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This booklet contains some of the presentations and summaries of keynote and workshop sessions that took place at the UK Council for Graduate Education's Summer Conference held at Regent's College, London, 2nd February 2001.

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KEYNOTE ADDRESS 1

WORKSHOPS



HOW THE ACCESS AND WIDENING PARTICIPATION AGENDA CAN APPLY AT POSTGRADUATE LEVEL

Professor Christine King, Staffordshire University

Professor King opened the conference with a personal view of where postgraduate education has come from both nationally and at her own University, Staffordshire University, and where she saw it developing in the future.

She reviewed some of the major changes which she had seen take place nationally - the rapid rise in postgraduate numbers, the increase number of part-time students, the growth in women students and the increase in overseas students. She noted how for many institutions this change had been overshadowed by growth in the undergraduate population. This was particularly the case in Universities such as Staffordshire which had built its reputation around access to undergraduate programmes and retention of non-traditional entrants.

Professor King then focused on ways in which postgraduate study could support the access and lifelong learning agenda. Traditionally, the majority of postgraduate programmes have concentrated on entry immediately after graduation. She recognised the need to address postgraduate programmes to a much wider range of potential students for mid career updating, for specialist advanced learning and work-based research programmes. This would require us to think differently about modes of delivery, times of delivery, entry requirements and approaches to marketing all of which pose significant challenges to those involved in postgraduate education.

PROMOTING A RESEARCH CULTURE IN THE HEALTH-RELATED DISCIPLINES

Professor David Baxter, Research Graduate School, University of Ulster

Special opportunities and threats exist when it comes to PhD training in the health-related sciences. The requirement to provide conventional research training for students in vocationally orientated health-related disciplines challenges the conventional ways of PhD training. The more established academic disciplines have characteristic research cultures that combine undergraduate teaching, postgraduate student supervision and nationally, if not internationally, competitive research, all occurring side-by-side. How then does this translate to the health-related sciences?

The culture of the RAE drives modern research and PhD training. In the health-related disciplines the research culture will not always exist and must therefore be created. The students themselves are central to this process. The aim must be to involve everyone in the department in establishing a culture of academic excellence: to place the emphasis on the development and application of evidence based skills and ipso facto establish the research ethos. This can be complemented by combining forces with students and researchers from other centres with the necessary interests and expertise, to increase the scale and importance of the research being undertaken. Through collaboration with other institutions it is often possible to develop research programmes capable of asking and answering questions of genuine academic importance and interest. An added gain from this approach is that students are less likely to find themselves working in relative isolation on mediocre projects or insufficient data sets. Practical consequences of networking also include the opportunity to co-author high-quality publications, which in turn are necessary to attract the research grants essential to support a vibrant research culture.

The major points of discussion centred around the importance of collaboration between institutions and departments in creating the research culture. The likelihood that in some areas a PhD degree might also carry significance as a vocational qualification was also raised, requiring collaboration between degree awarding institutions and the



Royal Colleges and professional associations in harmonising the vocational and academic issues involved. This was an excellent talk on a challenging topic that attracted a lot of interest, reflecting the increased activity in this area.

RESEARCH TRAINING IN THE CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS AND DESIGN

Professor Sandra Harris, Nottingham Trent University

EPSRC DOCTORAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS (DTAs): BUILDING NEW RELATIONSHIPS

DR D H LEECH, DIRECTOR (PROGRAMME OPERATIONS)

The session was based on a presentation by Dr David Leech from EPSRC who explained how the new system of Doctoral Training Accounts (DTAs), to be introduced in 2001, would work.

The Universities of Departments involved would get an annual allocation of money not tied to a particular number of students, that would provide considerable flexibility to institutions to use as they wished. In return, universities would need to provide high quality supervision, broader training, more career advice and accurate data about students, submission rates and first destinations. The mature student incentive would go, though allowances for students with a disability and exceptional fieldwork payments would remain with EPSRC.

EPSRC had two particular reasons for making the change. Firstly, a new relationship between EPSRC and academics would be created, with academics taking all the key decisions around training and stipends. Secondly, students would be encouraged to develop a closer link and identification with EPSRC than just the place from whence they got their grant cheque. The working of the new system would be monitored, including factors like extent of industrial collaboration as well as submission rates.

Dr Leech pointed out that doctoral students funded by EPSRC were getting older (though the average age at start of research is still under 25) and therefore had higher expectations of their Ph.D,

including help with careers. The typical career patterns of previous students at first destination and after ten years was examined – which showed the greater shift to the private sector after ten years – and Dr Leech said he felt that the new system would encourage greater collaboration with industry at the Ph.D stage.

