

05

review of 2005

UK Council for Graduate Education

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 conference summaries and 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

www.ukcge.ac.uk

UK Council for Graduate Education



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, an Administrator and an Events Officer, and one part-time member of staff, a Clerical 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 during this Conference, which is also the occasion for elections to the Executive and a report 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 2006 Summer Conference will have a European focus and is to be held at the European University Institute, Florence.

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, published reports, and Conference summaries. 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, links to member organisations and other sites relevant to graduate education, and postgraduate data and information. The site also advertises workshop and conference programmes and delegate places can be booked electronically.

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 130 full institutional members, 8 associate members and 9 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 £500 per year, associate membership £225, 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 who have a particular interest in postgraduate education.

The Office

- manages the day-to-day running of the Council
- administers Council 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 2004

This year has again been one of significant activity for both the Council and graduate education more generally. It has also been my final year as Chair of the Council.

It has also been a year of considerable change for the Council as both our Administrator, Elizabeth Long and our Events Officer, Lucy Cross left us to further their careers. We wish them well and on behalf of all our members thank them for their hard work in the development of the Council. We have in Nicola Crouch and Barbara Wilson recruited two excellent new colleagues, who with Suzanne Hayward are helping us further develop our activities.

As the Review demonstrates, we have been involved in many activities covering a wide range of issues associated with postgraduate work. Of particular importance has been the introduction of our briefings which have received an encouraging level of interest. The briefings, short up to the minute presentations of very current issues, will continue to be a feature of our work in the next year.

Graduate education has similarly moved on. Changes in funding in England have troubled many of us concerned with access to postgraduate research, whilst the QAA special audit has challenged many institutions to examine how they measure up to the new Code of Practice. In Europe, the publication of the new Charter and Code of Practice have moved the Bologna agenda forward and the Council will be at the forefront of influencing policy following discussions at its Summer Conference in Florence in July.

Finally, stepping down as Chair leads to me reflect on what I have learned from working with the Council for the last six years and on the commitment and enthusiasm of those involved in its work and more widely in postgraduate work in the UK and more widely. Malcolm McCrae, our current vice chair will take on the role of Chair after the Winter Conference in February. He will I am sure further enhance the activities and reputation of the Council over the next years.

Professor Howard Green

Chair, UK Council for Graduate Education

December 2004

publications

During 2005 the Council published two new reports; Confidentiality of PhD Theses in the UK and Professional Doctorate Awards in the UK. The reports were launched at the Summer Conference and both publications are freely available to download from the Council website, www.ukcge.ac.uk

Confidentiality of PhD Theses in the UK

*Professors Stuart Powell and Howard Green, UKCGE
(ISBN 0-9543915-3-5)*

The UK Council for Graduate Education determined a need to establish the national picture regarding confidentiality of the PhD thesis and therefore surveyed its membership through a questionnaire. The Council disseminated the basic findings of the survey to members early in 2005 and published a report in the summer of 2005 which was launched at the Summer Conference.

It is evident from the findings of the survey that confidentiality of PhD theses is an aspect of doctoral study where there is variability of practice across different institutions within the UK.

In many parts of Europe doctoral theses are made public before or during the examination phase that is then conducted in a public forum. However, in the UK it is typically the case that theses are treated, implicitly or explicitly, as documents in confidence until examination processes are complete. After these processes it is common practice in the UK for theses to be made public - available in the University library and noted to the British Library. Again, it is typically the case that universities allow exceptions to this process of going public. The survey that this report considers, addressed the nature of such exceptions, their extent and their prevalence.

The main conclusions were as follows.

(i) Reasons for PhD theses to be made public

Two reasons for theses to be made public were noted - the first relating to the underlying ethic of doing research and the second to transparency of standard of award. These reasons imply that it is necessary for research degree theses to be made publicly available following successful examination. Any deviation from this principle should be exceptional rather than commonplace and only ever temporary in nature. The longer a thesis is allowed to remain hidden from public scrutiny the more likely it is that these reasons are held in jeopardy. Institutions should think carefully therefore about making such exceptions and - where deemed unavoidable - they should be monitored with rigour.

(ii) Accessibility to a 'contribution to knowledge'

The view expressed above is derived in part from an understanding that the 'contribution to knowledge' must be in a form that is viable enough to be sustained over a period of time and readily accessible to others in the field. Lack of such viability and accessibility would deny the purpose of 'contribution' in that others cannot make use of the new understandings. The implication here is that theses should never be kept confidential; to do so is to deny the key purpose of doctoral study. The only exception to this would be a limited embargo on information within the submission in order to protect commercial sensitivity such as a patent pending.

