



Review of 2008

UK Council for Graduate Education

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The Council promotes the interests of graduate education across the disciplines in the United Kingdom's Higher Education Institutions which make up its membership. It carries out surveys, establishes expert working groups on issues of interest and relevance to the postgraduate sector, runs workshops and conferences, and publishes policy documents. The Council also brings together the United Kingdom's Institutions which have active degree programmes and other organisations with an interest in postgraduate education. Institutions in this latter group include the Research Councils, the National Postgraduate Committee, professional bodies, such as HETAC, and academic research organisations, such as the Foundation for Science and Technology.

The Council was established to promote

- the interests of graduate education across all disciplines in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)
- a distinct identity for graduate education and research in Higher Education
- the development of quality and quality measures for graduate education and research conducted in HEIs
- the effective leadership and management of postgraduate students
- the status, education and training of postgraduate students
- effective infrastructural provisions for graduate education (including appropriate funding)
- equal opportunities for students in graduate education
- the professional development and status of staff and supervisors in HEIs

Role of the Council

All the Council's activities must help in the fulfilment of its role, which is clearly defined within the Constitution. It has been agreed by the Executive Committee that this role can be encapsulated within the following:

- An authority on postgraduate activity in the UK
- A forum for discussion about PG issues and developments
- A commentator on policy developments within postgraduate work

Operation and Policy

The Council was established in 1994 under the Chairship of Professor Robert Burgess, now Vice Chancellor of the University of Leicester. A major thrust behind its foundation was the growing interest in the UK of the Graduate School concept adopted by many North American Universities to manage and develop their postgraduate portfolios.

The Council was granted Charitable Status in 1997 (Registered Number 1061495). Under its Constitution, activities are managed by an elected Executive Committee of members individually nominated (from member institutions) who serve a term of three years and have special responsibilities within the year-to-year operation of the Council. There are four Honorary Office Positions; Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary; and the Executive may co-opt members in particular specialisms. Ordinary members have opportunities to discuss proposals, including the budget and audited finances, as well as to review the Council's activities at the annual AGM, during the Winter Conference, and the Business Meeting, during the Summer Conference.

The Council helps its members contribute to the development of the culture of the UK's graduate education by systematic enquiry into, creative thought about, and critical analysis of educational and other issues. Council events and publications support this aim, while membership of the Council gives people involved in postgraduate education - whether as academics, administrators or managers - regular occasions to meet others in their fields of interest, as well as opportunities to enhance the quality of their work through participation in expert networks.

The Council is based at Staffordshire University, Lichfield Campus, and employs two full-time members of staff, a Principal Officer and an Events Officer, and one part-time member of staff, an Administrative Assistant.

What the council does

Conferences

The Council runs two conferences, in Winter and Summer each year. The Winter Conference is a one-day event and usually includes two plenary speakers and a series of workshop sessions. The Council's AGM is held at this Conference, during which the results of the elections to the Executive Committee are announced, and a report is given to members including a review of Council business and accounting procedures. The Summer Conference takes place over two days, usually in July, and includes plenaries and self-help workshops as well as the Business Meeting, Conference Dinner and the opportunity for delegates to meet informally. The 2008 Summer Conference focused on the impact of Bologna on Doctoral Education in Europe.

Workshops

The Council runs a full programme of workshops each year which focus on a wide range of postgraduate issues, both postgraduate taught and postgraduate research. The workshops consist of presentations and break out groups. Much discussion takes place and delegates are able to raise and discuss issues.

Working Groups

The Council establishes working groups to investigate and produce a report on a range of current postgraduate issues. A full list of published reports can be found on the Council's website, www.ukcge.ac.uk.

Publications

Regular publications include the Council's quarterly Newsletter, Annual Review, and published reports. All these publications are available on the Council's website, www.ukcge.ac.uk.

Website

The Council's website can be found at www.ukcge.ac.uk. Enquirers can access information about the Council and its publications, as well as links to member organisations and other sites relevant to graduate education. The site also advertises workshop and conference programmes and delegate places can be booked online.

JISCMail

The Council operates an email service, JISCMail, which any member may join. Members are automatically added to the Jiscmail service. JISCMail is a mailing list service sponsored by the JISC, for the UK Higher and Further Education communities. The list:

- enables members to stay in touch and share information by e-mail, by providing a facility for members to send messages for all other subscribers by directing them to the one central address
- enables the Council to update members on relevant issues and Council business
- acts as an information service, providing details of conferences, workshops, and publications and requests for consultation information
- facilitates the sharing of information and ideas as well as alerting the Council's Executive to those areas of interest that may also be usefully addressed in other fora.

Membership

The Council has 125 full institutional members, 7 associate members and 7 individual members.

A full list of the Council's members may be found on our web site; <http://www.ukcge.ac.uk> and at the end of this publication.

Currently full membership fees are £580 per year, associate membership £250, and individuals who wish to receive information about the Council directly rather than by way of their institution(s) may do so on payment of a personal fee (please contact the Office for further details). Full membership is open to all institutions within the area of benefit in receipt of public or private funds for the delivery of postgraduate programmes. Full members have voting rights at Council meetings during which individuals from member institutions may stand for election to the Executive Committee. To qualify for associate membership, institutions or organisations must have an interest in postgraduate work. Although associate members may neither vote at Council meetings nor stand for election to the Executive Committee, they do enjoy all other benefits of membership. Applications for membership are approved by the Council's Executive Committee. All members must subscribe to the objects of the Council.

The Council has reciprocal relationships with various organisations including the UK GRAD programme, National Postgraduate Committee (NPC) and the Canadian Association of Graduate Schools. It is also committed to expanding the base of such reciprocity, and the profile of graduate education, by encouraging more professional organisations and learned societies with an interest in graduate education to join the Council. In 2004 the Council developed a joint statement with the UK GRAD programme to show how the two organisations work together to strengthen shared aims and complement and support each other.

Institutional links

Via a 'link person' in every member institution, the Council distributes information about its activities and publications and maintains contact with members. These link persons provide a valuable, voluntary service, and take responsibility for distributing Council material and information to those staff within their institutions that have a particular interest in postgraduate education.

Service to members

The Council constantly considers how it can improve its service to members and its profile. Ideas and suggestions are always welcomed from members.

The Office

- manages the day-to-day running of the Council
- administers the Council's Executive Committee and Officer meetings
- manages and coordinates all Council events
- maintains the Council's membership database
- maintains and updates the Council website
- oversees JISCmail
- publishes the newsletter, published reports and other documents, and responds to requests for copies of these documents
- provides information about the Council and about membership to the organisation
- provides an information resource on postgraduate issues
- acts as first point of contact for general enquiries and publication requests

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Review of 2008

In the main this year has been one of consolidation for the Council and its activities.

There have been two changes in Council Staff. Christine Worrall joined the Council in August 2008 as Administrative Assistant and Carolyn Raven joined that Council as Principal Officer in October 2008. Carolyn has replaced Nicola Crouch who had been the Principal Officer for the Office for four years and has relocated to Keele University. I wish to acknowledge Nicola's contribution to our activities and wish her well for the future.

Turning to various events mounted by the Council, as this Review demonstrates we have continued to cover a wide range of issues in the postgraduate arena during this year.

Of particular note in this year has been our 3rd European Conference on 'The Impact of Bologna on Doctoral Education in Europe' which was hosted as our Summer Conference in July 2008 in Edinburgh.

The Council has also tried to keep members abreast of the continuing developments and topical issues in Graduate Education and has been particularly pro-active in responding to the changes in the Immigration Regulations which will affect International Students.

Finally, we have continued to work in collaboration with QAA and ran our two day Residential Workshop in Nottingham 'Audit and Best Practice for Research Degree Programmes' where Professor Paul Luker, Assistant Director, QAA and Senior Associate for HE Academy ran a Plenary Session on 'Key Audit Issues for Research Degree Programmes'.