He also talked of the other advantages which the DTA system would bring as compared with the old system of quota awards for research students. These included flexibility in the number of students and years funded and the level of the stipend; the possibility of departments (borrowing) DTA money from each other to reflect different recruitment patterns in different years and a greater incentive to get industry more involved. EPSRC also wanted to get students to identify more with the source of the DTAs, through an enhanced WebZone, more hypertext links to other bodies, greater contact with professional bodies (for example by making a financial contribution to student membership fees) and additional benefits to students including an Affinity credit card.

Various issues were raised in discussion – for example that 4 year funding would be possible but that perhaps many universities would choose to pay higher stipends over a shorter period, the possibility that universities would treat DTA students as employees and thus rendering their awards subject to tax (Dr Leech said EPSRC would advise universities not to do this), the possibility that some low DTA awards would reduce EPSRC badging of awards (as half the award has to come from EPSRC for the award to be linked in name) and the position about student transfer to other institutions.

ESRC POSTGRADUATE FUNDING: NEW SCHEMES AND POLICIES

Phil Sooben, Director of Postgraduate Training

The presentation covered the new schemes and arrangements for ESRC Studentship Funding. Details of the proposed change in funding to the '1+3' awards which will begin operating in October 2002 were described. These changes are to be underpinned by a new course recognition exercise that will take place in the autumn of this year. It was made clear that only those advanced



courses recognised in the exercise, as providing research training will be eligible to take ESRC 1+3 award holders. Concern was expressed by delegates about the short timeframe between the application forms for the new exercise becoming available in May (later revised to June) and the submission deadline in September.

ESRC/EPSRC QUESTION AND ANSWER FORUM

Dr D H Leech, EPSRC, Director: Programme Operations & Phil Sooben, ESRC, Director of Postgraduate Training

The structure of this open forum was generated by questions asked. For the purposes of this report however issues discussed are separated out into three areas.

Implications of the 1+3 Model There was considerable discussion around the 1+3 model with questioners concerned about the place of the MPhil and funding implications of the practice of registering students for MPhil with the possibility of transfer to PhD registration. Reassurance was given that where at initial registration there is an intention to proceed to a doctorate then ESRC would find this quite acceptable and further that calculation of submission rates would not be affected. Issues relating to the MPhil resurfaced later in the forum when the impact of the Qualifications Framework was considered. It was argued from the floor that the MPhil might become defunct if it was interpreted that, because of its inclusion in a PhD programme, 33 percent of that programme was at masters level. There was some consensus that students would not wish to 'go back' and do another year at masters level if they had already done the first year of a 1+3 programme. The view from the panel was that there needed to be some flexibility in all these issues.

Future Trends and Issues Concerns were raised about the impact of future funding changes on the sector. Panelists suggested that the Councils, in general terms, would not be placing new demands and that the principles currently in operation would remain for some time. There was however, sympathy for the sector in that the 'salmi slicing' of funding categories was seen as potentially counter-productive. Phil Sooben noted

that ESRC is not planning any major changes and that there would be no more major consultative processes for the next five years. As far as EPSRC was concerned David Leech noted that there might be some knock-on effects from the introduction of doctoral training accounts. Both panelists engaged in some crystal ball gazing:

Government might encourage more 'behind the wall' collaboration between councils - this being seen as preferable to any reduction in the number of Councils;

there was a general aspiration that increases in funding would lead to an increase in recruitment within doctoral and postdoctoral work which in turn would have a positive effect on the quality of staffing within the HE sector;

focusing funding resources on an ever-smaller number of institutions was treated with caution by panelists and questioners alike;

European legislation regarding the free movement of labour could lead to a situation where anybody in Europe might be eligible for full funding by a Research Council.

Linkage with RAE Results It was clear that those applying to ESRC for recognition might need to make a case for recognition 'in spite of' a rating of 3b or below. EPSRC however, would not use RAE ratings in its deliberations.

The session was well received, with attendees appreciating the openness and frankness of the speakers and their willingness to speculate about future trends.

CAREER PLANNING FOR POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

Phil Marsland, Careers Development Manager, Leeds Metropolitan University

The Career Development Service at Leeds Metropolitan University (LMU) is concerned with career planning for students and staff, including contract researchers.

The Service believes that it is a useful exercise for students, particularly research students, to take



the time to identify their skills and how to communicate these to employers, and to learn about personal development.

Over a weekend in September 2000, LMU and the University of Huddersfield ran a career planning Graduate Summer School for research students. The Summer School aimed to address the following questions: Where am I now?; Where do I want to be?; How do I get there?; and to review students' current positions and build on these. The Summer School cost £100 per participant: with a maximum class size of 30, the first Summer School attracted 24 participants.

