

Session on building a research environment

EUA-CDE seminar April 15th – April 16th



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For quality of life

Natural Sciences

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Building a research environment: discussion statements (Rudd)

- What do your departments and PhD-supervisors do to integrate and socialize new PhD-candidates? Is it effective & how do you know it is?
 - Faculty/GS level: Introduction training; PhD meetings; courses in getting started (transferable skills training); associations PhD candidates
 - Small research groups: social activities
 - Supervisors: MSc students already involved in activities

Building a research environment: discussion statements (Rudd)

- What kind of professional skills training and supportive resources would be most important to particular disciplines? How to involve professors and departments?
 - Time planning and project management
 - Internship: Working with and within SME's and larger companies/organisations to obtain skills
 - IPR
 - Career coaching with people invited from industry that is also interesting to supervisors
 - Career planning (after PhD)
 - Intercultural communication
 - Professional teaching
 - Retired professors support writing articles

Building a research environment: discussion statements (Rudd)

- How can universities and graduate schools change academic career universities and department cultures that tend to exclude women?
 - Active policy for underrepresented
 - Communication courses
 - Creating awareness (e.g. no meetings at times important for family life)
 - Related to criteria for recruitment

Building a research environment: discussion statements (Knudsen)

- How much structure do we need in a doctorate programme? Does more structure lead automatically to better PhD's?
 - The minimum structure that would do the job: independent researcher (sufficient intellectual challenging)
 - The excellent will not become better with more structure; may even become irritated with mandatory courses
 - Define learning outcomes for all PhD candidates, with courses available, but tailor-made training plan for individuals
 - Get rid of bad students in an early phase (go/no go); 15% drop out with half no go decision (WU)

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Building a research environment: discussion statements (Rudd)

- What do your departments and PhD-supervisors do to integrate and socialize new PhD-candidates? Is it effective & how do you know it is?
 - Integrated in departmental duties (teaching)
 - Are the supervisors integrated?
 - Where to integrate in fragmented disciplines?
 - Do humanities doctoral candidates want to be integrated

Building a research environment: discussion statements (Rudd)

- What kind of professional skills training and supportive resources would be most important to particular disciplines? How to involve professors and departments?
 - Only handled at the institutional level
 - Finding the right role models is particularly important in the humanities
 - Awareness of skills – overcoming lack of confidence

Building a research environment: discussion statements (Rudd)

- How can universities and graduate schools change academic career universities and department cultures that tend to exclude women?
 - Role models

Building a research environment: discussion statements (Knudsen)

- How much structure do we need in a doctorate programme? Does more structure lead automatically to better PhD's?
 - Thinking in opportunities in going beyond the personal relation rather than structures
 - Critical mass for small disciplines – overcoming fragmentation
 - Opportunity for funding

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Building a research environment: discussion statements (Rudd)

- What do your departments and PhD-supervisors do to integrate and socialise new PhD-candidates? Is it effective & how do you know it is?
 - Peer integration is not a problem; scientific & social events suffice
 - Staff/departments integration can be; grad schools can influence
 - Different circles
 - Semantics are important: not students
 - Community enhancing activities on all circles
 - Mentorship/ tutoring, apart from formal supervision

Building a research environment: discussion statements (Rudd)

- What kind of professional skills training and supportive resources would be most important to particular disciplines? How to involve professors and departments?
 - Should skills be offered by grad school or by dept?
 - Integrate skills in whole learning process of individual research project
 - Semantics: not transferable skills, but rather personal development skills
 - Look at competences rather than skills

Building a research environment: discussion statements (Rudd)

- How can universities and graduate schools change academic career universities and department cultures that tend to exclude women?