(iii) Mis-use of confidentiality

Confidentiality should not be used as an alternative to legitimate ways of anonymising data within a research report to protect participants. We would argue that where such legitimate anonymising is deemed not possible then the research should

not be acceptable for a research degree award. Clearly, such unacceptability would need to be determined at the outset of the project rather than at the stage of final assessment. This implies that any need for confidentiality should be discussed and agreed - one way or the other - at the stage of project negotiation, i.e. at registration of the programme of study rather than at the process submission for examination. Clearly, such discussion and agreement would be based on predictions of likely outcomes of the research project but would be viable nonetheless.

(iv) Justifying the need for confidentiality

It may be useful to think of any confidentiality period as synonymous with a temporary 'embargo' - always limited in time and for a specific purpose but accompanied by an underlying intention that information in the thesis is withheld from public scrutiny to enable a process of e.g. commercial exploitation to take place on the understanding that it will be subjected to public scrutiny as soon as that process is complete. This implies that a candidate for examination would need to provide explicit justification for any such confidentiality period.

Professional Doctorate Awards in the UK

*Professor Stuart Powell and Elizabeth Long, UKCGE.
(ISBN 0-9543915-4-3)*

This report and discussion paper was published in the Summer of 2005 and launched at the Summer Conference. It concerned the Professional Doctorate Award in the UK - focussing upon the range of awards available and the nomenclatures used. The survey that is reported arose from requests from member institutions of the UKCGE that the Council might develop some kind of register of such awards. The lists of such awards that are given in the appendices are not a register in the proper sense - the Council does not require its members to register any awards that they make. However, the various appendices do include all the responses that were returned to the Council

and hence provide those working in the field with a reference list of awards currently available, those planned at the time of going to press and approximate numbers of students studying for the various awards.

The main conclusions are as follows:

(i) Since the UKCGE report into Professional Doctorates in 2002 there has been a marked increase in the number of different Professional Doctorate Awards offered by UK universities.

(ii) The number of titles is likely to continue to increase with the dominance of Engineering, Education and Business persisting. There are also indications of increasing differentiation in professional areas where such awards already exist and the addition of awards in 'new' areas of professional work.

(iii) There is some unease across the sector about the proliferation of titles and the increasing differentiation of award that this reflects.

(iv) One major distinction of the Professional Doctorates is the use of the professional area as part of the nomenclature. This stands in contrast to the 'traditional' PhD where no qualifier is used. Yet the nomenclature of professional doctoral awards is not routinely standardised. This lack of standardisation in the nomenclature of academic awards is not, of course, restricted to Professional Doctorates though it may seem that here diversity is the rule rather than the exception.

(v) There is a tension between the usefulness of increased specificity and the confusion caused by increasing differentiation of titles - and particularly perhaps of the abbreviations of those titles that candidates are entitled to make use of in their professional work. Arguably, if a title is not widely recognised in the profession then its usefulness is diminished.

(vi) New named awards combined with small numbers of students studying them imply that some students at least will

be moving on through their profession with an award that very few other professional colleagues will have.

(vii) It is not clear that the notion of cohort-based learning is universally applied in the professional doctorate context.

(viii) To treat Professional Doctorate awards as synonymous with 'taught programmes' would seem erroneous given that comments indicate that for some institutions at any rate the amount of teaching within a Professional Doctorate programme is variable and may be minimal. The balance between 'taught' and 'research' components may be as much dependent on the nature of the professional area as on the institution and it may vary considerably in terms of whether or not the award of the doctorate is also a licence to practice.

(ix) A higher proportion of the pre-1992 sector are offering Professional Doctorate awards than the post-1992 and though the overall number of institutions offering in this way is smaller in the pre-1992 sector than in the post-1992 sector they are offering a greater number of awards in total.

2005 winter conference

The winter conference was held on 9th February 2005 at the Novotel, York. The Council were pleased to welcome Christine Humfrey and Professor Paul Ramsden as keynote speakers who addressed delegates on 'International Postgraduates: Our students, Our Challenge' and 'The Higher Education Academy and Postgraduate Education' respectively.

There were three themes to the conference; Distance Learning and Innovative Forms of Delivery in Postgraduate Teaching; the 'European Dimension' of Postgraduate Teaching; and Postgraduate Taught and Continuing Professional Development. Presentations included:

- Distance Learning MSc Biomedical Sciences.
Professor Clive Mulholland
- Distance Learning - an Innovative Form of Delivery.
Professor Glynn Skerratt
- International Collaboration in PhD Programmes.
Dr Mikael Holst
- The Bologna Process.
Ms Jessica Olley
- The MBA in Higher Education Management.
Paul Temple
- Postgraduate Taught - Meeting the needs of Continuing Professional Development.
Julia O'Sullivan

2005 summer conference: highlights

The Summer Conference was held on 6 - 7 July 2005 at City University, London. Below are some of the highlights from the conference sessions.