Professor Malcolm McCrae
Chair, UK Council for Graduate Education
December 2008

Publications

During 2008 the Council concluded research for its forthcoming publication; Higher Doctorate Awards in the UK which will be available shortly from the Council website at www.ukcge.ac.uk

Higher Doctorate Awards in the UK

Professor Stuart Powell (Research Professor, University of Hertfordshire) and Ms Nicola Crouch (Administrator UKCGE 2005-2008)

(ISBN 978-0-9543915-6-0)

A survey by questionnaire of 125 UKCGE member institutions was undertaken, to map the range of awards that are described as being at higher doctoral level and their incidence across member institutions. A response rate of 56% (70 respondents) was achieved.

In this Report UKCGE mapped out academic awards known as 'higher doctorates' that were on offer in member institutions at the time of its survey and examined how the situation with regard to these awards was changing, if at all. As with so many of the other surveys that UKCGE has carried out what resulted was a picture in which there was some common ground but also considerable amounts of varying interpretation, particularly with regard to nomenclature of awards, and varying practices, particularly with regard to eligibility criteria for the award and examination procedures.

The impetus for the survey arose during various UKCGE meetings and workshops over recent years where it had been noted that member institutions have quite different notions of, and approaches, to higher doctoral awards. For example, (i) Some institutions offered such awards and some did not, yet there was no clear rationale for the separation in this respect; (ii) instances were noted where the same nomenclature was employed (by different institutions) for higher doctorates on the one hand and honorary doctorates or initial doctorates on the other.

Among the findings that appear in the report the following may serve as exemplars.

- Of the 70 member institutions who responded to the survey, 70% offered higher doctorate awards.

- The most common categories of person eligible for registration for a higher doctoral award were 'Alumni' and 'Current Academic Staff'. Respondents noted an array of caveats within those categories and these relate in large part to issues such as: pre-requisite qualifications, time elapsed from first degree or initial doctorate to point of application for the higher level of award, time in 'qualifying post' and place where research work took place.
- The only award cited unequivocally as a higher doctorate (by ten institutions), and with a single nomenclature attached to it, was the Doctor of Divinity (DD). The other awards available in more than ten institutions were the higher doctorates in Science, Letters, Law and Music (mostly, though not universally, known by the abbreviations DSc, DLitt, LLD and DMus respectively). However, in all of these cases the award was also offered by one or other of just two institutions elsewhere at initial doctoral level.
- Institutions varied in what they expected to be included in a higher doctorate submission. Variations related to: (i) publications, (ii) commentary, (iii) CV and (iv) a statement regarding collaborators. Of those institutions that required a commentary, the range of maxima was from 500 words to 30,000 words.
- The majority of respondents (56%) indicated that an oral examination was not required at higher doctoral level within their institution. In 17% of the sample such an examination was compulsory and in the remainder it was discretionary.
- Fees ranged from £250 to £4,100 with the majority charging somewhere between £500 and £999. The situation with regard to fees varied within institutions in terms of whether or not the applicant is a member of staff.

- In the two year period preceding the questionnaire the majority of institutions had made either no higher doctorate awards or had made just one. In contrast just three institutions made more than 13 such awards each.

The report raised a number of key issues that the Council believes are fundamental to the control of the quality of higher doctoral awards and it makes some recommendations. It is hoped that this information will be of use both for those currently offering such awards and for those considering them.

2008 Winter Conference: highlights

The annual Winter Conference was held on Tuesday 12th February 2008 at the British Library. Its theme was Responding to Change in Postgraduate Recruitment.

Keynote addresses were given by Professor Mary Stuart on "Widening Participation to Postgraduate Study: Decisions, Deterrents and creating success" and by Professor Chris Park on "The PGT Student Experience: Findings from a Higher Education Academy Survey".

Four parallel themes explored the International Postgraduate Student Market, New Researcher Development, International Student Needs and Expectations and Doctoral Students Conceptions.

Widening Participation to Postgraduate Study: Decisions, Deterrents and creating Success

Professor Mary Stuart, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Kingston University

The opening presentation by Professor Stuart explored the aims of the Widening Participation project and the impact of those aims on the decision to go onto Postgraduate Study. The Widening Participation in Higher Education project focused on undergraduates and their student experience, so the project was to bridge the gap in obtaining literature that represented post graduate students.

A joint venture between Kingston University and Brighton University secured a bid from the HEA Research and Evaluation Project Scheme for 2006/2007 and used both qualitative and quantitative data from conducting over 1000 questionnaires, 60 surveys and 20 interviews.

The outcome of that research indicated a number of Socio-Economic factors that influenced the decision of individuals to study at Post Graduate Level as follows:

Those more likely to undertake Post Graduate Study

- EU and OS students
- Theoretical course students
- Having older children
- Those lower in debt worry
- Afro-Caribbean students (& East Asian at Brighton)

- Male students
- Those with Family HE experience

Those less likely to undertake Post Graduate Study

- Home students
- Applied course students
- Having younger children
- Those higher in debt worry
- White students (& East Asian at Kingston)
- Female students (& traditional males?)
- Those with less Family HE experience

Professor Stuart evaluated the outcomes of the research, stating that Peer support was equally important at postgraduate level as at undergraduate level and that students felt that decision making was difficult and those whose families did not have experience of HE found it more difficult than those that did. The implication is therefore that students need support in making choices about their future lives and vocational outcomes matter to most students whether they continue to PG study or not

The PGT Student Experience: Findings from a Higher Education Academy Survey

Professor Chris Park, Higher Education Academy

Professor Park reported on the HEA Survey in early 2007 which sought to investigate the student experience for those in taught post graduate studies. The main themes of this survey were:

- Motivation and choice
- Overall experience
- Dimensions of the experience
- Views of particular groups of students

The survey was undertaken across 30 HEI's and specific focus groups were set up for 11 HEI's and 107 students. Particular attention was also paid to specific students groups such as International Students, part time and distant students and students with disabilities.

The main outcomes of this survey were that most students were very positive about their experience, where more than 80% rated their experience as having met or exceeded their expectations and nearly 90% agreed that their studies were progressing well.

The highest rated areas were:

- teaching and learning;
- assessment;
- balance within programmes;
- timetabling and workloads;
- access to resources;
- overall access to advice;
- accuracy of information, advice and guidance received before programmes start

and the lowest rated areas were:

- feedback;
- degree of flexibility in choosing options;
- advice about study choices;
- induction;
- careers advice and financial advice;
- student support

Professor Park highlighted the strategy of the HEA in light of these findings, which would be to focus on the enhancement of the student experience through benchmarking and longitudinal tracking.

The International Postgraduate Student Market

Christine Bateman, Education UK

Focusing primarily on the impact and implications that the Prime Ministers Initiative would have post graduate studies in the UK, Education UK refreshed its brand and marketing delivery in all priority countries focusing on employability, innovation, language and value.

Key points of discussion

Education UK has sought to build strategic alliances and partnerships, engaging with countries at two levels:

- Government & policy level: UK engaging pro-actively and collaboratively to address global education challenges
- Sector & institutional level: building strong strategic partnerships which will jointly and creatively address these challenges in practice

With postgraduate education having increased significantly since 1996 and International Students forming an ever increasing proportion, Education UK has responded to the Vision 2020 reported and has highlighted that

the findings need to be revisited to determine the following:

- To identify and examine the key choice factors for students choosing overseas study
- To identify and consider the factors, which determine which country, city, institution and course they choose and determine the timeframe over which they make these decisions
- To identify UK's competitive advantage compared to US and Australia and some emerging markets
- To determine the key influences and influencers upon students decisions and their impact
- To ascertain changes occurring in the different markets, whether any of these represent a discernible shift and why these changes are occurring.

In doing so it will be anticipated that predictions would be country specific and short to mid-term (aiming at 3 to 5 years) and a model would be developed to forecast student mobility to UK from the major sending countries. The forecast of demand for UK education should be sector specific, i.e. Higher education (1st Degree, Postgraduate Taught, Postgraduate Research), Further education and Trans-National Education and where possible, demand for broad subject areas should be identified

Evaluation and outcomes

Christine Bateman highlighted the importance of national strategy on international education in increasingly competitive market and the importance of having up-to-date market data on demand for education, especially at postgraduate level.

