

UKCGE Residential Workshop 2008
 Audit and Best Practice for Research Degree Programmes
 – QAA Perspectives, Institutional Experience and Key Audit Issues
 12-13 November, 2008 Rutland Square Hotel, Nottingham

Audit Issues for the Professional Doctorate
 Prof Bonnie Steves, Director, Caledonian Graduate Centre, Glasgow Caledonian University

Aims of the talk:

- 1) Understanding the differences between the Prof D and the PhD
- 2) Identifying audit and development/validation issues
- 3) Reflecting on issues of good practice and the GCU experience

I Is the Professional Doctorate a research programme?

1. What is the Prof D?

PhD	Prof D
Professional researchers	Researching professionals
Gold standard route to academia	Entry from selected professionals
Individual study	Cohort based
Focused study that tends not to change practice. Emphasis more on academic knowledge.	Study directly related to professional practice with emphasis on constructive change.
Starting to include a taught element	Taught element. Credit rated
Employment related skills may be part of study but are not a prerequisite.	Employment related skills are a key element.
Focuses upon more discrete methodology	Offers broader scholarship

- The difference between the professional scholar and the scholarly professional.

2. History of Prof D's

- Limitation of the PhD to change practice
- Established in Education, Business, psychology, Engineering and more recently Allied Health Professions and Nursing.
- Survey of Prof D awards in the UK (Powell and Long, 2005)

Powell, S and Long, E (2005) Professional Doctorate Awards in the UK, UK Council for Graduate Education, UK.

3. Named awards for Prof D

- Prof D in a specified subject - eg EdD, DCLin, Deng
- Prof D

Description: “An award at a doctoral level where the field of study is a professional discipline and which is distinguished from the PhD by a title that refers to that profession”. Powell and Long (2005:8)

But now have

Prof D eg no named routes, professional specific awards considered too disparate

- Studies at all levels of the programme still inform the respective disciplines but final reward remains Professional Doctorate.

Examples at Glasgow Caledonian University:

1. Nursing doing Prof D in change management – Assess the validity of the revised framework for change management within the context of the integrated services for children with complex needs.
2. Social Work Prof D in education – An exploration into service user and carer participation in HE Social Work Programmes: concerning efficacy for whom?
3. Podiatry Prof D in clinical podiatry – Comparing microbiological results with tissue biopsies and/or wound swabbing in diabetic foot wounds.

4. Standard of ProfD – research programme or not?

Professionals should be aware of the distinction made by some funding bodies between PhD and Prof D recognition if they wish to pursue a research career and apply for grant funding.

- Funding bodies – have several examples of where they do not recognise the Prof D as a Doctorate equivalent to PhD in research training.

Examples:

- Research Councils
- new - National Institute for Health Research, Department of Health
DH Research Capacity Development Programme = new research post-doctoral award and Career Scientist award - only those holding PhD's and not those with Prof D's are eligible to apply. Official clear distinction made between the suitability towards a research career path of the PhD and the ProfD.

5. Purpose of the Prof D

- To enhance professional practice
- To carry out a research project based on professional practice
- To improve clinical/public services
- To contribute to the professional knowledge base

Is this research? Yes, if evidence-based and work is carried out at Doctoral level.

Definition of Doctoral Work – SCQF level 12 – (SHE level 6, PG 2, PhD – Doctorate)

Demonstrate and/or work with:

- A critical overview of a subject/discipline, including critical understanding of the principal theories, principles and concepts
- A critical, detailed and often leading knowledge and understanding at the forefront of one or more specialisms
- Knowledge and understanding that is generated through personal research or equivalent work which makes a significant contribution to the development of the subject/discipline

7. Key components of the Prof D

- Professional Development
- relevant skills to underpin evidence-based practice
- research design and planning
- data analysis
- generic training

Prof D experience

- All our students talk about having more confidence in their practice, being able to shape their practice, being better at strategic thinking and planning, having a huge impact on effecting change with a rigorous evidence base.
- Taught modules give them the strategic thinking and research skills to direct that change in an evidence based manner.
- Research is beyond just the simple service change, evaluation and audit. There is a much broader research scholarship which enables different ways to look at organisational change and interpret policy and make it work in practice.
- Similar to applied PhD research that studies a research issue/problem, poses possible solutions, researches and compares solutions, makes recommendations based on evidence, implements the best solution, and evaluates its success.

II. Audit and Development/validation issues

Accredited Award

Professional Doctorate or Professional Doctorate in _____?

Demand

- Who are your potential students? Where is your market?
- What motivates them to take this Prof D?
- How do you promote the programme and recruit?

Admissions

- What entry qualifications do you require?
- Do you allow Apel? If so, how much and what criteria do you use?
- What are your admissions criteria?

Structure

- Proportion of taught modules to research element/thesis?
- Number of taught modules and length?
- Proportion taught face to face and independent learning at a distance?
- Proportion of Masters and Doctoral level?
- Credit rate all or part of the programme?
- Where and how do you include research training elements of training needs analysis and PDP?

Assessment

- Coursework + thesis: How many total words to write?
- How many assessments and what to assess?

- Exit programmes and how many attempts allowed for progression?
- Criteria for pass at M level in Masters modules and D level in Doctorate modules
- Portfolio of work or thesis?
- Type of assessment for research thesis element? Viva or not?

Supervision

- Is there the supervisory capacity to supervise significant numbers of students?
- What is the difference in a Prof D and PhD thesis and their supervision?
- What support do you have for supervisors who are more likely to be used to supervising PhDs'?