What does HESA data tell us about postgraduates

Professor Robin Sibson, Chief Executive, HESA

Professor Sibson began with a brief review of the nature of HESA as a body whose charitable status is dependent on ownership by the HE sector and as a consequence HESA is keen to remain transparent in its dealings with Institutions. The various customers for HESA data were reviewed with it being stressed that HESA was keen to ensure that data employed in constructing the now all pervasive league tables was accurate and quality guaranteed but that it was not their role to provide a 'kite mark' for any particular league table formulation. The nature of the data collected was discussed and in relation to postgraduates there was a request from HESA for some debate by the sector as to the need for further subdivisions of level within postgraduate awards eg: equivalence of PhD and the newer professional doctorates such as EdD and DBA. The most recent data on postgraduates in terms of overall numbers, division between full and part time study and the gender balance in these groups and the main countries of origin for overseas postgraduates were all presented. In the case of overseas postgraduates a need was expressed for a clearer understanding of the nature of the large numbers of students studying on a part time basis. Professor Sibson then reviewed the most recent data of the work destination, level of work and qualification requirements of those successfully completing postgraduate awards. Finally there was a request for the sector to make an input to the ongoing review of the student record due to be implemented in 2007/08.

The Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

Dame Ruth Deech, Head, Office of the Official Adjudicator

Dame Deech gave the Conference an update on the development of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. The Office is now a compulsory part of the HE sector in the UK in that students must have the opportunity to take a case to it. The Office has jurisdiction for complaints unless a student goes to law. The first part of the presentation outlined the work of the Office to date and gave some basic statistics including those relating to (i) complaints received (83 in 2004 but with the number running at twice that level in 2005), (ii) formal decisions made (over 40 with an average time to complete of 20 weeks) and (iii) the success rate of complaints (34% of complaints justified wholly or in part).

Dame Deech recognised that research degrees are of a particular kind and indeed represent something of a 'gamble' for the student. She cited some cases to illustrate the role of the Office and the parameters of its responsibilities and powers. First she cited the case of a student complaining that a PhD viva had been hostile and unfair. That student won because there was a combination of convincing evidence but it is unlikely that simply asserting it was unfair will be successful without clear supporting evidence. A second case was of a student accused of plagiarism; here the complaint was not upheld because advice had been clearly available to the student concerned in handbooks that he had received. Finally, she quoted a case of a complaint of 'wasted time' but here again there was evidence that the student had been advised and had ignored the advice given; hence the complaint had not been upheld.

The main lessons to be learned from these cases are perhaps (a) that academic and other university staff need to keep accurate records of where and how advice was given and (b) that internal procedures need to be clear, transparent and adhered to by the relevant staff members. The Office plans to organise workshops with the aim of sharing good practice in these respects. Dame Deech pointed to a need to simplify internal procedures and to rationalise penalties for plagiarism across the sector.

Dame Deech spoke with sympathy about the particular situation of overseas students. While she accepted that universities had often not broken their own rules, even so a student who has had a less than satisfactory experience is likely to take that message back to his/her own country. She stressed the need for universities to take seriously the situation of overseas students and to recognise their particular needs and concerns. She also accepted that such students need to take responsibility for learning about the UK education system and to remain aware of the need to undertake work and be examined in English.

Finally, she took cognisance of the QAA Code of Practice and made the point that the Office is not a regulatory body - neither does it intend to make academic judgements or indeed to second-guess them.

New HEFCE funding & quality assurance arrangements for Research Degree Programmes

Mr Will Naylor, HEFCE

Doctoral completion rates and the HEFCE web facility

Matthew Davies, HEFCE

This presentation outlined the current (to 2004/5) funding process and the model which is in place for 2005/5*. The key message about the old system was its Byzantine structure in which the monies received came from at least three separate pots: The QR research student pot, the teaching model pot and indirectly from the QR pot itself. This assumes th3e

students were working in a unit of assessment graded 3a or above or within the so called capability fund Units of assessment. art and design communication, cultural and media studies dance, drama and performing arts ,nursing ,other studies and professions allied to medicine,social work , sports-related studies.