Changes in the Postgraduate Market and Recruiting the Web 2.0 Generation

Jayne Rowley and Dr Charlie Ball, Prospects

The presentation by Prospects paid attention to the focus of university recruitment being on the undergraduate sector but this has shifted to the postgraduate sector. The new target population differs in terms of: expectations, age profile (e.g. in the new postgraduate intake there were 40% over 30) & academic destinations. In particular the Web 2.0 generation is: online 6 hours a day – 'on-line and on-demand', doing not viewing. Creativity is becoming fashionable (e.g. developing websites). In terms of activity 1% generates, 9% comment and 90% view.

Key points of discussion

As well as the changing profiles of applicants, what they apply for is shifting; in particular Masters Qualifications are seen as very transferable in the UK and extremely transferable outside of the UK.

Evaluation and outcomes

The presenters opened up a host of interesting possibilities regarding ways of using the web as part of a new understanding of recruitment as well as the delivery of the curriculum. They painted a picture of a new and different kind of prospective student with a distinctive lifestyle and hence expectations of university life and ways in which they may access that life.

The New Researcher Development Programme

Dr Janet Metcalfe, UK GRAD Programme

Dr Janet Metcalfe spoke about how the new programme is building upon the former UK GRAD Programme and the former UK HERD Programme. The Vision for 2008-2012 is "The UK is world class in supporting the persona, professional and career development of researchers". The Aims are to:

- champion development and implementation of effective policy
- Enhance HE provision through sharing practice and experience
- Provide access to development opportunities and resources, and the new feature of
- Build an evidence base to support the researcher development.

The establishment and purpose of Roberts Skills funding was explained as some delegates did not know of its existence. The effects had been a major change for PGRs and now the effects were to be extended to Research Staff through the merger of the two organisations.

Key points of discussion

UKGRAD/UKHERD are currently undertaking a re-branding exercise and the working title is The New Researcher Development Programme (NRDP). Regional Hubs, driven by steering groups and their membership are being reconstituted in 2008 for the next four years. The new website will be launched in June 2008.

There would be six national networks: two for researcher development, distinct for PostDocs and PGRs, for virtual interaction for 86k researchers; two networks would support HE Staff supporting researchers, and policy

makers; the final two networks would be for Academics and non-HE Employers. The latter was felt a very welcome innovation.

The impact of the SET for Success and Lisbon Agenda was setting the context for skills development. One delegate argued that the Government was doing nothing to fill the shortfall in practitioner based research area, and questioned how the NRDP could help. There was no data on the supply and demand but DIUS would be calling for bids for research into this shortfall. It was questioned also whether the NRDP could become more internationally biased. It was clear that its mission was for all researchers, but necessarily, some elements were only for Research Council funded students.

Evaluation and outcomes

Dr Metcalfe focussed her presentation based on the existing knowledge base of delegates – some totally new to UKGRAD and UKHERD. One third each were supporting staff and/or PGR students. The talk did not cover PGT students.

The Skills development of PGRs was seen as an exemplar for the world. However, there was still need to work with the British Council to get messages out to the world markets. The NRDP's R & D unit will need to develop an evidence base of knowledge of what PGRs do beyond their first destination. Other key developments would be:

- National provision of Grad Schools would be reduced to five per year.
- There would be continued but non-funded support for local Grad Schools
- Through activities, closer links to Research Councils
- A trainers' support unit would be a one-stop-shop
- An incubator unit for the effective researcher; talent spotting good practice of support for researchers

This was a concise and lively briefing.

International Students: needs and expectations – where can we do more?

Dominic Scott, UKCISA

Dominic gave a personal resumé of his work with the British Council which informed and influenced his current work with UKCISA (formerly UKCOSA), engagement with International student affairs. This also served to illustrate a number of changes that HE has had to accommodate in recent years in relation

to students from overseas. A detailed overview was provided with humorous illustrations and anecdotes as befits a postprandial presentation, of the wealth of current initiatives (each with its own acronym to add to the growing list related to HE affairs) which are influencing or will impact on our work with postgraduate students.

The tightening of immigration controls and the Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) was discussed followed by Prime Minister's Initiative (PMI) for international education, which he noted had an investment of £78m but regretted that only £250k was allocated to the Student Experience section. Other initiatives (Joint Education Taskforce – JET; Points based Immigration System – PBS; Student experience and Employment Advisory Group – SE & E) were also touched on as he questioned whether or not it was becoming more difficult for the UK to attract, retain and support international postgraduate students

Key Points of discussion

It was suggested that integration needs managing in the classroom through structured engagement, particularly in relation to helping students adapt to styles of learning and teaching prevalent in the UK but different to those experienced by students previously. He suggested that some may declare that they understand the need for a different style but they still need opportunities to test their limitations in a safe environment. They also need to attend orientation sessions available in most HEIs – but they may also need to have this attendance encouraged by supervisors.

In conclusion it was discussed that supervisors, managers of postgraduate programmes, Graduate School leaders etc need to become conversant with so that we can decide and manage internal reactions to them, and proactively engage with the issues and ethical ramifications, rather than simply passively accept what is thought by government to be appropriate.

A Pilot Exploration of Doctoral Students' Conceptions of Research

Dr Douglas Halliday (Durham University)

Dr Halliday reported back on the findings of a pilot study that was conducted amongst 198 Doctoral Students at Durham University. The pilot study focused on the different approaches by students to their research and how this information can be used to “develop” more effective researchers.

Strategising Postgraduate Recruitment

Professor Simon Lee, Vice-Chancellor (Leeds Metropolitan University)

Professor James Stirling, CBE, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)(Durham University)

The plenary session gave the opportunity to hear how two universities are investing in the postgraduate recruitment market.

Key points of discussion:

Leeds Metropolitan University: Professor Simon Lee used the university website to demonstrate the importance of communication through daily reflections, the Vision and Character Statement, Leeds Met Acts and Headingley Carnegie Scorecard. Professor Lee expressed that Leeds Met is a student-centred university and through the implementation of a 'low charging, high impact' fee policy a vibrant and flourishing undergraduate community continues to develop.

The success of the undergraduate provision has increased the need to establish postgraduate opportunities. Therefore, the university is seeking ways in which to refresh and enhance the postgraduate community, by increasing the number of masters available in areas of expertise across the university and externally through partnerships.

Professor Lee went on to note that whilst increasing masters provision is the way forward for Leeds Met and important for the progression of home grown students, the attractiveness and flexibility of such provision should also encourage students to apply from outside the university. He remarked that universities should adopt a culture of encouraging students at this level to seek out the best choice for themselves whether or not that means them staying at the same university or moving to another to widen their knowledge and perspectives of university life. He concluded by highlighting the recent initiative undertaken by the university in 2007 to celebrate the centenary of the Headingley Campus of Leeds Met. This included offering 100 full-time funded PhD studentships which are contributing to the research environment and enhancing the established PhD provision.

Durham University: Professor James Stirling stated that in the past the university had not proactively marketed postgraduate recruitment which had led to numbers becoming static and falling behind their competitors. On commencing his appointment at the university he had inherited a 65% target for growth in

recruitment of postgraduate students and therefore, needed to develop a strategy which would proactively support all levels of the university to achieve this.

The strategy looked at the challenges, actions and issues of increasing recruitment. In addition, the university faced further challenges to provide a high-quality student experience, delivering appropriate skills training and internationalisation. In response, the university developed an infrastructure which consisted of, a Graduate School concept, a purpose built postgraduate college, Director of Postgraduate Training and a £2M annual investment package, which included doctoral fellowship schemes, postgraduate scholarship schemes and strategic partnership awards. An Institutional Code of Practice ensures quality of postgraduate provision highlighting the responsibilities of students and staff. In proactively engaging staff, becoming more focused at marketing, providing flexible incentive scholarships and improving administration of the applications process postgraduate student numbers are increasing.

Looking forward the university needs to continue the upward trend, be aware of the internal and external environments to ensure they are able to position themselves at the forefront of change.