Mr Marsland summarised the programme of the Summer School and the students' experience of it. The aim was to offer an interactive experience for students, based in part around the publications *Art of Building Windmills* by Peter Hawkins and *Introduction to Type* by Isobel Briggs Myers, which are widely used textbooks in career and personal development.

The above texts and other exercises conducted by the tutors helped students increase their self-awareness and gave them the vocabulary to describe themselves and their skills. Whereas in advance of the Summer School students had expressed a desire for CV writing advice and interview skills training, in hindsight they reported finding the self-awareness exercises the most valuable.

The Summer School also advised students that most jobs are found through networks rather than through advertisements, and gave advice on how to identify and use networks.

CV writing skills were covered, along with advice for backing up with evidence the adjectives used in CVs to describe oneself and one's skills. Interview skills training was deliberately left out because of the size of the group, however participants expressed a desire for this to be included.

The Graduate Summer School proved very successful, although tiring for the participants, therefore it will be repeated in future with an amended structure, perhaps running over two weekends and including one or two extra sessions. The Summer School was considered good value for money at £100, for example compared to the

Research Councils' Graduate School Programme which costs £500.

PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATES : A REPORT ON PROGRESS

Professor Stephen Hoddell, UWE

Stephen Hoddell, in an animated and enthusiastically received presentation, traced the history of the Working Group on the Professional Doctorate to a 1999 specialist seminar on the theme. The Working Group was expected to report at the end of the year. Stuart Laing, of Brighton University, was thanked as the source of the data for the presentation.

The variety of models/criteria – (1) a named subject (eg EdD), (2) related to a professional discipline, (3) containing a substantial taught element - make it difficult to define the PD precisely. (1) and (3) are not always required, and (2) is quite vague.

The first PD arrived in Britain in 1992, the D.Ed at Bristol University, and there are now about 150 programmes operating. In post-1992 institutions, in spite of their vocational expectations, PDs are less common than in the old universities, owing to the new Universities' preoccupation in the early 1990s with the standing of their doctorate programmes. The new Universities are now catching up, partly because of the importance of PDs for employment. At the start of the PD development several subject areas were 'in search of credibility': education and clinical psychology especially wanted the 'Dr' title.

The reasons for awarding PDs can be found initially in the Parnaby Report (on engineering) in the early 1990s, which was one of the drivers: the PhD was deemed too theoretical and a preparation for an academic career, so the Eng.D. was proposed. There was also a growing recognition in many professions that the ability to conduct research was a core professional competence, and there was also a need for content related to practice in the professional area: for example, the D Clin Psy serves as a license to practise.

The key PD/PhD differences lie in the 'flavours': the PD is modular, credit-based whereas the PhD is integral, not credit-based, although it may con-



tain some credit-based 'hurdles' to progression in the PhD. The PD is usually part-time (though not the EngD or D.Clin Psy) the PhD full-time (though take-up for the part-time PhD is growing). The PD is usually cohort-based, the PhD usually individual, although a team/ cohort approach is emerging, and some institutions use the same criteria for both PD and PhD, for example in Particle Physics which is team based. The PD focus is on practice, the PhD on theory.

The similarities between the two are the requirement of a significant original contribution to knowledge; a 'substantial' written dissertation/thesis, a viva, and evidence of expertise in the subject area.

Both doctorate paths are subject to convergent pressures: Universities' insistence on comparable assessment (thesis and viva), ie the PD is not to fall short of the PhD benchmark; an increasing emphasis on taught elements in PhD programmes, and the QAA's identical qualification descriptor for the two paths.

The Working Group was set up in the context of the QAA framework, with the time-scale May 2000 to May 2001. Its aims were to collect information about PDs, in a context where Universities were usually driven by external bodies/ professional associations with their own regulations, which were looking for comparability across the field. The Group sought to identify good practice; to expand on the QAA qualifications framework (though now the emphasis is necessarily more on implementation) and to represent the views of the HE sector.

A survey of employers contacted via Universities and students (sent to their line managers), showed that most employers are in the public sector. The topics included employers' reasons for supporting students, the benefits they derived, the costs (who pays?) and the reasons for choice of course and institution. The survey revealed a middle management perspective: the development of individual skills, especially research; development of skills within the organisation; retention and motivation of staff (a good point for marketing PDs); improved management and leadership, and improvements in the quality of output/production.

Perceived disadvantages included staff time and

energy absorbed, particularly for public sector organisations.

Fees were paid entirely by the employer for 40% of students (especially EngD, DBA); 35% of fees were paid by students, especially in the public sector (for the D.ClinPsy in particular), and for the remainder fee payment was shared.