From 2005/6 funds will come from a single element in the reseaech block grant for students in units rated 4 and abopve, according to three price bands depending on the subject, laboratory, part laboratory and lubrary based. To accommodate the inevitable consequences of these change they will be introduced oweve a 4 year period.

For those who are eligible, the new funds are contingent on institutions meeting the new quality assurance arrangements. The presentation then outlined the QAA special review in 2005/6.

Finally the presentation outlined the completion rate study which HEFCE had undertaken earlier inn the year - and the approach which was to be taken to completion rates in the future.** Data accuracy was a key issue here and this led to Matthew Davies from HEFCE outlining the new web tool that will permit institutions to check the returns, not simply those relating to research degrees, to assure themselves that any data emanating from HEFCE was based on accurate data.

The talks generated considerable discussion around the impact of change on disciplines and intuitions. For several delegates the new model would cut off funding for research students because of the RAE rating. Others noted the impact on specific disciplines. It was clear that money was at the heart of the matter and a lack of strategic linking of the demand for PGR students and the availability of funds to support them adequately. As far as completion rates were concerned, it was felt that care needed to be taken at an aggregate level in the presentation of the analysis as one of the key international marketing tools for UK doctoral programmes is timely

completion - not necessarily what the HEFCE student highlights. Funding and completion are however very closely related as was highlighted in Toni Wright's contribution later in the Conference.

* Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE) (2004) Funding for research degree programmes (RDPs) Available from the web: www.hefce.ac.uk/research/postgrad/rdpfund.htm.

** Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) (2005) PhD research degrees: entry and completion. HEFCE2005/2. Available from the web: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk>.

Special Review of Research Degree Programmes

Julian Ellis, QAA

Mr Ellis began with a detailed explanation of how the QAA envisages the forthcoming special review working. This is a one-off survey based on questionnaires and supporting evidence designed to show the alignment of HEI provision regarding research students with the QAA Code of Practice. Following an earlier consultation process, the QAA have tried to address some of the major issues raised by concerned HEIs in putting together their final plans for the review. These included concerns about the volume of work the review would entail, the use of HEFCE completion data, proposed links between review results and funding, the timing of the review and the possible duplication with RAE activity. A pilot project is currently underway with three HEIs, and this is expected to high-light any further alterations which will be needed to procedures as they currently stand.

The scope of the review is to include all HEIs currently receiving HEFCE funding. There will be no exemption from review for institutions which have recently had an institutional audit and data for reviews will include all RDP students registered for an award from an HEI. This particular review is a one-off survey. Hereafter, reports will form part of the evidence base for subsequent institutional audits, which will include consideration of RDP as from 2006/07.

Mr Ellis emphasised that HEIs would not be required to submit vast amounts of evidence, but that they should be selective, demonstrating their good practice and conformity with the precepts of the Code of Practice but not overwhelming the review teams with documentation. This was not a full self-evaluation exercise. Completion rates would be an important element of the evidence reviewed but Mr Ellis sought to reassure delegates that this data, on its own, would not be considered a cause for concern.

Review teams would comprise two reviewers per submission, selected from nominations and existing auditors and representing the range of HEIs. Reviews would be desk-based and only if there was a cause for concern would they be likely to make a follow-up visit. It was stressed that the QAA did not anticipate many such visits. Judgements would be either "appropriate and satisfactory" or "cause for concern", with evidence that an HEI was on the way to meeting the precepts of the Code of Practice being usually sufficient to pass the threshold. Where the threshold was not met, HEIs would be required to devise institutional action plans detailing how further action required would be taken. Finally the timetable for the review was offered, indicating that final reports will be made to HEIs and HEFCE by July 2006.

Questions to the speaker focused on the nature of the documentary evidence that should be submitted to the review, and the meaningfulness of the judgements made by review teams. There was some concern that, if it was anticipated that very few, if any, HEIs would be deemed to be unsatisfactory, and if QAA confidence in the current quality of provision was so high, then this was a somewhat pointless exercise. There was also concern that, despite reassurances to the contrary, there would ultimately be some hidden link between review judgements and future HEFCE funding.

Research Students: predictors of successful PhD Submission

Toni Wright, University of Birmingham

This session concerned research which Toni has been conducting on submission of doctoral theses at Birmingham university*. The initial part of the talk concentrated on a statistical analysis of cohorts beginning their doctoral study between 1984 and 1993. The analysis, using Chi Square tests, on a population of over 3,500 candidates, identified the key explanatory variables as age, those aged 20 - 26 more likely to submit within 4 years, discipline group, sciences more likely than Arts and Humanities, funding source, Research Council rather than other, and class of degree, 1st and 2.1s more likely than others.