Programme Quality Assurance

- What structures do you put in place to ensure quality in a programme that: crosses disciplines, crosses Schools over the whole university, crosses taught Masters programmes and Higher Degrees research programmes?

Student experience

- How to combat the potential isolation of Part-time Doctoral research?
- What support mechanisms do you have for the students?

Validation process

- What process do you use for a programme that bridges taught programmes and pure research programmes?
- Taught programmes need Programme Learning outcomes, validation panels through a Quality Office, but typically research programmes don't have LO's.
- pure research Doctoral programmes go through a Higher Degrees Committee.
- How do you handle the harmonisation of a proliferation of Prof D's in different disciplines?

III Examples of good practice - GCU experience

1. Glasgow Caledonian University

- Origins date back to 1875
- One of UK's largest modern universities
- 1500 academic and research staff
- 17000 students, 400 PGR's
- 2500 international students from over 100 countries
- 55% of research students are PT
- Practical and vocationally orientated programmes
- Single site, city centre location
- £70 million spent making GCU one of the most modern campuses in the UK

Student Satisfaction: International Student Barometer 2008

- 1st in UK for international student experience
- 2nd in the world (out of 80 universities who took part)

2. Graduate Centre

Working together to develop a vibrant research community

- For all researchers: research students, staff, research leaders
- Provides research training and support
- Facilitator of communication and collaboration for research students and staff
- Social & intellectual hub
- Responsible for recruitment, admissions, monitoring, progression and assessment of research students (in partnership with Academic Schools)
- Hosts Professional Doctorate in partnership with Academic Schools.

3. GCU's new Professional Doctorate

- Recruiting 18 students/yr
- 92% retention rate
- Strong cohort and community
- Over 45 staff teach and supervise on it from all schools

4. Key features of our new Prof D at GCU

- research degree based on work practice
- focused marketing on public sector,
- generic framework has enabled easy extension to other professional sectors education, law and social science.
- developing and enhancing services
- educating future/current leaders
- developing professional knowledge base
- enhancing personal effectiveness

5. Admissions

- three years work experience
 - upper second class honours, but many have 1 or more Masters
 - clear rationale for application to Prof D instead of PhD
 - support from employer (time, financial, use of work practice issues in studies)
- recruitment interview questions revolve around 3 key areas:
- 1) motivation for doing Prof D
 - 2) some idea of the research proposal based on work practice
 - 3) understanding and experience of the challenges of undertaking Prof D

6. Motivation for doing a Prof D

- To make a difference in professional practice that will help people
- To contribute new knowledge based on rigorous research
- To learn with a cohort of like-minded professionals
- To engage in life-long learning/CPD
- To gain additional skills and qualifications
- To further professional career

7. Degree Structure

- 4 years part-time

Stage 1 (2 yrs) modules:

- Research Methods RM (70 M-level)
 - 4 units: The Nature of Enquiry, Qualitative Research Design and Analysis, Quantitative Research Design and Analysis, Critical Review
- Professional Development PD (50 M-level)
 - 4 units: Professional Life Skills, Strategic Thinking, Strategic Leadership, Culture and Culture Change
- Project Development, Design and Management (60 D-level)

Stage 2 (2 yrs)

- Research project and thesis (360 D-level)

7. Assessment

Stage 1 Rm and PD: 1 formative and 2 summative assessments per module

Stage 1 Project Design: 1 summative assessment

Stage 2: Thesis and viva

Total Stage 1 = 40,000 words; Stage 2 = 60,000 words

8. Supervision/support

- Stage 1 Rm and PD: Advisor of studies + Buddy from earlier cohort
- Stage 1 Project Design: Supervisor from across the university, expert in the field of study likely to become the Director of studies
- Stage 2: Director of Studies, 2nd and 3rd supervisors from across the university (experienced and new supervisors)

9. Programme Quality Assurance

Stage 1

- Programme Board + annual programme reports and module reports
- External examiner
- Assessment Board + External examiner reports

Stage 2

- Supervisory team
- Registration of research proposal
- Annual reports and presentations
- School Research Committees
- University Higher Degrees Committee
- External and internal examiners at viva

Both stages

- Programme team review after every unit teaching block
- Steering group = Deans, Graduate Centre and program team leaders.
- Student-staff Consultative group – very engaged: they always find someone to come
- Supervisor training and support specifically for Prof D – given by Graduate Centre and Visiting Honourary Professor for Prof D (expert in EdD)

10. Student, staff and university experience

students – say it as a “quality experience”

- well-supported by staff
- strong cohort and community support has a profound impact
- well-organised and structured programme encourages development
- cross-university teaching and supervision gives academic excellence
- feel equipped to deal with contemporary practice, comfortable with change management
- often the first in their area to construct business/project plans and more strategic in their thinking
- like to take the opportunity of the modules to come out of their comfort zones and explore new research approaches and new ways of thinking
- producing publications, conference talks and poster presentations from their module courseworks already

staff

- never had more people wanting to teach on a programme than had spaces available before!
- Sharing of research ideas and teaching across disciplines and Schools
- Enjoy the intellectual challenges and debates with staff and students

University

- leading example of staff working together across School boundaries, of Schools collaborating
- teaching units in Research Methods used as research training for PhD students
- Graduate Centre has recognition as a strong facilitator of collaboration, enabling other projects such as MRes, Masters supervisor training, Academic writing for dissertation training to develop across Schools.
- improved supervision training and support at Doctoral level
- increase in research collaborations and research group activity across Schools
- external recognition for staff eg external examiners of Prof D's