2008 Summer Conference: highlights

The Summer Conference was held on 3rd and 4th July 2008, South Hall Complex at the University of Edinburgh. This year's theme was Impact of Bologna on Doctoral Education in Europe.

Bologna: Doctoral Education in Education *Dr Sandra Bitusikova, EUA*

Dr Bitusikova gave an overview of Doctoral Education in Europe, highlighting the wide range of provision available and that there was a general movement towards structured programmes.

The UK has pioneered transferable skills provision and the remaining challenges include mobility, new (professional) doctorates, funding, regulatory frameworks.

Key points of discussion

- Relationship between EUA (CDE) & EC – EUA Hope to follow example of European Research Council and remain separate, but influence EC Policy
- Plea to CDE not to neglect Part-time and mature students
- Problem of introducing pension provision & other social benefits to PhD Students in UK – would lose tax-free status

Evaluation and outcomes:

As the opening plenary it provided a very useful background setting for the rest of the Conference.

Graduate School Dimension

Professor Mary Ritter (Imperial College, London)

Mary emphasised the importance of Graduate Schools in the global context - producing good doctoral graduates can offer 'global brainpower' solutions for an increasingly internationally-based knowledge economy. They can be crucial not just for personal development but also to reconcile the tension between increasing competitiveness and sharing through collaboration – 'co-petition' as she termed it. Knowledge transfer is not one-way, rather the aim should be 'knowledge integration', linking the production of new knowledge, including 'blue skies' research, to innovation and applied development. While attention to 3rd cycle doctoral programmes

developed only recently within the Bologna process, the London Communiqué stressed the value of Europe's wide variety of doctoral programmes and the dangers of over-regulation.

While Graduate Schools take many forms (graduate school, doctoral school, graduate academy), Mary contrasted two major structural types: the single over-arching and inter-disciplinary graduate school covering a university, prevalent in the UK, and the more specialist discipline-based graduate school, where there might be several within one university. Both cover quality matters, training in transferable skills, and integrative functions (e.g. sharing best practice), but the over-arching form was more effective at addressing inter-disciplinary, while more specialist schools can provide a stronger subject-specific focus.

An important 'added value' role for Graduate Schools was their ability to monitor the effectiveness of their skills training programmes. At Imperial, they had initiated a longitudinal evaluation study – SKIPI (Skills Perception Inventory) - giving useful quantitative feedback. Comparing pre- and post-training, data showed significant student improvement in four skills areas: group work, communications, planning, and skills awareness. The research also revealed some interesting differences – by gender, by subject area, and by country of residence.

Returning to the global context, Bologna's emphasis on physical mobility needed extending to development of students' inter-cultural skills and global mobility, something we in the UK are not good at. This should be integral to doctoral training, not an add-on, together with an appreciation of the value of networks at national, regional and global levels. The newly established EUA Council for Doctoral Education is a 'network of networks' – there is a lot the UK can learn from colleagues in Europe.

Summing up the many advantages of Graduate Schools, Mary noted that they offered good structures for delivering doctoral training, for better integration of doctoral students and giving them a voice, for quality assurance and establishing consistency, for building inter-disciplinarity, and they offered economies of scale and added value.

Key points of discussion

Two key points which were welcomed positively by contributors were:

- Mary's emphasis on the importance and value of developing inter-cultural and global networking skills among doctoral students
- The potential threat of an over-rigorous application of the ECTS framework which could undermine the essence of the doctorate.

Evaluation and outcomes

A comprehensive overview, drawing on the successful experience of twin Graduate Schools at Imperial, which emphasised the key dimensions of Graduate Schools and their potential advantages for under-pinning doctoral programmes. A final cautionary note about the dangers within the Bologna process of an over-regulated application of credits to doctoral programmes clearly struck a chord with many conference participants.

Doctoral Summer Schools – The European Experience

Dr Paule Biaudet (L'Université Pierre et Marie Curie)

The presentation focused on ReMaT (Research Management Training) which is an EU project funded under FP6 to develop research management training for PhD students and early-career researchers in BioSciences, with the ultimate goal of achieving broad support for integrating research management training measures as an essential part of doctoral education.

ReMaT offers an intensive, two-day course in research management and science entrepreneurship to introduce PhD students in the biosciences to key strategic topics and transferable skills in research funding, management, knowledge transfer and value creation. The training provides an opportunity for European networking as well.

The presentation highlighted how Doctoral Summer Schools could be used to reflect on the experiences of students and provide opportunities for improvement. Candidates also had opportunities in their own countries to participate in local communication events, including meeting with recruiters, former doctoral students working in industry and journalists.

The Doctoral Summer Schools provided candidates from different countries with an

opportunity to present their work and demonstrate the key generic skills acquired through research training to an audience of peers.

Doctoral candidates were highly positive about the experience and welcomed the opportunity to work together as part of multi-disciplinary teams with other doctoral candidates. The Doctoral Summer Schools also highlighted the different levels of motivation and training experience of students from different countries.

The overall experience highlighted the importance of developing research training and ensuring opportunities for 'learning by doing'. The project also highlighted the employment concerns of students who were not aware of the skills required and labour market.

Alternative approaches to generic and transferable skills training

Dr Jon Turner (University of Edinburgh)

The focus of this presentation was embedding skills training in academic programmes, Summer Schools and stand-alone activities. In addition it paid attention to Postgraduate researcher-led initiatives and Collaborative approaches to postgraduate training.

Key points of discussion

- Funding has been a key driver
- Ten years funding is probably not long enough to ensure lasting change
- Levels of engagement with the Roberts agenda have increased with time
- The focus of activity has changed from university level, general skills, to provision targeted at the needs of a Department/School and at the stages of the PhD
- PhD student initiated events are the most effective form of students developing transferable skills. This type of event is increasing in number and is seen as a significant indicator of engagement with the development of transferable skills

Evaluation and outcomes

The message that came through from this presentation was that one size does not fit all when it comes to transferable skills development for research students and as such tailored provision is essential.

PDP: Development and Impact of the York Skills Forge

Dr Jonathan Carr, York, UK

The Skills Forge (SF) was developed within the Department of Electronics, University of York, to support Graduate Professional Development and has been adopted institution wide. It is a “one stop shop” aimed at students, supervisors and administrators. For the student, it begins with a training needs analysis and maintains records of courses attended and scheduled. It streamlines administrative processes; bookings, email reminders, and queues for training courses are handled by SF. Details of supervisory meetings and records “signed-off” by students and their supervisors are maintained within SF and are confidential to the student / supervisory team. User feedback has resulted in new features being added, e.g. following student requests a calendar / diary is included which facilitates the setting up of supervisory meetings. At York, 70% of first years are using SF. The success at York has led to customized versions of SF being offered to other HEIs on a modest commercial basis.

ECTS – European Perspectives

Professor Ella Ritchie (University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne)

Joint PhD programmes represent a pure form of mobility and are highlighted by EUA CDE as an upcoming focus area. All parties involved will enjoy certain benefits if the joint programme turns out well. The doctoral candidate will, for example, gain access to different research environments, develop (genetic/transferable) skills, build networks for future collaboration, etc. The research links will be deepened for supervisors, and universities may benefit from joint programmes through reinforced internationalisation and in terms of benchmarking.

Ideally joint programmes are based on strong research collaboration or other links and networks, and they only makes sense if the criteria for PhD are the same in both universities. Joint programmes must be thought well through and a contract must be prepared (addressing the length of the study programme, the time spent at each university, the research environment, criteria for supervision and training, intellectual property issues, fees and other expenditures, academic standards of the award etc.).

One must not forget to include in the contract what steps should be taken if things go wrong

(departure of supervisor, research funding dries up etc.)

Last but not least – Joint programmes must add value to the PhD programme - otherwise it is not worth the effort.

Key points of discussion

- Mobility needs to be for a purpose
- Joint doctorate programmes must be legal (due to national legislation not all European universities are “allowed” issue joint diplomas)
- A contract between universities and doctoral candidate must be prepared
- If the criteria for joint programmes are too complicated, consider instead arranging research stays – they also favour mobility.

