



Work Based Learning
at Middlesex University

**‘The Generic Professional
Doctorate – current perspectives
on development and validation’**

Institute for Work Based Learning

**Professor Carol Costley
Head of Research, IWBL.**

What is a generic professional doctorate?



Work Based Learning
at Middlesex University

- **Generic abilities for professional practice are a key component of doctorate learning** “Substantive knowledge has been found to have less long-lasting value than other forms of knowledge” (Pole 2000)
- **Generic approaches can be formulated through a subject discipline route or as a field of study in its own right** “generic attributes are highly context-dependent, and are shaped by the disciplinary epistemology in which they are conceptualised and taught” (Jones 2009)

Rationale for the Doctorate in Professional Studies (DProf)



Work Based Learning
at Middlesex University

- The DProf arose from the field of work based learning studies which was validated as a field of study in its own right in 1995. WBL arose in part from independent studies in the 1980s.
- Professional Studies and Work Based Learning Studies have a focus upon cross or transdisciplinary learning that is practice-based
- The scholarly basis for the field emerges from a wide range of sources



Generic learning

- **Transdisciplinarity** cuts across disciplines, it does not merge them concerned with knowledge generated and used in practice. May draw on disciplinary knowledge as an empirical or methodological source
- Generic assessment criteria
- **Mode-2 knowledge**, Nowotny et al (2001 p89) state, has reflexivity, eclecticism and contextualisation
- **'Horizontal discourse'** Bernstein (1999) describe as everyday or common sense knowledge which is oral, local, context-dependant and specific, tacit, multi-layered
- **Social complexity of learning** in working, a multiplicity of interconnections (Antonacopalu, 2005)
- Learning which is “essentially concerned with the individual and their own practice” (Scott et al 2004).

