



EUA-CDE- EUA Council for Doctoral Education

news

IMPLEMENTING THE SALZBURG PRINCIPLES

On 21 October 2010 the EUA Council, which is made up of representatives of the European rectors' conferences, unanimously approved the Salzburg II document with its recommendations for the reform of doctoral education. This document is the product of a process that began one and a half years ago, in the summer of 2009. The day before the second Annual Meeting of the EUA-CDE (4-5 June 2009), the Steering Committee met in Lausanne, Switzerland. After a successful year establishing the EUA-CDE, the new membership service believed it was necessary to be more proactive in communicating the achievements of Europe's universities. The Steering Committee therefore decided to launch the Salzburg II initiative. Five years had passed since the Salzburg Principles were established as the foundation of the reforms of doctoral education, and it seemed the right moment to stop and take stock of the situation.

Also, there was (and is) a feeling that we are at a very sensitive time in the reform process. The important positive message is that Europe's universities have taken the lead and are exercising strongly their responsibility for transforming doctoral education from a private supervisor-supervisee relationship to an area that has the institutional support required for such a vital function. It has been a move from a system without much accountability, career guidance or institutional support to one of rights and responsibilities with training for a wider labour market, and with the institution taking responsibility and offering support.

However, there is a more negative side: the issue of over-structuring. EUA's Trends 2010 report suggests that the rise of institutional structures, such as doctoral schools, has been overtaken by the increase in taught elements in doctoral programmes.¹ Even though taught courses are an important support for doctoral education – and some disciplines (such as economics) have always had an important tradition of master classes – it is important to affirm the main message of the Salzburg Principles, namely that doctoral education is based on original research. The major outcomes of doctoral education (creative thinking, autonomy, flexible mindsets, etc.) can only develop through the painful process of conducting research.

Reducing the doctorate to an advanced Master's means losing what makes doctoral education valuable.

As the consultations with the members of EUA-CDE began, these worries emerged from different contexts. Institutions that had a long experience with structured doctoral education sometimes observed that doctoral candidates were behaving more and more like students. It seemed that the more help the institution gave, the bigger the temptation for the doctoral candidates simply to follow the structure without developing the independence the doctorate aims for. Wide offers of courses and skills development could lead to simple procrastination.

In a similar way, adopting detailed credit systems could change candidates' chief motivation away from research towards the 'hunt for credits'. Some institutions had already reacted to this by setting limits to non-research activities (and here credits proved a good tool). But it was clear that part of the implementation consisted of striking a balance between making more of doctoral programmes while at the same time protecting the core of the doctorate process: original research.

Other worries were connected to the context of the national higher education and research systems. In top-down systems, universities often lacked the autonomy to decide how to strike this balance. In other cases, there was a mismatch between the desire of governments to increase the number of doctoral candidates and the resources allocated to universities to provide high-quality structures. However, the main result of the consultations was the great and justified pride within individual institutions of what they had achieved, and a wide consensus about the importance of seeing doctoral education as a special cycle within the Bologna structure, based on research and therefore different from the first and second cycle – the main point of the Salzburg Principles as they were articulated in 2005.

If the consensus affirms the principles from 2005, what, then, is new in Salzburg II? In fact, we were not out for news – and certainly not for a new set of principles – when Salzburg II was launched. We wanted to know about implementation, and we



¹ Trends 2010, p. 43

wanted to show the achievements on the ground. Salzburg II has been an important learning process, which has given much more depth to the principles – as for instance the examples of admissions and internationalisation show. In the 2005 Salzburg Principles, the issue of admissions was not touched upon directly, but could be seen as included in the call for embedding research in institutional strategies and policies (the second principle). Salzburg II makes it explicit that admission is an institutional responsibility, and that admissions procedures should be public and transparent. There are also a number of other recommendations, such as the importance of recruiting doctoral candidates with a strong research potential rather than past performance – not all good Master's students will be good researchers, after all. Internationalisation is explicitly mentioned in the ninth Salzburg Principle under mobility. Salzburg II not only gives examples of models of internationalisation, it also stresses the connection between mobility offers and research, not least that mobility in doctoral education must be driven by the research project and the need of the individual doctoral candidate. In sum, Salzburg II makes it clear what it means to implement structures in the research-based third cycle.