Evaluation and outcomes

In January 2009, the PhD programmes will be included in the Erasmus Mundus (EM) framework. In order to be accepted, the participating universities must be allowed to award joint diplomas. If the UK universities want to enter EM-agreements, time has come to prepare the future collaboration with their European partners.

Scandinavian Models for Graduate Schools and Research Schools

Gry Kibsgaard (The University of Bergen)

The Scandinavian Countries (Norway, Sweden & Denmark) have all recently been reviewing their organisation of doctoral education. The challenge to develop a critical mass of researchers & resources - given the countries' small populations and the slow average completion time for PhDs in Norway (typically 10 years) – has generated four main models of Graduate School. These are:

- The faculty based model
- A network based model (Scottish ‘pooling’)
- Thematic schools (eg based on health)
- Flagship schools, led by one strong University Research group

The speaker described examples of each model, pointing out that in practice many Graduate schools are hybrids.

Key points of discussion

Collaborative relationships are seen as essential to provide adequate critical mass for research and research training.

Governance issues are critical to the success of collaborative relationships, e.g. ensuring that each participating University has a staff member (and often also a research student) on the Board.

This talk was about Graduate Schools, but these are often a secondary product arising from the primary research collaboration arrangements.

Evaluation and outcomes

It was noted that (perhaps implicitly) these models seem to fit full-time students better than part-time ones. It became clear that the Scandinavian countries face similar problems, and are using similar solutions to the UK.

The transferable skill agenda is a new concept in Scandinavia. However some more TS have (implicitly) been being delivered for years, e.g. in summer schools.

The Role of the European QA Agencies in Graduate Education

Peter Williams, QAA UK

The presentation provided an overview and commentary on a range of developments with respect to graduate education across Europe and their current and potential impact with respect to quality assurance and enhancement. These included:

- ENQA – European National Quality Assurance Agencies Group (PW is current President)
- Bergen (2005) and London (2008) communiqués
- EUA report on Doctoral Programmes in European Universities (2007)
- European Council for Doctoral Education (CDE)
- European Charter and Code of Conduct for Researchers (2005)
- UK Revised Research Concordat (2008)

Key points of discussion

The current involvement of European Quality Assurance agencies in graduate education is limited. Attention has focused on the first and second Bologna cycles. However there is potential for greater involvement and the QAAs own Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes is proving extremely influential in both informing the current debate and helping to set the agenda for the future. In discussion Peter Williams reinforced the view that ECTS

should not be used for the research component of Doctoral programmes.

Evaluation and outcomes

Whilst the Bergen (2005) and London (2007) communiqués have highlighted the need for consideration of doctoral programmes, neither contain explicit mention of quality assurance of these programmes. It is important that standards and guidelines (such as QAA's code) are not used as a tick-box checklist to ensure compliance. The future emphasis is likely to be away from such narrow focus on compliance towards investing trust in mature institutions with the emphasis on "enhancement."

Trends V Report: Relevance for Doctoral Education

Dr Sybille Reichert, ETH Zurich

The "Trends" project undertaken by the EUA is intended to capture developments across Europe and provide evidence on the formation of the European Higher Education Area. The latest Trends V report (2007) was the subject of this presentation. The data was collected from more than 900 institutions across Europe. The report indicates significant reforms are occurring at institutional level across much of Europe.

Dr Reichert proposed that the Bologna process was the vehicle for change rather than the cause. Although the Trends V report did not have a significant amount to say about doctoral education there is evidence that doctoral reforms present significant challenges to a number of institutions.

The presentation covered a range of issues impacting the attractiveness of doctoral programmes including: length of study, nature of supervision provided, availability of funding, the extent of academic and social isolation and the extent to which specialisation to doctoral level impacts on future career options for researchers. It was noted that Europe now produces more Doctorates than the United States, with the 27 EU member states producing 93,000 Doctorates annually. There are substantial variations in the numbers of Doctorates per head of population across Europe. The quantity of Doctorates produced is not a significant issue for Europe at present, but what does the Doctorate mean in terms of skills is a matter of discussion across Europe. Despite producing more Doctorates Europe does less well than the United States or Japan in providing a research career for Doctorates.

A number of countries including France, Germany and the Netherlands have set up national programmes to attract nationals with a PhD back to their home country from the United States and elsewhere.

The role of Graduate Schools in Doctoral training was discussed with a number of different models reviewed during the presentation. There was no clear consensus on the most appropriate model. The presentation concluded with a number of challenges for institutions:

- Enhancing the relationship of doctoral programmes to areas of research strength
- Creating opportunities for professional training
- Enhancing the attractiveness for international applicants
- Increasing the awareness of the needs of all doctoral students – not just those progressing into a career at a university and
- The need for clear leadership at Graduate School level.

For many institutions in Europe the challenge is to ensure an appropriate balance between central management and leadership and local management and leadership at departmental or faculty level to ensure that there is sufficient flexibility to develop new and innovative doctoral programmes.

“Don’t forget the Post-Doc . . .”

Dr Iain Cameron, RC-UK

Dr Cameron discussed the context of the new Research Concordat and the seven principles that were included to support and manage research careers. The new Concordat had a strong emphasis on the responsibility of researchers to take control of their careers.

Key points of discussion

The revision of the 1996 Concordat was to pay particular attention to supporting the aspirations of researchers, strengthen and support good researcher employment practices in universities, address wider issues (e.g. attractors to research, careers, CPD, mobility) and incorporate EU Charter and Code.

Having gone to consultation, the Concordat has 16 signatories and 21 supporters for the set of seven principles:

- Recognition of the importance of recruiting, selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research.
- Researchers are recognised and valued by their employing organisation as an essential part of their organisation’s human resources and a key component of their overall strategy to develop and deliver world class research.
- Researchers are equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile, global research environment.
- The importance of researchers’ personal and career development, and life long learning, is clearly recognised and promoted at all stages of their career.
- Individual researchers share the responsibility for and need to pro-actively engage in their own personal and career development, and life long learning.
- Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers.
- The sector and all stakeholders will undertake regular and collective review of their progress in strengthening the attractiveness and sustainability of research careers in the UK.

Quality Assurance procedures for Postgraduate programmes in Europe

Professor Dionyssis Kladis (The University of the Peloponnese)

QA in Continental Europe is a complicated and sensitive issue and the ‘normal’ QA procedures did not work well because of the lack of structure of the PhD.

The European Universities Association runs a Quality Assurance process which looks at the institutional level mechanisms for assuring the quality of PhDs. They are able to do this because of the respect gained through a long standing engagement with the Bologna process. The process is guided by four principles:

- Internal: the responsibility for assuring quality lies with the institution
- Institutional: it relates to institutional strategy and capacity for change
- For enhancement purposes

- The emphasis is on developing a quality culture

The evaluations are by external audit and site visit.

Since 1994, 206 evaluations and 24 follow-ups have been conducted in 185 HEIs from 34 European countries and 5 from non-European countries. Since 2001 there have been 'co-ordinated evaluations' at a regional or national level.

There have also been three rounds of the 'Quality Culture Project' since 2001 focusing on internal quality assurance and networking/best practice involving 134 HEIs from 36 European countries. The EUA's system does not evaluate programmes, but is about affecting change and enhancing quality.

Evaluation and outcomes

Delegates from UK universities that had been through the EUA Quality Assurance process felt that it was more supportive and developmental than the UK's Quality Assurance Agencies Institutional Audit process.

Mobility – Opportunity versus Reality

Karoline Holländer, Eurodoc

Ms Karoline Holländer, the recently elected President of EURODOC (The European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers) explored the various opportunities and obstacles to geographical, sectoral and disciplinary mobility for doctoral candidates and early career researchers within Europe.

She presented EURODOC's committed support for the enhancement of mobility by addressing such issues as the current lack of resources to support the indirect and direct costs of mobility and particularly the implementation, portability and transferability of pension rights and funds (and other social benefits) for doctoral candidates. Ms Holländer's recommendations for action included the establishment of an international mobility fund for pensions, the training of appropriate staff within European HEI's on issues related to mobility, the incorporation of relevant information within recruitment processes and the general development of a more responsive culture towards mobile researchers.

