional strategies and policies...
- The importance of diversity: the rich diversity of doctoral programmes in Europe including joint doctorates is a strength which has to be underpinned by quality and sound practice
- Doctoral candidates as early stage researchers: should be recognised as professionals with commensurate rights

continued

- The crucial role of supervision and assessment
- Achieving critical mass
- Doctoral programmes should operate within appropriate time duration (3-4 years)
- The promotion of innovative structures to meet the challenge of interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable degrees
- Increased mobility
- Ensure appropriate funding

Agreement of Salzburg Principles (2005)

- http://www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/upload/Salzburg_Conclusions.1108990538850.pdf

Key points

- Establishment of structures for doctoral students
- Structured RT programme
- Rights of candidates
- Mobility
- Sound QA

The Development of the Doctoral Cycle

- Increasing link between Research Innovation and Education
- Growing emphasis on Employability and Skills
- Increasingly Internationalised context (competition, collaboration, rankings, mobility)
- Concordat for Researchers
- **New developments in research Masters**

What are the drivers for change in national doctoral programmes from the Bologna Process?

- Not binding – voluntary process but still has a strong influence across the wider European university sector
- No equivalent (yet) of the diploma supplement for the first cycle for recording of third cycle degrees
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
- Benchmarking exercise through Trends reports, the Tuning project and other assessments by the EUA

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- Mutually shared criteria, methodology and self-accreditation through ENQA and The European Standards and Guidance; The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications becomes a reference point for the three cycles of degrees
- Mobility of students especially when funded by a European project are a driver for change
- EUA and the Council for Doctoral Education shapes policy networks
- The power of Benchmarking, League Tables and 'soft' law
- Reputational capital acquired (internationally ?)

The Quality Context of Bologna

EHEA (Bologna) and the European Universities Association provides large amount of guidance and good practice on outcomes, structures, quality assurance, training and recent developments

Useful to engage with this as extensively as possible

Nature of doctorates Dublin descriptors, FHEQ, DOC-Careers project on Collaborative Doctorates, Guidance on Joint Doctorates

Quality Assurance, European Standards and Guidelines (ESG), ENQA (Association of QA agencies) EQAR (quality register)

Engaging in networks and projects from the EC or the EUA is a valuable source of learning

Encouraging and Supporting Staff and Student Mobility

Developing a strong national network representing Graduate schools (or equivalent) is important in order to make the most out of these activities

Code of Practice

- A code of Practice for Doctoral students based on the Bologna process is a good starting point for effecting structural, cultural and academic change.
- The UK Code of Practice (predated third cycle), introduced by the QAA in 2004 was a key determinant in raising the profile, professionalising and improving doctoral provision in the UK.
- Code covered Institutional arrangements, research environment, selection, admission and induction, supervisory arrangements, progress reviews, skills development and feedback mechanisms.

Designing A Research Training Programme

- What is the value of a RTP for doctoral candidates?
- To gain specific knowledge to help complete research degrees successfully
- To gain a broad range of Research and research Management skills to become a competent researcher
- To be more employable both inside and outside academia (50% of UK doctorates are employed outside a research role)
- **Training by research and not just for research**

Designing a RTP in the UK

- In the UK the Research Councils give guidance on subject specific and transferable skills
- Generic skills include
 - team working,
 - presentation skills,
 - writing and analytical skills,
 - communication skills,
 - entrepreneurial skills.
- Designing an interdisciplinary programme helps to develop and strengthen these skills
- Need to get academic and professional staff on board to deliver programme (both staff and students likely to be initially sceptical)



Implementing Change

- It's not a quick process
- Good quality management isn't just about structures and processes its about people and culture
- Need a clear and commonly owned strategic direction where supervision and training is valued
- Be prepared to manage people as well as the process
- Assure minimum standards but encourage continuous reflection, development and improvement.
- It is worth it because excellent doctoral provision is central to the wider academic standing of the institution and will provide a sound basis for a growing international profile