The second part of the talk reported more qualitative work undertaken with successful applicants investigating the contribution of learning factors to submission. Acknowledging the difficulty in establishing a realistic contactable population for this part of the work, variables such as study difficulties, personal difficulties and views on supervision measured by the variable, perceived to have enough time for the student, were all significant.

A lively discussion followed the presentation, with delegates keen to explore the implications for the work and in particular to examine the impact of supervision on the outcomes. It was stressed several times that whilst structural developments may go some way to improve submission, other attributes were probably more important. Fundamentally however, it did appear that adequate funding lay at the heart of success.

* Wright, T. & Cochrane, R. (2000) Factors influencing successful submission of PhD Theses. *Studies in Higher Education*, 25, 2 pp.181-95

Benefiting from a postgraduate education; what do employers want?

Professor Lorna Unwin, University of Leicester

Universities need to consider whether and how they can respond to the challenge facing their postgraduate course provision which include:

- the increasing diversity of organisations that offer postgraduate courses and training;
- what are the specific needs of students seeking a postgraduate qualification to give themselves a labour market advantage over the increasing number holding undergraduate degrees;
- the extent to which postgraduate courses relate to job and the economy;
- the changing face and training needs of the public sector
- the increasing framework of regulations (UK government, EU, City, etc) within which organisations operate;
- the potential to replace formal (off the job, in university) training by informal (on the job) training which can be more inclusive but not necessarily "good learning";
- the continuum between the highly regulated courses accredited by professional and statutory bodies (or the requirements of Research Councils) and free style, blue skies courses;
- the extent to which employers, while using qualifications to sift applications (but still often relying on A level scores), make final selection on other abilities ("learner agility," talent, self-starter, gumption, team player, aesthetic/appearance etc);
- the role of critical thinking versus "useful" knowledge;
- the realities of the new, less regulated, labour market - adaptability, need to deliver, hitting the nub of problems quickly, statistical/numerical and financial competence;
- how delivery style and assessment can develop employment-related skills - including generic research modules and work-related projects;

- the predicted longer working lives requiring more CPD;
- how those already in the labour market who do not have first degree can access postgraduate courses;
- the expertise of more mature postgraduate students;
- the difficulty of explaining to employers what the “extra” is that a Masters award gives over a Bachelors degree;

It was noted that the Government's skills strategy tended to ignore postgraduate courses. This was a potential area where UKCGE could take up the issue at a national level with appropriate Government ministers and departments.

Creating new knowledge for the workplace: connecting professional expertise and academic study

Dr David Guile, Institute of Education

Dr Guile discussed the issues surrounding Professional Education and the relationship between professional expertise and academic study. To this end, he provided a detailed description of the motivation, organisation, content, mode of delivery and student assessment of the core module of the MA in Lifelong Learning (MA LLL) offered by the Institute of Education.

The 30-credit module of the MA LLL aims to analyse the concept of LLL from the perspective of the theorist, policy-maker and practitioner and relates to 14-19 education, Higher Education, professional education and work-based learning. Topics covered on the module include discussion of the economic, social and demographic factors that have contributed to the concept of a 'learning society'; the nature of the knowledge acquired in a learning society; the relationship between lifelong learning and the accumulation of human and social capital; and the extent to which policies for LLL lead to learning or to 'credentialism'.

The author noted that conventional wisdom in professional education had moved in recent years from the caricature of

contrasting the 'high ground of theory' with the 'swampland of practice' to a view based on reflective practice and professional artistry. However, the author argued that the conventional wisdom continued to perpetuate the split between theory and practice, viewing theory as an abstract representation and not part of the world. Importantly, the MA LLL module is based on a view of professional education which considers theory to be embedded in practice and in which practices influence the development of theory. But it covers also policy issues involving widening access, gender equity and social inclusion, as well as government policies promoting access to LLL and/or e-learning.

Discussion about the content of the module moved to the practicalities of module delivery, noting the importance of providing student-centred tuition that accommodates full-time and part-time students, acknowledges cultural diversity and, in the context of a programme in which there is considerable flexibility and choice among modules, ensures the student experience does not become fragmented.

New Directions in Doctorates: the Professional Doctorate, the New Route PhD

Professor Tony Fell, University of Bradford

Professor Stephen Hoddell, University of the West of England

Tony Fell introduced the purposes of the session and clarified the agenda for discussion. Stephen Hoddell provided a commentary and response to the overviews comments given previously by Stuart Powell. It was agreed that the term covered a myriad of different courses and suggested that a simpler nomenclature was needed.