Key points of discussion

Discussions focused on the situation within the UK where students in receipt of doctoral studentships receive a tax free stipend which is potentially worth more than the provision of other social security benefits such as pension rights and parental leave. If these rights were to be implemented then UK Universities would have to bear a larger cost burden which may result in a reduction of student numbers. This picture varies throughout Europe and across various disciplines and is something that EURODOC representatives feel strongly about. Delegates also discussed whether there was any known baseline as to the current scale of mobility of European doctoral candidates and early career researchers so as to ascertain what could or should be achieved in this area.

Evaluation and outcomes

It was felt that it was not beyond the bounds of possibilities that something could be done at a national political level to even out the playing field across Europe when it came to the mobility of social benefits for doctoral candidates and early career researchers and perhaps this issue should be visited at this level. This issue needs to be addressed at a national level rather than at the level of individual institutions in order to assure a common approach. EURODOC has a workgroup devoted to the issue of Mobility and will continue to pursue this agenda.

Bologna & Training Requirements in Social Sciences

Professor Nick Rees (Liverpool Hope University)

The main focus of the presentation was on research training in the social sciences in an Irish and UK context, of which Professor Rees has recent experience in both countries. There is a huge amount of differentiation on the European landscape between teaching and research institutes. HE is too inwardly focused and needs to be outward looking for depth and breadth of skills acquisition. An important area is the development of innovative and creative training for part time students (an often underrepresented key group).

It was important to recognise that Bologna is a backdrop for development in graduate education, that reform and change actually began before Bologna (which has proven to be a useful vehicle for development). Bologna is a voluntary agreement which allows for continuing diversity and does not require conformity by all stakeholders. For example, the form of a PhD may vary greatly, but HE is

more concerned with the process in which students are engaged and the outcome of this process for subject and professional associations. Some of the Bologna recommendations require thought on the part of HE. Mobility of researchers should only be advocated if the benefit is clear.

Progress in graduate education has been made in the UK and Ireland over the last 5-10 years. Some HEI's have been slower to respond to Bologna due to a lack of awareness of the application and understanding of the agreement. In the UK however, the requirements for training in the social sciences are more stringent than in Ireland where effective delivery of training can be questionable. Dedicated career services can be limited in Ireland. A tension exists between the expectations under Bologna and what is required by specific disciplines.

Another point of note was the extent to which students can actually relate to graduate education. Institutions must be proactive in providing appropriate advice to students regarding graduate support and training. This of course has a knock on effect for student and supervisor workload balance. The fact that training requirements are not prescribed is at present a bonus, as each university can implement their own framework.

Key points of discussion

HE needs to be proactive in identification of discipline specific skills. The tendency for HE to be too inwardly focused needs to change and requires institutions to be outward looking for depth and breadth of skills acquisition.

The ever growing cohort of Part time students must be catered for with the development of innovative and creative training, particularly when many are mature and come with already developed skill sets.

In addition, PhD's can vary greatly, so HE must be more concerned with the process of PhD acquisition, management and training.

Training in the social sciences is more stringent in the UK than in Ireland where effective delivery of training can be questionable. This needs to be addressed in the Irish context.

Evaluation and outcomes

- More resources need to be put into the identification and development of discipline specific training and support in the social sciences.

- Bologna is a valuable tool and has advantages because it is not compulsory or too prescriptive
- On a number of levels, HEI's must concern themselves with providing appropriate advice to students on a number of levels: Institute, faculty and department level.

Some key areas of which HEI's need to be aware include programme diversity across the sector, discipline specific training requirements, the capacity for sharing some training across subjects, the existing employment market and career development

Institutional Strategies for Developing Research Supervisors

Professor Tony Fell (University of Bradford)

The content of Professor Fell's session covered how research supervisors could be developed within an international and national context, an overview of key stages and processes within this – such as induction, progress monitoring, denouement and thesis completing leading up to the viva. Finally an overview of current issues such as training for potential supervisors was reviewed. An extremely comprehensive handout accompanied this presentation which enabled participants to follow and add their own issues to the debates.

Key points of discussion

There were useful points of discussion around the issue of recruitment and selection of supervisors. Also how to persuade supervisors to come on a training event and to acknowledge that there was an art in supervising research students was highlighted. The need for senior management engagement was considered imperative to establish such an ethos of continuous professional development within any given discipline area. Additionally, issues surrounding audit trails and records of supervision was debated to offer transparency of the process but also to contribute to a "feed forward" opportunity for the student. Underpinning all the points raised was the need for continuous dialogue between the student and supervisor.

Evaluation and outcomes

It was considered that programmes would need to be evaluated but that some supervisors required subtle ways of being informed about different and perhaps more helpful ways to engage with the process of supervision for example, through the use of pertinently chosen case studies. Also it was

possible to induct new supervisors along more experienced people.

Various stages in evaluation were considered and expanded upon from the initial meeting and fleshing out of ideas, to how records of sessions would be kept to how to plan for the viva.

Sharing of good practice was the very essence of this talk and the Bradford thesis plan was offered as one possibility – those interested were asked to e-mail Professor Fell.

This was an excellent, informative and helpful talk which stimulated numerous questions. It tapped into the experience of people in the audience who were reassured about their practice but also challenged to develop it. The audience experience the session as thoroughly useful for their purposes and departed with hints and tips on how to make the process of supervision both enjoyable and effective. The fact that we were now in an age of litigation and the prospect of appeals stimulated the need for training. Important questions concerning the thesis plan, planning for the viva and final reflections on the process were raised.

The Bologna Process: 2010 and Beyond

Professor Ian Haines, UKCGE Executive Committee

Professor Ian Haines reiterated that this UKCGE event was a European event. He introduced the history of the Bologna Agenda, which began with the signature of the Sorbonne Declaration in 1998 and subsequently progressed through bi-annual declarations. The Bologna process did not initially recognise PhD education as being within its remit.

The 'Lisbon Agenda' and the 'Bologna Agenda' are parallel processes; the Lisbon Agenda addresses economic aims while Bologna is concerned with education. The Lisbon Agenda includes the aim that by 2010 expenditure on research and development will account for 3 per cent of Europe's GDP. As of 2005, expenditure on research and development accounts for approximately 1.9 per cent of GDP spent. The Lisbon Agenda also envisaged that two-thirds of the expenditure on research and development would originate from the private sector; however, indications are that no more than half of the current expenditure on research and development is from the private sector.

The Bologna Agenda aims to produce a European Higher Education Area while the Lisbon Agenda aims to facilitate the development of a European Research Area. However, Professor Haines cautioned that the economic Lisbon Agenda and the educational Bologna Agenda are in danger of becoming enmeshed rather than complementary. Consequently, we have a major challenge in addressing the risk that the diktats of applied research will undermine curiosity driven research; a balance between the two is required.

Moving on to a discussion on demographic trends, Professor Haines outlined that by 2020 there will be 20 per cent less 18-24 year olds in the European population, this also takes into account immigration. Accordingly, increasing or even maintaining the numbers enrolled in doctoral education will be difficult.

Researchers' potential impact on public and private sector policies and roles increases the importance of instruction in other skills not necessarily directly related to their research. These skills or competencies include social responsibility, multicultural awareness, ethical conduct and a consciousness of research's impact on wider society. Consequently, PhD education should provide wider instruction. Getting to know more and more about less and less is not necessarily the exclusive purpose of a PhD education.

Professor Haines also declared that we must be cognisant that English is rapidly becoming the *lingua franca* of research and that the English speaking world's linguistic advantage will dissipate, especially as other countries begin delivering programmes in English. Professor Haines stressed the importance of higher education meaningfully promoting and engaging with lifelong learning; little is happening in this area and the 'Copenhagen Process' has stalled.

Evaluation and outcomes

In conclusion, Professor Haines briefly explored a number of issues that we will need to address post 2010.