Building a research environment: discussion statements (Knudsen)

- How much structure do we need in a doctorate programme? Does more structure lead automatically to better PhD's?
 - Guidelines and guidance yes, structure should have purpose & balance
 - Structure follows strategy
 - PhDs themselves ask for more structure
 - PhDs' aim → independent researcher, so not too much structure

Session on doctoral completion

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Facilitating doctoral completion: discussion statements from presentation Gab van Winkel (1)

- A final **completion** rate **below 75%** should be regarded as a problem.
- To **assess** the problem, at least some **hard data** is needed.
 - agree
 - 100% is also a problem
 - needed: entry date, graduation date, drop-out date
 - we should know what the reasons are PhD candidates do not finish

Facilitating doctoral completion: discussion statements from presentation Gab van Winkel (2)

- But to **solve** it, PhD candidates and supervisors must be **involved**, together.
- And preferably they value the **school's measures** such as quality control, monitoring and mediation.
 - yearly monitoring can be useful for identifying problems
 - learning outcomes should be leading
 - clear criteria with respect to number of publications, research work to be done and role of supervision; depending on subjects/research fields

Facilitating doctoral completion: discussion statements from presentation Gab van Winkel (2)

- But to **solve** it, PhD candidates and supervisors must be **involved**, together.
- And preferably they value the **school's measures** such as quality control, monitoring and mediation.
 - 4 years seems more appropriate than 3 years (risks related to design/field/laboratory work)
 - financial incentives (positive/negative) implemented with respect to finalizing thesis work

Facilitating doctoral completion: discussion statements from presentation Leonids Ribickis

- How do part time PhD-research and jobs beside the PhD-research affect efficiency of the PhD-program and how to assess this?
 - Take away time related to maternity/paternity leave
 - Part time other activities might be beneficial to individual quality
 - Success rate is a better measure

Facilitating doctoral completion: discussion statements from presentation Leonids Ribickis

- What are good measures to calculate completion rates (data/definition) and how to use the figures in efficiencyimprovement?
 - Insert discussion result

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Facilitating doctoral completion: discussion statements from presentation Leonids Ribickis

- What are good measures to calculate completion rates (data/definition) and how to use the figures in efficiencyimprovement?
 - Important to make the calculations for internal use
 - Important to have comparable methodologies (full time/half time)
 - Best practice sharing on data collection

Facilitating doctoral completion: discussion statements from presentation Leonids Ribickis

- How do part time PhD-research and jobs beside the PhD-research affect efficiency of the PhD-program and how to assess this?
 - Non-funded candidates with jobs common in the humanities
 - 'External/dual' candidates need clear admissions procedures
 - Not homogeneous group

Facilitating doctoral completion: discussion statements from presentation Gab van Winkel (1)

- A final **completion** rate **below 75%** should be regarded as a problem.
- To **assess** the problem, at least some **hard data** is needed.
 - Difference in institutional views on the importance of TDD
 - Importance of institution caring about the issue

Facilitating doctoral completion: discussion statements from presentation Gab van Winkel (2)

- But to **solve** it, PhD candidates and supervisors must be **involved**, together.
- And preferably they value the **school's measures** such as quality control, monitoring and mediation.
 - Professionalisation of doctoral candidates
 - Breaking isolation
 - Coaching and mentoring (different from supervision)
 - Writing regularly (book or articles)

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Facilitating doctoral completion: discussion

statements from presentation Leonids Ribickis

- What are good measures to calculate completion rates (data/definition) and how to use the figures in efficiency improvement?
 - If you measure output, you also need to consider input (time, money)
 - Measure input is difficult, so we focus on output, thus we measure effectiveness rather than efficiency
 - Definition of 'time to degree' is difficult: to end thesis, to defense?
 - Create incentives to increase completion rate but that needs balance for quality assurance
 - Effectiveness can be restricted to: PhDs thrive in excellent groups, all other measures have no influence

Quality debate

- How do we measure input, throughput and output?
- Input: objective transparent procedure on institutional level
- What does the PhD lead to? What is it for?
- Quality is related to purpose. Can we measure?
- Quality of outcome can only be measured some years after PhD (jobs, citation index etc).

Facilitating doctoral completion: discussion statements from presentation Leonids Ribickis

- How do part time PhD-research, and jobs beside the PhD-research affect efficiency of the PhD-program and how to assess this?
 - Not discussed

Facilitating doctoral completion: discussion statements from presentation Gab van Winkel (1)

- A final **completion** rate **below 75%** should be regarded as a problem.
- To **assess** the problem, at least some **hard data** is needed.
 - Aiming for more than 80% is not realistic and not efficient
 - Below 70-75% is not acceptable
 - Non-completion remains a personal drama, so early warning system is necessary

Facilitating doctoral completion: discussion statements from presentation Gab van Winkel (2)

- But to **solve** it, PhD candidates and supervisors must be **involved**, together.
- And preferably they value the **school's measures** such as quality control, monitoring and mediation.