What does this mean for the future; where do we go from here? Concretely, we now have the possibility to look into the major individual elements of implementation. In October 2010, two new projects were launched, which will look into issues that are central for doctoral education: quality and

internationalisation. The Accountable Research Environments for Doctoral Education (ARDE) project will take up the points on quality and accountability in Salzburg II. It will be a way to demonstrate the quality procedures that already exist in the different doctoral schools and programmes, and it will be an opportunity to share best practice in a number of working groups in the years to come. On internationalisation, EUA and partners from Latin America, Southern Africa and South-East Asia will look at the increasing role of doctoral education at the global level, particularly in building capacity in developing countries. The Cooperation on Doctoral Education between Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe project will look at the issues of doctoral education in relation to big global agendas as well as at practical issues of North-South cooperation. EUA-CDE members will have privileged access to these events, and we are looking forward to working with you.

This issue of EUA-CDE News will present examples of implementation of reforms in doctoral education. From the Netherlands, we have an example of some of the oldest doctoral schools, established more than twenty years ago; and from Spain we have an example of implementation in one institution in a country that is about to pass an important new law on doctoral education. There will also be more details about the new projects.

We hope that the issue will inspire and inform you.

DOCTORAL EDUCATION IN THE NETHERLANDS, 2010 – A BRIEF HISTORY AND A SILENT REVOLUTION



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The Netherlands, being one of the first countries on the European continent to establish research and graduate schools, is entering a second stage in its modernisation of the doctoral system. The first stage (1987–2009) consisted of the introduction of a system of (national or local) research schools and graduate schools. It brought de-individualisation of the supervision and collectivisation of the training programme and turned a majority of PhD candidates into employed candidates. National co-operation in their training has been introduced. Careful steps were taken on a path of external and internal quality assurance.

A second stage started quietly as soon as the new BA/MA structure sat on solid ground, from around 2005 onwards – the year of the Salzburg Principles. The Dutch universities implemented a system of local graduate schools, while keeping many national research schools intact. We see the settling down of an organisational structure that combines

local graduate schools with national co-operation in PhD training in research schools. At the moment, the Dutch doctoral system is going through a phase of a silent revolution.

The essential hallmark of the silent revolution is the sliding of the first phase of the PhD trajectory into the final stage of the Master programme, mainly by having (Research) Master students prepare a proposal for a PhD project. This goes hand in hand with giving the potential PhD candidates a clearer voice in the finding and development of their topic and project, and professionalisation of data collection on the performances of the doctoral system. This development is supported considerably by NWO who started a special subsidy programme for graduate schools who want their potential doctoral candidates to lay the foundation for a PhD in their Master programme.

The monitoring of supervision quality and professional training of PhD supervisors is beginning to get into stride. Strikingly, the growing maturity of the Dutch doctoral system keeps in step with a certain and increasing flabbiness of the quality assurance of the doctoral system.

Some facts and figures

There is a total number of 7 400 doctoral students. 14 universities are offering doctoral programmes (Bartelse e.a. 2007). The average completion time is 50.3 months for PhD candidates with an employee status (Sonneveld 2010). The success rate is 75% (on average) (Oost 2006).

Success can also be measured in terms of labour market perspective. New research learns that recent PhD recipients reach an employment rate of 86%, that is, having a job at the moment of the thesis defence. The average age at that moment of defence is 34. Striking are other demographic facts. The proportion of male/female students is 53%/47%. This means that the Netherlands have gone through a period of strong feminisation of the PhD system, since the early nineties. Parallel to this, is the internationalisation of the system, with a percentage of 28% international students among the doctoral candidates in 2010 (Sonneveld 2010).

The organisational structure

All these results are achieved through a system of local graduate schools and (often) national research schools that cover the total population of doctoral candidates. All 14 Dutch universities have a number of graduate schools. Organisational structure, responsibilities, level of mutual co-operation, financial basis and level of professionalisation may differ considerably university by university.

