

# Structuring Doctoral Education

## Conclusions and recommendations

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## How and why to achieve critical mass

### ■ Why?

- ✓ The lonely researcher is history
- ✓ We need to build a doctoral community based on the institutional priorities in research – build on strength
- ✓ Critical mass has the potential research quality
- ✓ Increases motivation of the doctoral candidates
- ✓ Leads to higher productivity
- ✓ Increases accountability
- ✓ Better possibilities for funding
- ✓ Increases the depth of the individual research

## Critical mass II

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### ■ How?

- ✓ Critical mass and research intensity can be attained using different strategies
- ✓ A question of content rather than numbers
- ✓ Building networks and clusters
- ✓ Using inter- and intra-disciplinary co-operation
- ✓ Regional, national and international strategies

## How to balance the tasks of doctoral candidates

### ■ The core component of doctoral education is research

- ✓ Research practice should significantly prevail over coursework
- ✓ The research project should build the capacity of autonomous research
- ✓ Original research corresponding to and being communicated according to the criteria of the discipline

### ■ Coursework

- ✓ Deepens knowledge, advanced methodologies and exposing to the research discussions
- ✓ Opportunities for career developments
- ✓ Should make sense for the individual research and career projects
- ✓ Minimum and maximum requirements

## Tasks of the doctoral candidates II

- Teaching/research assistantships
  - ✓ Clear contractual and balanced arrangement
  - ✓ Activities should be part of professional development – not only for financing or dependent on research agendas outside the candidate's own research
  - ✓ Part of high-level academic education
  
- Status of the doctoral candidate
  - ✓ Recognised as an early stage researcher
  - ✓ Should contain clear rights and duties

## What needs to be structured?

- Making faculty take responsibility and ownership
  - ✓ Developing awareness of supervisors
  - ✓ Professional development of faculty
  
- Looking at output and outcomes
  - ✓ Structures to improve completion
  - ✓ Financial support is important to improve completion rates
  - ✓ Part time arrangements
  - ✓ Securing a wide spectrum of competencies developed through research
  
- Data collection
  - ✓ Monitoring progress

## What needs to be structured? II

- Nurture support structures for a research culture
  - ✓ Extending support for research capacity and infrastructure for all disciplines
  - ✓ Developing continuous self-assessment

## The role of structured programmes at different institutional levels

- Who decides what – and where?
  - ✓ Government regulations – should recognise university autonomy
  - ✓ Universities should independently develop strategies and standards for doctoral education based on the research strategy of the institution
  - ✓ Including freedom to choose to implement credit systems or similar
  - ✓ Limit the number of different doctorates
  
  - ✓ Do not overregulate at the top – do not underregulate at the bottom
- Diversity of models according to university culture
  - ✓ Providing transparent supporting structures
  - ✓ Have clear decision processes
  - ✓ Universities must be accountable based on self-evaluation



## How to balance creativity and structure

- There is no contradiction between creativity and structures
- Excellence comes with excitement
- Structures must be flexible to foster creativity as a process and originality
- Admission should take into account the creative potential of the candidate
- Finding an individual balance between research and coursework
  - ✓ Keep the same balance for supervisors

## Building a Research Community

- The research community should be self-organised
  - ✓ Open to society and to other stakeholders
- Structuring the community
  - ✓ Physical space to accommodate informal communication
  - ✓ Events
  - ✓ Build bridges to MA and postdoc level
  - ✓ Problem-based approach to inter-disciplinary communities
- Building collective identity and recognising the community and organisation of doctoral candidates
  - ✓ Part of institutional strategies and included in self-assessment
- Dedicated and sustainable funding for community building

**Thank you for your attention**

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