Session on training towards employability

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Training towards employability: discussion statements

- Should we train PhD's towards employability?
- Would we train PhD's towards employability within the PhD programme or supplementary to it?
 - Create awareness to both PhD candidates and supervisors
 - Training with respect to transferable skills part of training plan incl. budget
 - A right to obtain transferable skills, no mandatory elements
 - Training elements from inside or outside
 - Some differences between private and academic sector with respect to transferable skills

Training towards employability: discussion statements

- What role should the graduate school play in training towards employability?
 - Yes, but university level could be more appropriate

Training towards employability: discussion statements

- How to make PhD's aware of their capabilities and competences?
 - Portfolio at the start; what do you want to learn, where are you and what do you want to do in future? Professional assessment (WU)
 - To be discussed with supervisors/Graduate School?
 - Financial incentives for chair groups in case PhD candidates have a Training plan
 - Provide central electronic platform on skills and competences obtained, information provided continuously by PhD candidates
 - Supplement to PhD diploma in which training elements are mentioned

Training towards employability: discussion statements

- How to make / should we make employers aware of the capabilities and competences of PhD's?
 - This is an issue in the private sector, in particular with respect to non-research jobs
 - You need to learn how to sell your capabilities, already starts in BSc education
 - Involve these employers in Graduate Schools; also by relating this to fund-raising

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Training towards employability: discussion statements

- Should we train PhD's towards employability?
- Would we train PhD's towards employability within the PhD programme or supplementary to it?
 - We don't believe in training towards employability
 - ... but we will provide information on career possibilities
 - ... and we will provide structures that prepare for future possibilities
 - Preparation is more active than training
 - Great differences within the humanities – not a 'problem area' per se

Training towards employability: discussion statements

- How to make PhD's aware of their capabilities and competences?
 - Make doctorate holders make an informed choice
 - Not an add-on
 - Traineeships
 - Incorporate skills like team management in the research

 - Do doctoral candidates want this kind of preparation?
 - Think about the age and gender 'problem'
 - Avoid isolation – part time as a possibility

Training towards employability: discussion statements

- How to make / should we make employers aware of the capabilities and competences of PhD's?
 - Build networks with future employers

Training towards employability: discussion statements

- What role should the graduate school play in training towards employability?
 - Create awareness among the supervisors
 - Collect information – to create awareness and create confidence
 - Using alumni network as an integrated part of the graduate school strategy

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Training towards employability: discussion statements

- Should we train PhD's towards employability?
- Would we train PhD's within the PhD programme or supplementary to it?
 - Yes, integrated within the research project/PhD programme, courses can be supplementary but relevant for Phd project
 - Aim for training on individual basis (personal development) as well as on basis of creating groups of alumni (sharing peer experiences and building network)
 - Project and people management is essential for both PhD project as well as for future jobs

Training towards employability: discussion statements

- How to make PhD's aware of their capabilities and competences?
 - Introduce PhD as project manager of own PhD-project in early stage (in Introduction Course)
 - Make PhD aware of necessity of specific skills for specific job
 - Train PhDs to reflexively speak about themselves and their competences

Training towards employability: discussion statements

- How to make / should we make employers aware of the capabilities and competences of PhD's?
 - Engage employers in all stages of academic education on basis of content; for two-way win-win situation:
 - A) employers learn about the possibilities of recruiting PhDs
 - B) PhDs learn about what employers are looking for

Training towards employability: discussion statements

- What role should the graduate school play in training towards employability?
 - Counter diversity in atmosphere in groups by informal activities
 - Organise group discussions on evaluatory results
 - Facilitate and stimulate training for supervisors
 - Stimulate accountability for supervisors (within accreditation)
 - Show examples of best practices in supervision
 - Inform supervisors on training possibilities for PhDs
 - Create context of co-teaching and co-supervision
 - Go for diversity in courses (nationalities, disciplines, gender)