However, we felt that all of these forms offered doctorate level research and training and led to originality in a various ways. Professor Hoddell argued that the PhD was beginning to be restructured along the lines of the new Teaching and Learning pedagogies for undergraduate courses, and that this would make the DProf look less radical. He added that competition

between different models of the PhD would intensify. Parity in status was the central matter to be insisted upon.

There were valuable contributions to the following from a wide range of developers reflecting divergent institutions, such as Manchester, Lancaster, East Anglia and the West of England.

Restructuring the Doctorate: All agreed that the other forms of doctorate were converging on the Professional, in that they engaged a taught element; researcher development, vocational and practical options, reflexive practice, and wider forms of assessment.

Definitions: The whole definition of the doctorate is now contested. The traditional definition is no longer dominant. What is essential is the requirement for 'originality of contribution'. The new forms of doctorate must be established for all stakeholders as 'equal but different'.

Cohorts: The cohort for the professional doctorate is unique, and focuses mostly on professionals who want to become researchers, not researchers preparing for employment latter. The unique challenge and opportunity of the professional doctorate is that it attracts high calibre mid and late career professionals who want to make an original knowledge and practice based impact upon their profession.

Status: Delegates shared the concern that the perception of the status of the professional doctorate was not universally held to equal that of the traditional. Evidence from the examinations revealed equal quality of output, but some groups, including some students, perceived a deficit. It was a major job for those involved to contest these perceptions successfully.

Generic Skills: Research manager development, from TNA to JRC Skills training were agreed to be central, however this raised the question of whether there were skills needs unique to professionals who were becoming researchers and also

whether professionals already had these skills and so could be given APL/APEL?

Assessment: The Viva should remain but the thesis should probably weight less than 100%, with portfolio's and accredited training being the main alternatives.

Continuing Professional Development: Staff development must prepare staff who will supervise the new doctorates whose requirements are unique and special. Supporting external supervisors from the workplace raises important challenges.

Evaluation: This was a constructive session despite the apprehension that was created by events external to the conference. The mood was constructive and confident, though there was a feeling that many obstacles remained before the Professional Doctorate was fully accepted and embedded in the British higher education system.

Practice Based Doctorates

Dr Seymour Roworth-Stokes, Surrey Institute of Art & Design, University College

Dr Kevin Neailey, University of Warwick

In the early part of the discussion it was recognised that the session was covering two quite different practice-based Doctorates: an EngD which was a Professional Doctorate normally based on an applied project with more elements of formal taught provision than a traditional PhD and an art/media/design practice-based PhD. The discussion tended to concentrate on the Professional Doctorate.

It was agreed that with the requirement for the PhD to fit the QAA Code of Practice it was moving towards the structure of a Professional Doctorate. However, there is still a real concern that the status of the Professional Doctorate is often perceived (even by some in universities) to be of lower status than the PhD. One way to remove confusion and alter the perception

would be to stop using different titles for the two Doctorates and to remove other differentiation (e.g. use of titles such as EngD, EdD, etc). However, it was recognised that this would remove some of the distinction that was deemed necessary. For example, the EngD had been developed to be different from and more useful than a PhD for those entering the engineering and allied industries. The use of the term “taught doctorate” for some of the early Professional Doctorates had not helped them to acquire equality of status.

It was agreed that the difficulties that had been discussed might be resolved by:

- never using the term “taught doctorate” for a Professional Doctorate
- ensuring that benchmarks are defined for each type of Professional Doctorate (as is done for the EngD by EPSRC and for some doctorates in psychology by BPS)
- generating evidence that holders of Professional Doctorates are at least as successful in their careers as holders of PhDs.

It was accepted that the perceptions of some about practice-based PhDs, are similar to those for Professional Doctorates. However, it was agreed that apart from possibly the production of a very major opus, the award of a practice-based PhD needed to rely heavily on the assessment of the process rather than the output.

Excellent presentations were also given by the following. Unfortunately due to the exceptional circumstances experienced during the conference, write-ups are currently not available.

Combining work and study: the role of the dissertation

Dr Ann-Marie Bathmaker, University of Sheffield

Postgraduate Research - Art & Design Research & the RAE

Professor Bruce Brown, University of Brighton

Forms of Doctoral Study in the UK - Key Issues

Professor Stuart Powell, University of Hertfordshire

2005 workshops

During 2005 UKCGE started a series of briefings on topical issues, entitled 'All you need to know about...'. They were held in connection with steering bodies in the sector such as the AHRB (Arts and Humanities Research Board which is now AHRC) and HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England). The purpose was to inform academics and administrators in the Postgraduate sector on changes in policy.