In terms of numbers, the Netherlands have 87 research schools (accredited by the Royal Academy) and a number

of local graduate schools that cover all the disciplines. In many cases, staff members and PhD students co-operating in national research schools are also members of local graduate schools.

In terms of critical mass, most graduate and research schools are in a good position. In 2004, of 33 research schools only five could be regarded as small schools (yearly inflow of less than 10 doctoral candidates). The other 28 schools had an average inflow of more than 10 candidates (between 10 and 37), in this respect meeting an essential accreditation criteria of the Royal Academy. The average number of starting PhD candidates per year will be higher in the graduate schools. They function at a higher aggregation level than the research schools.

In terms of institutional autonomy, the graduate schools and research schools share the same type of worries. Their functioning is seriously hindered by financial limitations. Aside from the current financial crisis, faculties are suspicious of giving their graduate schools adequate financial means that might enhance their power in the university system. One could speak of structural or essential tensions between the respective deans of the faculties and the graduate schools. This is even more so if we look to the dyad of local university power holders (Boards of Governors, faculty deans) and deans of supra-local research schools.

Quality assurance

Many of the national research schools have gone through a process of accreditation by the Royal Academy. This leads to a intriguing situation in which the level of quality assurance works at a higher level for the research and graduate schools who take up the challenge of a more serious accreditation, while having the local graduate schools "fly under the radar" of a regular control of their performance. Local Boards of Governors are convinced that their own university is better equipped to assure the quality of the graduate programmes. This still has to be proved.

Internationalisation

Internationalisation is high on the agenda of research and graduate schools. A healthy percentage of the PhD population consists of international candidates (28%). Many PhD candidates are advised or supervised by teams having staff members with considerable international experience in their midst. Many PhD candidates do work in an graduate school with a considerable percentage of international candidates (Sonneveld 2010).

Nevertheless, we can conclude that the Dutch world of graduate and research schools still has work to do in stimulating PhD students to collect international research experience. Only 17.4% of recent Dutch doctorate recipients registered an expectation from their supervisor

to gain extra research experience abroad. A challenge will be to get international co-operation in the graduate training started. For example, joint doctorates and co-tutelle are not yet welcomed with large-scale enthusiasm.

Employment prospects

A final word on one of the important quality criteria for judging the functioning of a doctoral system: the career perspectives for doctorate recipients. Their initial position on the labour market is promising: 86% have a job at the moment of their thesis defence, 66% are active in research (63% in academia), the connection with their graduate training is highly appreciated and a huge majority are satisfied with their first labour market position (85% (very) satisfied) (Sonneveld 2010).

There are also less positive sides to this. The temporary positions at 49% is very high and we don't know yet where they will be in five or seven years. Though female PhD recipients are on a par with their male colleagues in their first job in terms of employment, doubts are justified whether they remain on a par with their male colleagues further on in their careers.

Though the employment situation gives reason for optimism, Dutch universities can do much better in supporting their doctoral candidates in career preparation.

Conclusion

The Netherlands has reached the stage of an integral organisational structure of research and graduate schools, taking responsibility for the total population of doctoral candidates, consisting of candidates with an employee status, scholarship recipients and external candidates who

combine their PhD path with other professional or private activities. The organisational foundation is healthy, though worries are justified regarding the financial pillars. Average completion rates, time to degree and career prospects can compete with best international practices. The Netherlands are now in a position to zoom in on specific issues which deserve deep consideration.

We conclude our contribution with mentioning some priorities for the coming five years. The average completion rates may be generally satisfactory, but we know that some disciplines are under-performing. Research is needed to find out the reasons behind those completion rates that don't reach the 75%. Time to degree can improve, but the sliding in of the first stage of the PhD trajectory into the Master programme will give a flying start to most PhD candidates.

Career prospects are no reason for alarm, but we have to find out what the labour market position is after five or seven years. One thing is certain, graduate schools can do much better in supporting their doctoral candidates when they enter the labour market. We don't argue for job guarantees, but a continuous collecting of information about labour market experiences among the graduate school's graduates is most welcome. And isn't it astonishing that graduate schools and their supervisors are so reserved in their support to make their doctoral candidates develop new research plans, while we know that many will continue in research, at least in the first stage of the completion of their PhD. Though many PhD recipients continue in research, only 43% of them report support from their supervisors in obtaining funding to continue in research (Sonneveld 2010).