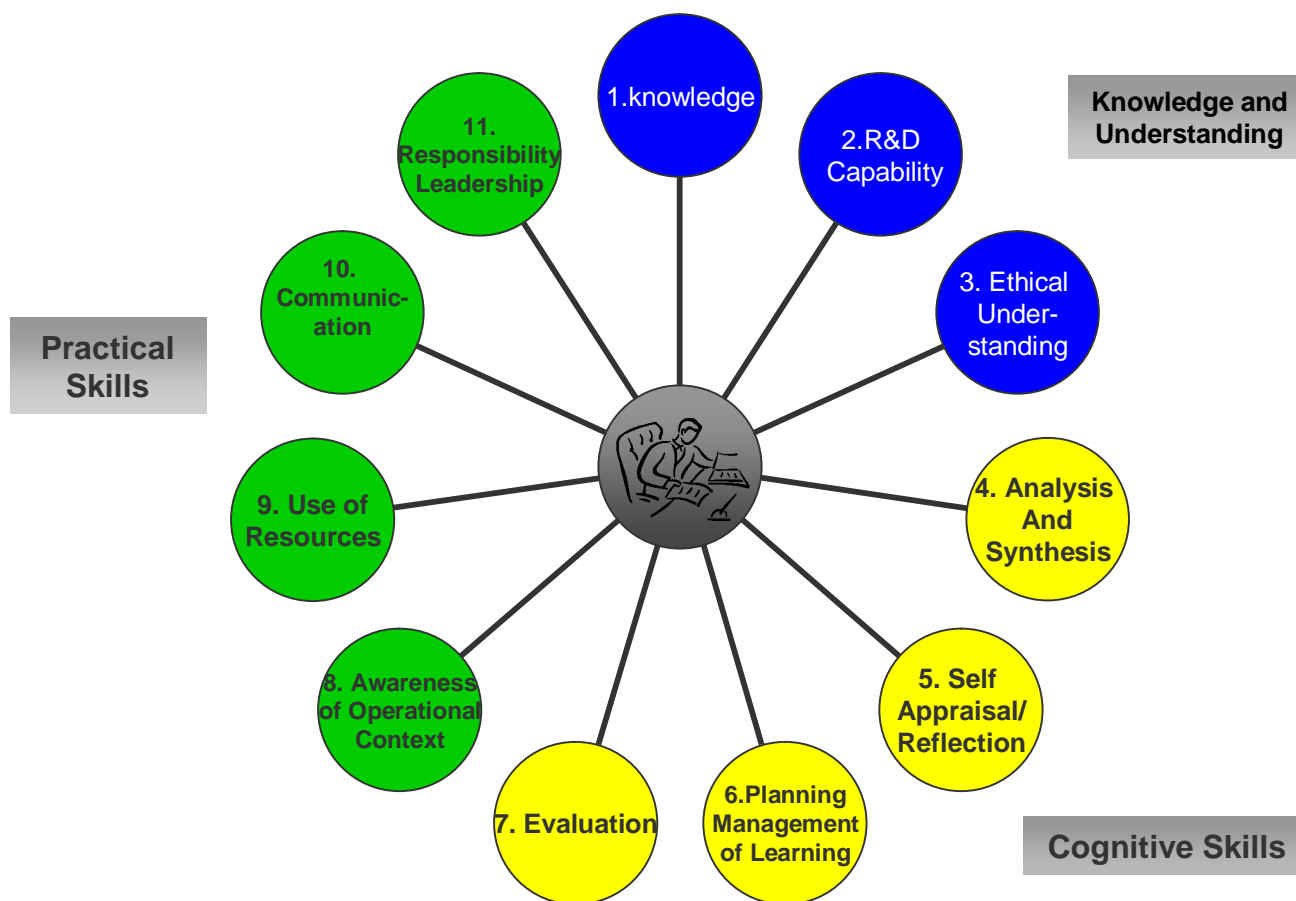


Ethos of the DProf

- **Flexible programme structure**
- **Practice knowledge; real world issues are the subject of the research**
- **Self managed learners with acknowledged existing professional expertise**
- **A focus and understanding of the candidates organisation and/or professional sphere**
- **Research centre does not impose knowledge content**



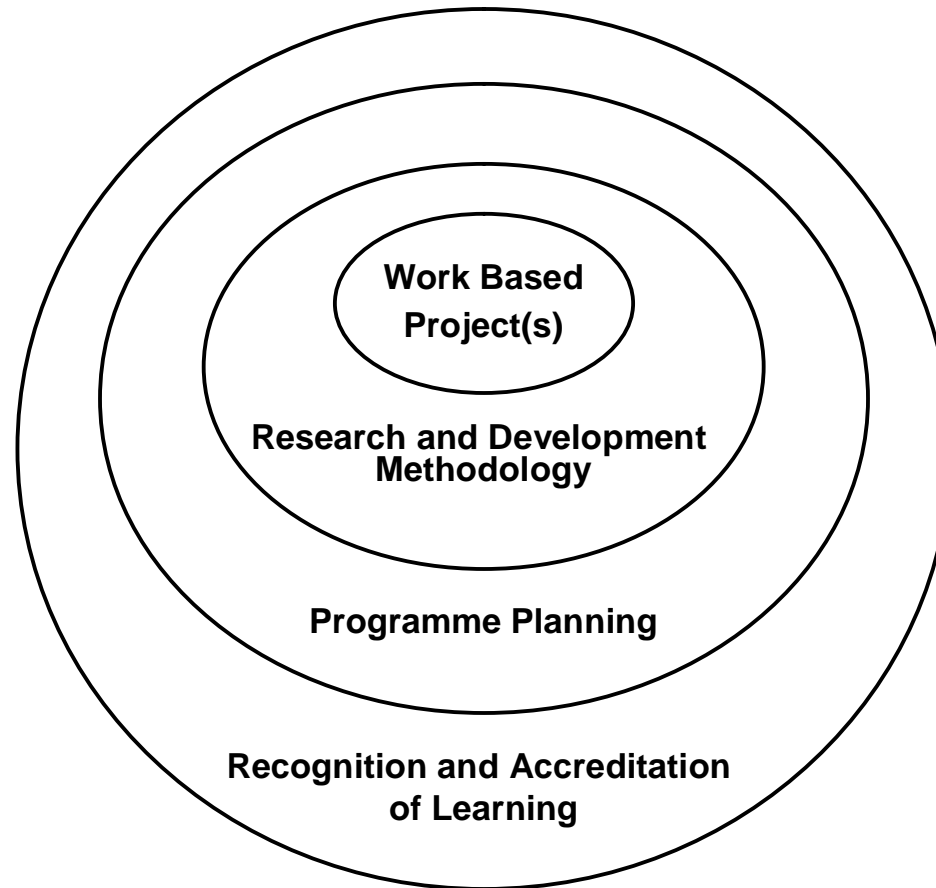
Assessment Criteria



The route to the Doctorate



Work Based Learning
at Middlesex University





Work based projects

- **Investigative approaches for practitioner researchers**
- **Research, critique & use of literature**
- **Rigorous, structured, scholarly research and development to inform application to practice**
- **Ethical issues of workplace and scholarly research**
- **Typically original topics, under-researched, limited previous formal investigations**

Examples of candidates and their doctoral projects:



Work Based Learning
at Middlesex University

- **A systems specialist improving the strategic management of the River Thames**
- **a university quality-assurance manager developing systems for a new faculty**
- **the administrative head of a major international religion, setting out an informed agenda for its future development**
- **a mediator of disputes contributing to wider understanding and practice in that field**
- **a senior interment manager addressing problems of burial congestion, within environmental, cultural and bureaucratic constraints**

Candidates' professional and personal development



Work Based Learning
at Middlesex University

- **Reflective and reflexive engagement with practice**
- **Self confidence, status and authority in change-making**
- **greater personal and professional credibility**
- **strengthened commitment to continuing development**



University Structures

- **The possibility to call upon any part of the university or professional sphere to support learning**
- **Regulatory practices that can change and support quality assurance**
- **Horizontal movement and thinking within the university**
- **Closer relationships with organisational and professional areas**



Work Based Learning
at Middlesex University