The AHRB's Research Training Framework and its Implementation, January 2005

In conjunction with Emma Wakelin, Head of Postgraduate Research Programmes, AHRB

This, the first of the Council's briefings, provided over forty colleagues from across the UK with the opportunity to discuss the new training programme funding which AHRB(C) introduced last year. The programme which takes as its model the Roberts proposals for funding skills training was outlined by Emma Wakelin. There then followed a question and answer session in which delegates were able to investigate the fine detail of how the scheme was to be introduced, the types of developments the Board were anticipating and how it would be monitored and evaluated.

The New Funding and Quality Assurance Arrangement for Research Degree Programmes, March and April 2005

In conjunction with Will Naylor, Policy Officer, HEFCE

Changes to the funding methodology was the second of the Briefings which the Council ran in 2005, this time in collaboration with the HEFCE. The workshop centred around two presentations. The first by Will Naylor, outlined the new model for institutional funding in which research degree funding is disconnected from the overall funding of research (QR) and will be awarded only to those Units of assessment with an RAE rating of 4 and above. Mark Gittoes presented the results

of the HEFCE analysis of completions which will eventually be a further element in the HECE funding equation. As ever, the briefings provided colleagues with then opportunity to quiz both presenters and a lively debate ensued.

In addition, seven workshops were held throughout the year:

E-Thesis Workshop, March 2005

This workshop was held as a response to the recently growing interest in the submission of theses in electronic format. The ultimate objective is to create a repository of theses at national or sub-national level that will be accessible on-line. Recent developments and plans for E-thesis work in the UK and internationally were outlined using institutional case studies to allow participants to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of e-thesis and the problems encountered in introducing the concept in UK Institutions. Particular reference was made to the implications of Intellectual Property Rights and issues of copyright.

QAA Research Administration for Registrars Residential Workshop, April 2005

Registrars, Senior Administrators, Graduate and Research Office Staff and Senior Academics reviewed strategic issues in administering Postgraduate Research Programmes, including Quality Assurance Agency audit and self-audit aspects in response to the new QAA Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Programmes. This was the second UKCGE Workshop focussing on and evaluating the impact of the Code of Practice and developing strategic approaches to managing change. The outcomes provided delegates with an appreciation of key issues involved in QAA requirements for research degree programmes and strategic approaches to their administration and the QAA Audit process scheduled for the academic year 2005 - 06.

Postgraduate Taught Programmes: Work based Learning Workshop, May 2005

This workshop gave the opportunity to participants to discover what was meant by work based learning and how the approach is evolving and responding to the needs of learners at Masters and Doctoral levels. The workshop, chaired by Howard Green was privileged to have two eminent practitioners of the art, Judy Saxton from Learn Direct and Kathryn Rouse, from Middlesex University to lead the event. Judy gave two presentations, the first outlining the concept of work based learning and its various origins, the second describing the Learn Through Work programme delivered within the Learn Direct brand. Kathryn outlined the approach adopted at Middlesex University, a leader in work based learning, both practice and research, with particular reference to the Professional Masters and Professional Doctorate with which she is intimately involved. The workshop was an eye-opener for the many delegates who were unaccustomed to the approach and the investment which some institutions have made in its implementation.

Healthcare Workshop: Postgraduate Education and Research Training: Meeting the Challenges for Nursing & the Allied Health Professions, September 2005

It was evident from this workshop that Postgraduate Research in the Allied Health and Nursing Professions has continued to develop at a steady pace since the publication of the Task Group 3 Report. Whilst there is still much to be done and many opportunities to be explored, there are many potential threats to providing postgraduate research training in these professional areas, such as the impact of the Research Governance agenda and changing staff roles and expectations. The workshop addressed both threats and opportunities, and delegates left the workshop with an understanding of those issues and measures to counter them.

Research Supervision Workshop, October 2005

The key issues for effective supervision of postgraduate research students were covered in this intensive one-day workshop, with reference to the new QAA Code of Practice. Strategies for Training Needs Analysis, generic and transferable skills training and progress monitoring through to selection of examiners and preparation for the PhD Viva were covered, together with Case Studies on real world problems in syndicated group discussions. It gave a rapid overview of the essential background for new and established supervisors to share with others and reflect on their practice.

Residential Workshop for Graduate Deans, Administrators and Research Supervisors - Professional Doctorates, QAA Audit and the PG Training Agenda, November 2005

This residential event focussed on the key elements of the forthcoming QAA Special Review and gave an opportunity to discuss issues and concerns in group and plenary sessions. The challenge of marketing a growing range of Professional Doctorate programmes and the proliferation of titles was considered, together with franchising and other issues. The essential training elements both for Professional Doctorates and for regular PhD students were discussed with reference to the design and delivery of generic and transferable skills programmes.