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THE REFORM OF DOCTORAL EDUCATION: UNIVERSITY OF BARCELONA



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The reform of doctoral education at the University of Barcelona (UB) took place in 2007-08. At that time, according to Spanish national legislation, doctoral programmes included two components: a taught period in which students completed a Master's programme, and a research period in which students completed a doctoral dissertation. The reform that we accomplished in that period had two main traits: i) it was inspired by the Salzburg Principles that were established in the Bologna Process (2005) and the recommendations issued by the Council for Doctoral Education (CDE) of EUA; ii) while complying with the official legislation, it introduced a number of key elements that allowed a real change in the university's practices and regulations and prepared the ground for a new organisational model of doctoral studies in Spain. Here, I will focus briefly on two action areas, following on from the first and fifth Salzburg Principles.

1. The first Salzburg Principle: research as the basis and the difference

The first Salzburg Principle defines the doctorate as based on research, a definition that distinguishes the doctoral period, or third cycle, from the Master's period, or second cycle, and the first cycle. Accordingly, the following changes were justified, discussed and approved by the Doctoral Commission of the UB:

- the research period of the doctoral programme was identified as the period of doctoral education proper

- whereas under the existing legislation and university regulations, it was difficult to set up structures such as Doctoral Schools, we could nevertheless implement smaller organisational changes that aimed at differentiating doctoral programmes from the teaching activities of the university departments (units in charge of teaching first and second cycle courses, as well as doctoral programmes until that point). A set of criteria was established to set up doctoral programmes that constituted appropriate research environments (with critical mass and quality research):

- each doctoral programme had to be organised and supported by recognised research groups (groups whose quality in research was officially recognised by external bodies at regional or national level, and had external funding for research).
- the research group or groups organising each doctoral programme had to include a minimum proportion of researchers who fulfilled the conditions for PhD supervisors.
- research groups whose members' teaching functions could be performed in different departments could jointly organise a doctoral programme.

A consequence of the application of these criteria was the reduction in the number of doctoral programmes that were offered by the University, which were now also more clearly focused on well-established lines of research.

2. The fifth Salzburg Principle: the crucial role of supervision

The fifth Salzburg Principle stresses the crucial role of supervision in doctoral education. Three aspects were focused on in order to implement the reform: first, the requirement that supervisors had to be active researchers; second, the requirement that the supervisor/s and the candidate signed a document in which each party contracted a series of responsibilities; and third, opportunities for collective supervision.

As stated above, a requirement for supervisors was to be a member of a recognised research group that was active in research. Another requirement was for their recent individual research work to have received a positive evaluation by external bodies, at regional or national level. This was an important complementary indicator of quality in those disciplines in which, traditionally, researchers work individually rather than in a team.

The signature of a document by the supervisor and the

candidate ensured that their respective responsibilities were discussed and clearly defined in written form upon admission to the doctorate. These included the frequency of supervisory sessions as well as the type of dedication of the candidate (full- or part-time).

In order to move away from the traditional isolation of the supervisor-doctoral candidate relationship, opportunities for collective supervision were sought after and encouraged. Accordingly, the co-supervision with researchers from other universities in Spain, and especially from abroad, following the internationalisation strategy of the UB, featured as important indicators of quality for doctoral programmes. Co-supervision was also presented as an opportunity for junior researchers, who may not have fulfilled the conditions for being main supervisors on their own, to work with senior researchers who did. Finally, the main change was brought about by the implementation of a supervisory committee that had the role of accompanying and following the progress of a candidate's research work from its inception until the end. This committee was to be formed by three members, one of whom had to be an expert from outside the programme; having international experts was encouraged as an indicator of the quality of the programme as well. This committee

had to meet first with the candidate to discuss the proposal that s/he had prepared with his/her supervisor six months after the beginning of the first year. Each consecutive year the committee had to receive an updated report and discuss the progress of the candidate's research.