- ECTS: UK universities have generally not engaged with ECTS. Professor Haines also stated that there is no logic in dividing the ECTS system by two and giving it a UK appellation.
- The debate on one-year masters and their relationship to the Bologna Agenda will also continue.

2008 Workshops

During 2008, the Council ran four workshops and a Residential two day Workshop on Audit and Best Practice for Research Degree Programmes held at Rutland Square Hotel in Nottingham

Professional Development for Established Research Supervisors, 13th March 2008

Virtually all higher education institutions have accepted that academic staff new to research supervision need initial professional development in the role, and established appropriate provision. However, for established supervisors, the position is very different. So the QAA special review (2007: para 35, p 8) found that:

Variability of expectations and requirements was...greatest in relation to the training and development of established supervisors...In most institutions, established supervisors are encouraged or expected, but rarely required to engage in personal development activities within this area.

Further on in the review (ibid., para 44 p 9), it was noted that one of the most common themes in the individual institutional reports was:

...the need to ensure that appropriate formalised training and development is not only available to, but taken advantage of, by all supervisors, new and experienced [in particular]... the need to find ways of engaging all experienced supervisors in appropriate personal development...

The focus of this workshop was to identify ways for Institutions could take this agenda forward. The objectives for discussions were around five key issues:

- Why do we need to engage established supervisors in personal development?
- What should the outcomes be of such development?
- What should be the central themes?
- How can we most effectively provide opportunities for development?
- How can we try to maximise engagement by established supervisors?

Following the welcome and introduction by Professor Malcolm McCrae (*Warwick University, Chair UKCGE*) Group Discussion took place on the subject of “Why do we need to engage established supervisors in professional development?” Further group

discussions took place during the day focusing on “What sort of development should we ask them to engage in?”, “How should professional development be delivered?” and “How can we promote engagement in development activities?”

Dr. Stan Taylor from Durham University ran the plenary presentations on Reasons for Engaging Established Supervisors in Professional Development, Themes for Supervisor Development and Suggestions for Promoting Engagement.

Evaluation and outcomes

The group discussions provided an opportunity for delegates to compare experiences and ideas, exploring practical implementation options and suggestions for promoting engaging in research supervision development. The supporting papers provided by Dr. Stan Taylor provided useful frameworks for delegates and feedback was positive.

Meeting the needs of Part-Time Research Students, 30th April 2008

This was a repeat workshop following the success of the initial workshop that was ran in October 2007.

There was a great deal of recognition that part-time research students are the least catered for in HEIs, but that often they are the most in need of support (both academic and pastoral). Research training was a big issue, with most participants in agreement that the Joint Skills Statement and consequently their current training programmes are not appropriate for part-time students (most of whom are already in employment). Other issues included low completion rates, and finding means to integrate part-time students into peer, research, academic and institutional cultures. There was a general agreement that there is not currently enough information about part-time research student numbers or profiles, and that current statistics do not breakdown into the kind of formats which would be useful.

Participants gave largely very positive feedback and the speakers provided a good mix and it was felt that it was definitely worth having all four there. The presentations by Murphy and Brice provided statistical and research-derived evidence for discussions, while Woodward and Chandler provided the experience and more informal knowledge that comes with being a supervisor of part-time

research students or a part-time research student oneself.

Finally, it was very noticeable how concerned participants were that there is not enough information about either the number or profile of part-time research students, how their needs are different from other research students, or how best their needs can be met. This is clearly an area in which more work can be done to support and inform HEIs.

The New Immigration Regulations: Understanding and Implementation, 20th October 2008

Susan Barnes, Policy Manager, UK Border Agency (UKBA), outlined the current situation in relation to regulations and institutional responsibilities under the Tier 4, the Student Route to Immigration within the new Points Based System. This had been established because of abuse of the current systems, and also to reduce 80 separate immigration schemes to one five-tier system, which is felt to be more transparent and less subjective. Dominic Scott responded with his perspective as Chief Executive of UKCISA on the impact for PGR and PGT students, indicating in general a welcome to the process which, through preliminary on-line self assessment, would now make it clearer to prospective international students whether or not they would have sufficient points to be considered for a visa. Catherine Marston, Policy Officer, Universities UK, and Laura Du Plessis, Senior International Student Adviser, Warwick University International Office, outlined views on and current plans for institutional implementation. A breakout session provided the opportunity for delegates to discuss institutional plans and concerns.

Key points of discussion

Outstanding areas of the process yet to be defined gave delegates cause for concern as some felt their institutions could not commit to Registration for the 4-year licence under Tier 4 (necessary by early Spring 2009) until more detail was known, on which internal procedures could be established and on which their appropriateness to be registered would be vetted by UKBA. Staff nominated to use the on-line Sponsor Management System would also be vetted.

The point at which a Certificate of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) could be issued was important, and institutions should only issue a CAS when a student had firmly accepted an

Unconditional offer. However, whilst a student might hold several CAS's from different institutions, only one would be accepted for issue of the visa tenable at the same institution. Subsequent changes to a different institution would require a new CAS to be issued (£10 a time) and a new visa to be applied for – at cost to student.

Issues of reliability of 3rd party fee sponsorship, where fee payments are still outstanding for existing students were for institutions to resolve and make immigration sponsorship decisions.

The requirement to report on failed starts or non-attendance was also of concern as definitions of enrolment periods and frequency of required attendance could vary across institutions and between subject disciplines. However, some flexibility would be permitted. Institutions needed to inform UKBA of their enrolment periods beyond which students may be reported for non-arrival, and it was for institutions to determine what were the 10 interactions, e.g. Tutorials, assignments, labs, milestones etc and report against those attendance requirements. However, if no reports were ever received by UKBA about missing students, UKBA may seek to visit institutions. A high level of problems with students may reduce an Institution's rating from A to B, and non-compliance of a sponsor in one category will affect rating in a separate category, e.g. educational establishment acting as a sponsor for students and also and employer.

Leave will be granted for the duration of the course, plus a reasonable period to tie up affairs, or seek an extension, but initially, which will not exceed four years. Only two extensions for re-submissions/resits etc would be allowed, i.e. maximum of six-year stay. A new CAS would need to be issued for each of these.

The lack of discussions with UUK and other representatives on the IT aspects of delivery was of major concern to both institutions and UUK. What data would be required to be exported to UKBA and how this could be garnered from existing information held by institutions in order to avoid costly, unfunded, duplication of data entry was yet to be addressed.

Delegates were concerned that to date, debate appears to have been around UG and PGT students; more debate is required about implications for PGR students.

UKBA is reviewing the required level of maintenance expected to be evidenced for first 12 months, i.e. £9,600, because of concerns of those institutions whose marketing promoted the low cost of living in their area.

Leave will be granted for the duration of the course plus a reasonable period to tie up affairs or seek an extension, but initially, which will not exceed four years. Only two extensions for re-submissions/resits etc would be allowed, i.e. maximum of six-year stay. A new CAS would need to be issued for each of these.

Evaluation and outcomes

The workshop provided an excellent overview of a major development affecting postgraduate study and debate could have continued for some time. Some institutions may need to consider closer monitoring and reporting of students than hitherto. This may be more difficult in relation to PGR students where there is less stipulation of frequency of contact. Systems must be robust and one University (Kent) already has an on-line attendance system for all students so International students are treated no differently in this respect.

Residential Workshop 2008: Audit and Best Practice for Research Degree Programmes, 12th – 13th November 2008

This Residential Event focused on all aspects relating to the Institutional Audit of Research Degree Programmes. The content of the residential was to crystallise the perspectives of experienced QAA specialist advisers and focus on the actual audit experience of those HEIs whose RDPs have been recently audited.

In particular, best practice in *Recruitment, Induction, Monitoring, Examination and Skills Training* formed the focus of small Syndicated Workshop group discussions, where delegates shared their problems and solutions in establishing effective and efficient RDPs, in preparation for QAA institutional audit. Key issues relating to HEFCE policy on Qualification Rates, Professional Doctorates, Part-Time Registrations, Extramural and Franchised RDPs were covered.