Training the Trainers: Training Examiners of the Doctorate Workshop, December 2005

This, the first in the training the trainers series was facilitated by Howard Green and Stuart Powell. The purpose of the workshop was to alert delegates to key aspects of doctoral examining and approaches to developing training programmes in their

own institutions. Following an introductory talk on the sheer variability of practice across UK institutions, delegates were involved in group activity focusing on their current practice and the development of an action plan for further development. They also had the opportunity of experimenting with certain delivery tools, role play, case study and the use of video. A key outcome of the workshop was the vital need to involve independent chairs in the examining process and to devote initial training activity on the training of these chairs.

other activities

Responses to Consultations

The Council responded to the following national consultations:

- The proposed QAAHE Review of Quality and Standards in Postgraduate RDPs - CL 03/051
(full text of this response is available on our web site www.ukcge.ac.uk)
- The Council for Science and Technology's proposed Universal Ethical Code for Scientists

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.

external links and activities

Professor Howard Green presented papers on:

- 'Current Issues in PG Research' (with Stuart Powell), SRHE Postgraduate network meeting, 5th May 2005 (Check this is consistent with what Stuart tells you)
- 'Postgraduate education in the UK'. University of Washington. Paper to force for change in postgraduate education, 6-10th September 2005
- 'Recruiting and Retaining the Best'. Investing in Innovation Conference, Earls Court London. 10th November 2005
- 'Postgraduate Education in the UK - some current issues'. Netherlands Association of Universities (VSNU) Conference on Doctoral Education, 22nd November 2005
- 'Postgraduate Education - Some Current Challenges'. University of Bristol, Learning and Teaching Conference, 14th December 2005
- 'Postgraduate Trends and Prospects'. Heads of Departments Annual Conference, Political Studies Association, December 16th 2005

He also contributed to several news items in the Independent and Times Higher Educational Supplement concerning postgraduate education.

He co-authored Green D.H. & Powell, S.D. (2005) *The Doctorate in Contemporary Higher Education*, Open University Press.

Professor Malcolm McCrae served on the Arts and Humanities Research Board (now Council) working group on 'Doctoral Research in the Arts & Humanities'

Mrs Kathryn Ludlow attended the QAA meeting on the Special Review of Research on behalf of the Council

Professor Alistair McCulloch was interviewed for an article in the Times Higher (September 30, 2005) on the cutting of the number of PhD places entitled "Criminal PhD cuts trigger job fears"

05

accounts and
directory of contacts



accounts 2004/2005

INCOME	2005	2004
Subscriptions	£63,797	£58,175
Conference fee & workshop income	£83,894	£76,463
Sponsorship & other income	£460	£20
HEFCE income	-	-
OTHER INCOME	2005	2004
Interest received (gross)	£4,719	£7,095
TOTAL INCOME	£152,870	£141,753
LESS: EXPENDITURE	2005	2004
Printing, postage & stationery	£4,820	£14,229
Advertising	£2,071	£6,049
Travel	£4,864	£9,041
Audit & accountancy	£1,468	£1,659
Legal fees	-	-
Rent	£7,117	£6,734
Conference & workshop costs	£49,190	£41,084
Telephone	£840	£913
Computer expenses	-	-
Salaries & clerical assistance	£72,972	£70,460
Repairs & renewals	£282	£370
Books & journals	£773	£723
General	£170	£257
Insurance	£1,117	£941
Bad debts	£1,195	£1,255
Bank charges	£125	-
Depreciation -Office equipment	£1,467	£1,726
Total	£148,472	£155,441
INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	£4,399	£(13,688)

projected budget 2005/2006

TITLE	BUDGET (£)
Salaries	74,478.00
Travel	5,500.00
Staff Dev	750.00
Accommodation	6,928.00
Stationery	750.00
Reprographics	600.00
Postage	600.00
Telephone	900.00
Printing	3,000.00
Room Hire	300.00
Books/Subs	1,100.00
Insurance	1,300.00
Working group	1,000.00
Winter Conference	7,000.00
Workshops	28,000.00
Summer Conf	21,650.00
Publicity & website	2,500.00
Equipment	500.00
Audit & accountancy	2,500.00
TOTAL	158,356.00

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

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

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Dr Emma Murphy, *University of Durham*

The Officers of the Council met on four occasions, and the full Executive Committee on four occasions, during 2005.

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