The idea of organised and collective supervision during the whole length of the doctoral studies period helped put the emphasis on the process rather than on the final product. This also underlined the importance of the doctoral period as a high-quality training period in which the candidate learnt to be an active participant in the on-going research, conducting his concrete research project in a sheltered and inclusive environment.

At the time of writing, the draft of the new legislation concerning doctoral studies in Spain is awaiting for its final approval by Parliament. This new legislation, likewise inspired by the Salzburg Principles, will allow all universities in Spain to move forward in their reform of doctoral education. Our experience provided evidence that the changes inspired by these Principles were possible and that they set the right path towards excellence in doctoral education.

QUALITY AND THE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE – TWO NEW INITIATIVES FROM EUA-CDE

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This summer, the EUA received funding for two very interesting projects that will relate directly to the work of EUA-CDE: **ARDE** (*Accountable Research Environments for Doctoral Education*, financed by Erasmus: Modernisation of Higher Education) and **CODOC** (*Cooperation on Doctoral Education between Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe*, financed by Erasmus Mundus Action 3). The projects will expand the range of activities open to members of EUA-CDE, and give a deeper insight into two areas that are a high priority for institutions: quality and internationalisation.

ARDE

The project on accountability is important in several ways. At the CDE launch conference in 2008, participants were asked about their priorities regarding doctoral education, and quality came out as by far the most important point. There is little reason to think that this has changed, and there are certainly challenges ahead for the new doctoral schools in this area (one example can be found in the article on Dutch doctoral education in this issue). Institutions that take

responsibility for doctoral education must tackle the quality question. However, as the Salzburg II Recommendations clearly state, quality in doctoral education must be tailored to the needs of training through research, and it is here that the big challenge lies. We know that many institutions have set up procedures, but we need to have a systematic overview, and we need to communicate this overview to stakeholders outside the universities.

For those keeping an eye on developments in Brussels, the last point has obvious relevance. In the recent months, the European Commission has come forward with its "Innovation Union" initiative,² which puts considerable weight on provision of doctoral education. Just as it was important to use Salzburg II to communicate the progress in structuring doctoral education, it is important to use ARDE to inform about how European universities monitor the quality of their doctoral schools and programmes, which will provide Europe with the researchers for the future.

How to participate?

ARDE builds on the active engagement of the EUA-CDE members. This spring, there will be a survey of all members to see what kinds of evaluations (internal and external) they

² http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm

are already undertaking and what procedures they have in place to assure and enhance the quality of their provision. Building on the results of the survey, four themes of particular interest will be identified and will form the basis for four focus groups (two in the fall of 2011, two in the spring of 2012), which will provide qualitative input to the project. All EUA-CDE contact persons will be sent the questionnaire and invitations to the focus groups. The results of the entire process will be collected in a report to be published in 2013.

Partners



With the support of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission



CODOC

We have used much energy on the progress of European universities in doctoral education, but we are not alone in this on the global scene. The mantra of building knowledge societies can be heard from Singapore to Sao Paolo and Cape Town. Everywhere, doctoral education plays a large role in this vision. Developing countries want to build capacity in their university sector and need to train, and not least to retain, researchers. Emerging economies aspire to be leading global players in research and innovation, and for that reason need to expand their doctoral education. Research collaboration and global mobility reach across the globe – albeit with different consequences due to existing inequalities. The CODOC project (financed by Erasmus Mundus Action 3) will look at the situation in three developing/emerging regions of the world (Asia, Latin America and Southern Africa), regions which have until present been absent from the global discussions on doctoral education. It aims to enhance European collaboration with these regions through better



understanding of the local conditions, pressures and trends. It will explore doctoral education as a strategic priority in the developing world, and feature innovative approaches to North-South delivery and capacity building. This project will be a valuable opportunity to learn more about the global face of doctoral education and the possibilities for networking and sustainable collaborations with new partners.

How to participate?

