

Discussion Lecture - Session 5

Tuesday 10th November, 11.15 - 12.15

Professional Doctorates from a Comparative Perspective

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Nicholas Rees is Professor of International Politics and Contemporary History at Liverpool Hope University, where he is also chair of the University Research Degrees Committee. He was formerly Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies at the National College of Ireland and founding Dean of the Graduate School at the University of Limerick (UL). He has been actively involved over the last decade in graduate education presenting and/or participating in events run by the European University Association, the UK Council for Graduate Education, the Irish Universities' Association and Irish Universities Quality Board. As an academic he has been actively involved in all aspects of undergraduate and postgraduate teaching throughout his career, including periods when he held demanding academic leadership positions. He has a strong record of innovative teaching and research collaboration with colleagues in Ireland, the UK, Germany, Greece, Bulgaria, Canada, China and Australia. As a researcher he has authored/edited four books, as well as having edited a number of conference proceedings and produced numerous book chapters and refereed journal articles.

Aims and objectives

The aim of the paper is track the development of the professional doctorate in Ireland, looking at the origins, evolution and influences that have impacted on the growth of professional doctorates in the Irish third level educational system.

The development of graduate education in Ireland offers both a mix of similarities and contrasts to the UK case, reflecting Ireland's position in Europe and its willing to look beyond its immediate neighbour for

examples of good practice across Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand.

Approach

This paper begins by looking at recent developments in graduate education in Ireland, examining the different models that have emerged in the last decade. This section of the paper examines the key institutional actors and policy drivers, as well as the broader landscape of graduate education in Ireland. It also considers the policy impact of developments in Europe,

especially in the context of the Bologna process, and broader developments across the educational sector in Europe.

The paper then surveys the Irish higher educational sector, detailing the development of professional doctorates in different professional areas and institutional contexts. It looks at how Irish educational institutions have responded to the challenges of developing professional doctorates and examines the educational regulatory framework that has been developed (including entry requirements, assessment, credit rating, learning outcomes, nomenclature and professional recognition). It also considers the issues (including distinction between professional doctorate and the PhD) that have arisen in the development of such programmes and how the educational and professional sectors have responded to these issues.

Findings

The paper provides examples of good practice and draws out significant lessons that may be relevant in other national educational settings in Europe and beyond. In particular, the paper highlights the conservative nature of graduate education in Ireland, and the mixed response of higher education institutions to the diversification of the traditional PhD. In the Irish case, the key drivers have been professional associations, linked to the increasing requirement that workers acquire graduate level qualifications. In particular, the paper provides contrasting examples drawn from clinical psychology (UL, TCD, UCD, NUIG), education (TCD, St Patricks College, NUIM, DCU), social science (UCC), Dentistry and Occupational Therapy (UCC), built environment (DIT), business (UCC, DCU) and Ministry (Milltown Institute), where there are very different types of professional requirements.

Select References

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