

Call for papers – Special issue

Structuring Doctoral Education

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Date of publication: 9 June 2017

Outline

Since the beginning of this century, doctoral education has been part of a rigorous reform process in higher education institutions. On the one hand, the Bologna Declaration of 1999 and the Lisbon Strategy of 2000 had an impact on the perspective of doctoral education. As the third phase of higher education in the framework of the Bologna Declaration, the third cycle nevertheless itself differs significantly from the first and second cycle, in particular as research is at the core of the doctorate. This links to the expectations of doctoral education exemplified in the presidential conclusions of the EU Lisbon Summit where it was stated that more and better trained researchers are needed in order to make Europe the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world. On the other hand, factors like 'massification' of doctoral education, globalization, increased mobility of candidates, diversification of the doctoral candidate population, professionalization of doctoral education and careers, and the development of various quality assurance systems have been drivers of change in the perception of doctoral education (ANDRES et al., 2015). In particular, the rapid growth in candidate numbers and subsequent numbers of doctoral degrees awarded are not matched with a similar increase in positions within academia. Keeping this in mind it is obvious that doctorate holders will embark on careers in labour markets outside universities and research institutes. For these careers, however, a research education taking place solely within disciplinary boundaries (and thus preparing for a career in academia) is deemed to be insufficient (KEHM, 2007).

Supported by an EU-wide discussion and consultation process, which reached its first significant mile stone with the publication of ten Salzburg principles by the EUA in 2005, universities across Europe and beyond started to develop institutional strategies to improve the quality of doctoral education. This was a significant shift as, until then, doctoral education mainly fell mainly on the shoulders of individual professors or departments.

There is a clear trend in Europe to give doctoral education more structure, in particular in the form of doctoral schools or through more structured doctoral programmes. Today, doctoral schools define the standard framework in many countries like the Netherlands, Denmark, France and UK. Moreover, various funding organizations like the German Research Foundation DFG or the European Commission through its ITN Programme in H2020 present schemes which move away from a highly individualised model of doctoral education based on a personal master-apprentice relation between supervisor and supervisee towards a more structure-oriented approach (BYRNE et al., op. 2013). However, the way in which these schools function varies from institution to institution, also depending on the specific national context of doctoral education and the legal framework.

At the institutional level new structures are affecting doctoral education on at least three different levels, all of which may (and should) impact the doctoral experience of the candidates and their future careers:

- Governance of doctoral education;
- Doctoral program level;
- Supervisor – supervisee relationship.

The aim of this issue of the Zeitschrift für Hochschulentwicklung is to contribute to the discourse on the impact of structuring and thus professionalizing doctoral education at all levels. Articles are expected to refer or relate to one of the below mentioned questions.

New governance structures are introduced, mostly in the form of doctoral schools, to enhance the quality of doctoral education, including more efficiency with respect to time-to-degree or lower attrition rates and quality standardizing doctoral education across the university and even beyond.

- How do changes in the governance of doctoral education impact on more transparency and more efficiency with respect to time-to-degree or lower attrition rates?
- What role do new governance structures have in preparing future PhD candidates better?
- What impact do the recent changes have on the satisfaction of doctoral candidates?
- Do governance structures help to create new initiatives or support measures for doctoral candidates and/or supervisors, and if so, how?
- How do the different stakeholders (supervisors, PhD candidates etc) perceive the changes in governance structures?
- What new quality measures have been implemented and how are these monitored?

Over the past decades, a trend to standardize doctoral programmes, to create a more elaborated curriculum and to make more course work mandatory can be observed in many institutions. This is a development which takes place for at least two reasons: on the one hand, it is a reaction to a global harmonization process of doctoral education, and on the other, institutions react efficiently to the phenomena of massification of doctoral education as well as the diversification of the doctoral candidate population.

- What role has the institution in preparing doctoral candidates for their careers, especially outside academia?
- In which ways did the above-mentioned changes at institutional and programme level impact on and support the career ambitions of PhD candidates and graduates?
- Is there a contradiction between harmonization of training and preparation for a broad range of careers in labour markets outside universities?
- To what extent does the structure at programme level influence cohort formation, increased peer-support and is there any impact observable, e.g. on time-to-degree, completion rates?
- Do strong structures inhibit some early stage researchers, leave little room for innovative research and thinking outside the box?