The workshop opened with a presentation from Professor Paul Luker (*Assistant Director, QAA & Senior Associate, HE Academy, York*) focusing on Key Audit Issues for Research Degree Programmes. Discussion focused on the need for HEIs to fully reflect on how they build and deliver skills training for PGR in their institutions. Discussion took place in the

context of the QAA RDP auditing process and with the benefit of input from an experienced QAA auditor we were able to identify those areas that will require particular attention as we develop training provision. It was extremely useful to hear about the audit process from institutions that had already been audited as well.

Delegates were then divided into two groups for the syndicated workshops which covered Auditing the QAA / RC Skills Training agenda and RDP Audit Issues: Best Practice for Recruitment & Induction

The second day of the Residential opened with a plenary presentation on RDP Audit Issues at Institutional Level – the Durham University Experience by Dr Douglas Halliday (*Graduate Dean, University of Durham*). The presentation provided a useful and informative insight into the policy and practice of an individual institution and highlighted some useful points to the delegates to consider. Delegate feedback for this session was particularly positive, learning from the experiences and practice of the University of Durham.

Further plenary presentations included Best Practice Outcomes from the Special QAA Review by Gill Clarke (*University of Bristol*) and Research degree qualification rates: current HEFCE policy and implications for audit by Suzanne Wilson (*Policy Officer, HEFCE*). The presentation by Suzanne Wilson focused on the supply of future researchers and knowledge delivery, questioning if Universities were delivering and producing high quality researchers. The key points of discussion looked at how institutions look at rates and what do they do with them; the trend is to reduce years to completion to meet Research Council targets and the need to persuade Universities that completion is an area the whole institution must engage in – need to be positive.

Following further syndicated workshops covering HEFCE Policy Issues and the QAA Audit and The Professional Doctorate – validation and other issues, the final plenary presentation was given by Professor Bonnie Steves (*Director, Caledonian Graduate Centre, Glasgow Caledonian University*) on Audit issues for the Professional Doctorate. The presentation started with a definition of a professional doctorate as compared with a PhD, confirming a professional doctorate as an evidence-based research programme with an emphasis on undertaking research within the context of professional practice, in which the

student is a member of a cohort. The Glasgow Caledonian model was described as a generic professional doctorate framework which enables students from a range of backgrounds to study together; commencing as a programme for health professionals, it now includes students from psychology, education, business.

The key points of discussion included the taught elements of the programme need defined learning outcomes at the appropriate level and the modules used at Glasgow Caledonian were defined.

Evaluation and outcomes

The two day Residential Workshop provided focused discussion and information sharing on best practice and experiences. The themed workshops provided valuable insight and opportunity for reflection to delegates and inside knowledge from the presentations given by Durham, QAA Bristol, HEFCE were insightful and valuable.

The Changing Role of the Supervisor, 3rd December 2008

Recent years have witnessed a revolution in PhD education. New styles of PhD have appeared, including the PhD by publication and the professional doctorate, the numbers of mature and part-time students have increased, and the nature of the training itself has been shaped to meet increasing student expectations and the broader and more-structured training requirements of the research councils and other funding bodies. For many of our academics, the supervisor's role is now very different to what they experienced as a student.

This one-day event looked at the new expectations of students and supervisors and explored ways of training and supporting staff to be effective supervisors in the new academic climate. The programme included presentations, discussion groups and a student-led exploration of their expectations. Full summaries of all discussions were presented in Plenary Sessions to ensure that all delegates benefited from the collective experience shared in each Workshop Discussion group.

External Links and Activities

Professor Mick Fuller (Honorary Secretary) represented the Council at the following:

- 25th June 2008 attended the launch of the New researcher Concordat, Westminster Hall, London
- 16th July 2008 attended the HE International Unit Briefing on International PG students, St Stephens Gate, Houses of Parliament, Westminster, London
- 8/9th September 2008, attended the UKGRAD Researcher Development conference, London.
- 16th September 2008, attended the DIUS Expo08, Manchester University, Manchester
- 24th November 2008, attended the HEA/UKGRAD/UKCGE What is a Doctorate event, British Library, London
- 8-11th December 2008, took part in the EAHEP EU-ASIA Doctoral Platform Meeting, Beijing, China


Professor Pam Denicolo (Vice Chair) represented the Council at the following:

- Member of the Rugby Team 08, working particularly on developing a framework of attributes for developing researchers
- Presented a keynote paper at the Vitae S-E Hub Conference on Doctoral Supervision; gave a presentation with Janet Bohrer from the QAA on The Changing Doctorate at the Vitae Researcher Development Conference, September 08, London, and a presentation with Rob Daley on Attributes of Researchers at the Vitae Policy Forum, January 09, Manchester
- Continued in her capacity as SRHE Chair of the Postgraduate Interest Network and executive editor of the Guides series: Issues

in Postgraduate Education: Management, Teaching and Supervision

- Secretary/Treasurer of ISATT (International Study Association on Teachers and Teaching) and lead of HE interest group, giving a keynote presentation on International Developments in PGRS Support and Training at the Lapland Symposium in July 08
- Provided a presentation on Supporting Supervisors to the Research alliance Colloquium, Cork, February 08
- Represented UKCGE and SRHE at the UNESCO Experts Forum on Graduate Education in Dublin, March 08
- Sat on the selection panel for the RCUK Longitudinal Cohort Study of PGRS
- Co-organised, and provided a workshop on Examining the Doctorate, the HEA conference 2020 Vision: Changing the Doctorate, London, November 08;
- Provided a three day workshop at the University of Iceland, Nordforsk Capacity Building for PhD Supervisors for colleagues from 7 Nordic countries in November 08
- Acted as external advisor to 3 UK universities on the development of PGRS support and training.

Professor Kevin Lee (Executive Committee) joined the Training and Development Board of the Economic and Social Research Council. In this capacity, he has acted as a member of the moderating panels for Postdoctoral Fellowships and for the PhD Studentship Open Competition, a member of the Board strategy sub-group, a member of the researcher development initiative and a member of Board visiting teams at the Universities of Durham and Cardiff.



Accounts and Directory of Contacts



Accounts 2007/2008

INCOME	2008	2007
Subscriptions	£70,330	£66,505
Conference fee & workshop income	£133,485	£85,225
Sponsorship & other income	£875	£517
HEFCE income	-	-
OTHER INCOME	2008	2007
Interest received (gross)	£4,796	£3,981
TOTAL INCOME	£209,486	£155,711
LESS: EXPENDITURE	2008	2007
Printing, publicity & website	£6,495	£11,150
Postage & stationery	£1,347	£1,212
Travel	£3,364	£3,177
Audit & accountancy	£2,184	£2,056
Legal fees	-	-
Rent	£7,706	£7,272
Conference & workshop costs	£64,284	£48,359
Telephone	£654	£669
Computer expenses	-	-
Salaries & clerical assistance	£79,511	£71,693
Repairs & renewals	£115	£12
Books & journals	£753	£682
General	-	-
Insurance	£1,217	£1,163
Bad debts	-	-
Bank charges	£143	£60
Depreciation –Office equipment	£210	£1,105
Staff development	£40	£185
AGM expenses	-	-
Total	£168,023	£148,795
INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	£41,463	£6,916

Projected Budget 2008/2009

Title	Budget (£)
Salaries	84,500
Travel	4,500
Staff Dev	1,000
Accommodation	7,912
Stationery	1,000
Reprographics	1,500
Postage	1,000
Telephone	900
Printing	6,500
Room Hire	1,300
Books/Subs	1,000
Insurance	1,500
Winter Conference	9,000
Workshops	32,000
Summer Conf	21,500
Publicity & website	3,000
Equipment	1,000
Audit & accountancy	2,250
TOTAL	181,362

Member Institutions and Link People

These details were believed to be correct as this review went to press.

Please notify the Principal Officer of any errors or omissions by emailing ukcge@ukcge.ac.uk.

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The Officers of the Council met on four occasions, and the full Executive Committee on four occasions, during 2008.

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Angus Burns, Events Officer
Christine Worrall, Administrative Assistant