The idea of taking the PD usually originated with the student, but most employers would repeat the experience, finding the PD better than the PhD in delivering management and teamwork skills. However, some said they would in future 'stick to proper PhDs'.

The QAA Qualifications Framework, was less detailed/prescriptive than originally expected, with no reference to credits; or limits on the proportion of M-level work in the doctorate. The distinction between the PhD and the named doctorate (PD) was based on taught content, as all doctorates now require development of employment type skills.

Other issues include the problem that PD candidates may do more work than PhDs, because of taught components; same assessment criteria or shorter word length for the PD; the question of whether the PD was held in lower esteem by academics; and the proliferation of different titles, especially among psychologists. The latter point returns us to Harris and the need for the sector to communicate clearly to the user community what our qualifications are about, and is thus problematic.

One key recommendation is that where a doctorate relates to an external community of practice (Clin Psy, EndD etc) there is a strong argument for one title per community of practice. In contrast with 'being an academic', the PhD is not the PD for academics, as there is no M.Ed component!

Universities diverge in their regulations for doctoral degrees: at one end, the PD is exam-board driven, with module marks and the thesis as one huge module; at the other end, there is no difference between the PD and the PhD.

Discussion — In discussion, the type of student was identified as possible average age 45, some with their own companies (so that some of the



students may also be the employers completing the questionnaires!), but the EngD students are usually younger, when Research Council funded. Each PD relates to professions in different ways. On the issue of the amount of work involved, it was important to remember that in the PhD, the formative aspect was invisible, but still there.

Exit routes from the PDs, including the EdD, were discussed.

The ESRC is not funding the PD, but the EPSRC is, so the issue cuts across the research councils.

It was suggested that in the health field the variety of labels offered an opportunity to indicate clearly what the PD training is about.

As the PhD thesis expands, we need to know what PD students are actually doing, and how this continues to differ from the PhD.

The question was raised of the relation between the PD and the PhD by prior or concurrent publication. PDs have different requirements: coursework and thesis of publishable quality, so that in the QAA first consultation Universities wanted to keep PD and PhD separate. As the PD grows, and the PhD becomes more varied, the distinctions become blurred. The length question is a red herring – there are massive differences across conventional PhDs: the question is how length relates to quality. The length of thesis is a problematic criterion but the only common one.

The question was raised of the proliferation of titles. Put in terms of clarity to stakeholders: was it necessary to reduce the vocabulary? Harris was about lack of clarity at M level: the user community knows the MBA is not 'M'. There is a lack of comparability of PhDs across disciplines anyway.

HEFCE REVIEW OF RESEARCH: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH DEGREES AND POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

Bahram Bekhradnia, Director of Policy, HEFCE

The HEFCE Review of Research focussed on the funding of research, and included the desire to strengthen the position of Postgraduate education. It was noted that HEFCE funding constitutes

the majority of Higher Education Institutions' (HEIs) public funding, but the minority of HEIs' total funding.

HEFCE has the goals of enriching the environment for research, enabling and supporting research, and aims to achieve these goals by its dual support mechanism which consists of a combination of core funding and funding for specific projects. HEFCE is concerned about HEIs' ability to sustain research excellence in the current climate of an absence of additional investment, and believes that the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), while being the best evaluation scheme available, needs continual improvement and explanation.

The HEFCE Review of Research identified the main weakness in HEIs as the management of people, both staff and students.

The Review made a number of recommendations on funding:

Funding should be selective based on RAE scores;

There should be an agreed rate of funding for 5* units of assessment, and for 5-rated units if possible;

There should be funding for 3a and 3b units;

There should be no special funding for collaborative ventures, except for research students;

There should be no earmarking of QR;

HEFCE should investigate whether matched funding is available for a capability development stream;

Teaching funding should be deemed to include scholarship;

HEROBC funding should be increased, and targeted.

The Review made a number of recommendations on staff and student resources:

There should be minimum strands of funds for research training;

There should be separate funds provision for



research students;

Collaboration should be facilitated;

There should be allocation of earmarked staff funds.

Mr Bekhradnia stressed that HEFCE did not wish to dictate to HEIs how they should spend their funds; rather HEFCE aimed to give greater leverage to those concerned with research students and to increase the level of recognition of the funds given to research students.

Delegates expressed concern at the managerialism implicit in the recommendations, however it was noted that HEFCE intended no reduction in academic freedom.

The issue of training for research supervisors was raised; it was noted that HEFCE would look into this.

The UK Council for Graduate Education had expressed concern at where responsibility lies for ensuring minimum standards for research training, and had also opined that it was not a funding council issue to facilitate collaboration between HEIs. These points had been noted by HEFCE.