A significant amount of research is focusing on the supervisors' perceptions of their practice and roles (BASTALICH, 2015). The structuring and professionalization of doctoral education contributes to a de-privatisation of the supervisor – supervisee relationship and “influences the way supervisors position themselves and adapt their professional identity” (DAHAN, 2007).

- How did the supervisor – supervisee relationship change when the former ‘implicit’ agreement between them moved to a more formal contract?
- To what extent and in which way does a more formalised supervision impact on the quality of doctoral education?
- How can supervisors change their vision of themselves from that of intellectual guides training future peers to trainers of a ‘professional’ in an undefined but presumably ‘non-academic’ sector?
- Does this effect the supervisors’ support for their candidates’ academic career ambitions?
- How and by which means can universities ensure high quality in supervision?

With regard to empirical contributions, we encourage both qualitative and quantitative approaches and mixed-method studies, as well as design-oriented studies. We especially encourage innovative research designs that are suited to address the question of the impact of the reform process in doctoral education on (a) universities as degree awarding institutions (b) different disciplines and programmes (c) the supervisors and (d) the doctoral candidates. In addition, we are particularly interested in case studies that refer to new practices of doctoral education. We look forward to your articles referring to one of the above-mentioned guiding questions.

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Guidelines regarding the journal

The ZFHE is a peer-reviewed online journal that publishes scientific contributions of practical relevance concerning current higher education development issues. The focus is on didactical, structural, and cultural developments in teaching and learning. Topics that are innovative and still regarded as open in respect of their design options are preferred.

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Submission information

English contributions may be submitted in two possible formats:

Scientific contributions within the main theme should comply with the following criteria:
The contribution...

- presents innovative perspectives, arguments, problem analyses etc. on the key topic;
- focuses on essential aspects of the key topic;
- is theoretically supported (i.e. it offers a clear connection to the scientific discourse of the topic under discussion);
- provides scientific insights with added value at least in some parts;
- clearly elucidates the methodology used to acquire knowledge;
- follows the relevant citation rules consistently (APA style, 6th edition);
- comprises up to 33,600 characters (incl. spaces, as well as cover page, bibliography and author information)

Workshop reports comprise the instructional presentation of practical experience, good practice examples, design concepts, pilot projects, etc. Workshop reports should comply with the following criteria:

- demonstrates potential for knowledge transfer;
- describes illustrative aspects and factors for the purpose of theory formation;
- systematically and transparently presented (e.g., no incomprehensible clues to details in an area of practice);
- follows the relevant citation rules consistently (APA style, 6th edition);
- up to 21,600 characters (incl. spaces, as well as cover page, bibliography and author information).

Submission and review schedule

October 28, 2016 – Submission deadline for complete articles:

Please upload your contribution(s) to the ZFHE journal system (<http://www.zfhe.at>) in the corresponding section (scientific contribution, workshop report) of ZFHE 12/2 issue in anonymous format. To do so, you must first register as an author in the system.

February 24, 2017 – Feedback / Reviews: Scientific contributions and workshop reports are evaluated in a double-blind process (see below).

March 24, 2017 – Revision deadline: Where necessary, contributions may be revised according to feedback and recommendations from the reviews.

June 9, 2017 – Online publication: In June 2017, the finalized contributions are published under <http://www.zfhe.at> and also made available in print.

Review Process

All submitted contributions will be examined in a double-blind peer review process to guarantee scientific quality. The editors of the current issue propose the reviewers for the respective theme and allocate individual contributions to the reviewers; they also determine which contributions will be accepted. The selection of reviewers and the review process for each thematic issue are always supervised by a member of the editorial board.

Formatting and submission

In order to save valuable time with the formatting of the contributions, we kindly ask that all authors work with the template from the beginning. The template can be downloaded from the ZFHE website under the following link:

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Since we must be able to edit the texts, they must be submitted unlocked/unprotected in in Microsoft Word (.doc), Office Open XML (.docx), Open Document Text (.odt) or Plain Text (.txt) format. Please do not submit any PDF files! Submissions in the “Scientific Contribution” and “Workshop Report” categories must first be made in anonymous format in order to guarantee the double-blind review process. Please remove all references to the author(s) of the document (including in the document properties!). Upon a positive review result, this information will be re-inserted.

Questions?

If you have any questions regarding the content of the issue, please contact Lucas Zinner (lucas.zinner@univie.ac.at).

For technical and organizational questions, please contact Michael Raunig (office@zfhe.at).

We look forward to your submissions!

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