The first part of the project will focus on collecting data from the regions. The preliminary results of this exercise will be presented at the EUA-CDE Annual Meeting 9-10 June 2011. In fall 2011 and spring 2012, a series of workshops will be held in the different regions to discuss the issues concerning developing doctoral education and establishing collaborations.

Partners

- Centre for Development Research, University of Bonn
- Karolinska Institutet
- Observatory on EU – Latin America Relations (OBREAL)
- Inter American Organization for Higher Education (OUI – IOHE)
- ASEAN University Network (AUN)

With the support of the Erasmus Mundus Programme of the European Commission



We hope that this new initiative will be a source of new knowledge for the EUA-CDE members and provide the chance to participate in discussing the burning issues – perhaps even a chance to shape tomorrow's doctoral education.

For more information, please see www.eua.be/projects or contact

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ANNOUNCEMENTS



This page is open for announcements about events or news from our members. To advertise any activity or news, please write to thomas.jorgensen@eua.be

Mobility and Collaboration in Doctoral Education – international and inter-sectoral 20 – 21 January 2011, hosted by Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), Hungary

The mobility of early stage researchers is increasingly important for universities. International mobility and collaboration with other institutions strengthen the profile of doctoral programmes and increase institutional research capacity. Collaboration with other sectors, such as industry, promotes a series of features such as innovation, entrepreneurship, social responsibility and diversified funding, all issues high on the priority list of universities and their doctoral schools.

Mobility at the doctoral stage requires special strategies developed for research. Doctoral education is highly individual and linked to the particular trajectory of the researcher. For this reason, the instruments for mobility in doctoral education are different from the ones that we know from the first and second cycle. They are not part of a collective and cumulative learning experience, but take place as part of an individual research project. Moreover, the skills and outcomes deriving from mobility are part of the highly individualised professional profiles that early stage researchers are developing.

The questions that this workshop seeks to answer are:

- How can institutions develop mobility opportunities and instruments to accommodate these needs?
- What are the different priorities that encourage individuals and institutions to engage in mobility?
- What are the mutual benefits and what are the obstacles and problems?

The workshop is open for EUA-CDE members only.

Registrations are open until **5 January** (please contact joanne.byrne@eua.be).

The 21st century doctorate – sharing European developments 18 March 2011, Scotland House, Brussels

QAA Scotland, in collaboration with the Scottish Government, is

holding an International Bologna Seminar on research degrees. The event will provide an opportunity for participants to share and explore the different practices and developments in doctoral programmes and research student experiences across Europe, which relate to the key issues around research in higher education as identified in the *Leuven Communiqué*. It will also address topics which are emerging around the significance of the third cycle in the Bologna Process, particularly those identified in *Trends 2010*.

In particular, the event will focus on:

- The mobility of postgraduate research students
- Interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral research programmes
- Innovation and creativity in doctoral programmes and provision
- Collaboration across Europe
- Skills training and career development for research degree students
- Graduate schools

Expressions of interest should be sent to Frances Morton:

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New generation in science: toward a new fashion ERA? Unravelling relationships between research traditions and new generations' hunger for change

Eurodoc annual conference and general meeting 31 March – 4 April 2011, Lithuania

Last year, the 10 year anniversary of the European Research Area (ERA) was celebrated. During the annual Eurodoc conference in Vienna in 2010, they looked back on achievements in the major policy agendas. One of the main outcomes of this conference was the accent on doctoral candidates as the link between European Higher Education Area and ERA.

2011 is also a year to celebrate, as the annual Eurodoc conference that will take place in Vilnius from March 31-April 4 will be the 10th of its kind. Therefore you are invited to join the celebration and to try to get a glimpse into the future of ERA.

It is evident, that we live in a fast changing world, and the younger generation is more receptive to new innovations. Traditions are valuable in Europe and this is attractive when you speak about tourism, but how attractive is this within the field of research? Are new investigation methods encouraged only on the "agendas"? How much social strain between generations is reality? What is the situation of research integrity? What attitudes toward research traditions and the overall mission of science does the new generation bring? Young researchers and doctoral candidates will discuss these questions from different points of view, bringing insights from different research fields and experiences from various European countries.

For more information visit: <http://eurodoc2011.ljms.lt>