

Bologna & Training Requirements in the Social Sciences

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Focus for Today

- ❑ EU & international drivers for change
- ❑ Bologna issues ... challenges for HEIs
- ❑ UK & Irish responses
- ❑ Research training as a requirement?
- ❑ Research training in the social sciences ... UK & Ireland

EU and Int'l drivers for change

- Global market for HEIs: competition
 - 4000 plus European institutions
- EU & Lisbon Agenda (2000)
 - Competitive & dynamic knowledge based economy
 - European Research Area ... skilled graduate and doctoral workforce
- Bologna & the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)
 - Bologna Declaration ... remove obstacles to mobility & enhance attractiveness of EU higher education area ... comparable degrees by 2010 plus ...
 - EHEA link with European Research Council
 - Focused on driving world class research
 - Bologna process beyond 2010 ... EUA role

Implications for graduate education?

- Bologna Declaration (June 1999) ... EHEA by 2010
 - Process of biannual ministerial meetings (29)
 - Move from 2 to 3 cycles (Berlin 2003)
 - EHEA to be aligned with European Research Area (London 2007) ... importance of doctoral researchers/career prospects
 - Harmonisation of doctoral issues in diverse graduate education systems
- EUA 10 Salzburg Principles on Doctoral Ed. (Feb 05)
 - Bergen Ministerial Communique (May 05) ...
 - EUA doctoral programmes projects (04-05, 05-07)
- Increased demand for researchers – transferable skills, mobility, employability, FP7
- A caveat ... a voluntary agreement ... does not require uniformity across member state educational systems

Doctorate ... third cycle qualification

Students expected to:

- have demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study & mastery of the skills & methods of research associated with that field
- have demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, implement & adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity
- have made a contribution through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work, some of which merits national or int'l refereed publication
- are capable of critical analysis, evaluation & synthesis of new & complex ideas
- can communicate with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with society in general about their areas of expertise
- can be expected to be able to promote, within academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advancement in a knowledge based society.

Bologna Issues

- ❑ Degree structures ... 3 cycles, but with considerable variation as to what constitutes a doctoral programme
- ❑ Diversification of doctoral education ... different approaches throughout EU ... common goal?
- ❑ Research careers ... EU Charter and Code of Conduct ... little visibility
- ❑ Comparability ... transferable credits ... EHEA Qualifications Framework (2005) e.g. 1st masters = 90 ECTS; taught elements of the doctorate?
- ❑ Mobility of researchers ... students & staff ... hard to achieve/barriers
- ❑ Skills Development ... personal, professional and careers ... challenge of integration & sustainability
- ❑ Organisational structures for graduate education vary across Europe

UK / Irish responses (1)

- London Communiqué (May 07): *we reaffirm our commitment to increasing the compatibility and comparability of our higher education systems, whilst at the same time respecting their diversity.*
- National level ... gov'ts supportive, provided it allows for diversity & is based on intergovernmental agreement
- UKRC has played a role in raising awareness of Bologna ... tough challenge

UK / Irish responses (2)

- ❑ UK Research Councils ... focus on producing int'l competitive postgrads
- ❑ HEIs slower to respond to Bologna ... less understanding of core issues ... challenges in adapting to change
- ❑ Example: UK HE Europe (Ghent paper, May 2008)
- ❑ Exchange of good practice and innovation in graduate education ... EUA & Council for Doctoral Education
- ❑ Need to focus on discipline specific research training requirements ... comparability across Europe (e.g. social science)

Training as a requirement?

- ❑ Bologna third cycle is not prescriptive regarding training ... but comparisons across member state states highlights the trends towards participation in research training programmes + disciplinary expectations
- ❑ EUA reports on doctoral education (trends) have provided considerable impetus for change in EU states ... professional & transferable skills
- ❑ National-level requirements ... QAA, Roberts money, research councils, RCUK & UKGrad
- ❑ Research Councils UK international strategy ... five key aims incl. collaboration & mobility

UK case: Implications for social science (1)

- Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC): £181m, 2007/08 ... circa 2,000 postgrads (1+3, +3)
- ESRC requirements ... postgraduate training guidelines & ESRC recognition process ... highly directive
- PG Training Guidelines - Main purposes:
 - Indicate skills and competences that students need to acquire
 - Context, objectives & content of training
 - Criteria for ESRC assessment of master's courses & doctoral provision

UK case: Implications for social science (2)

- ❑ General Skills/Personal Dev & Employment-related Skills ... similar to UKGrad
- ❑ Subject & discipline guidelines re research training ... expertise / research methods training (e.g. politics, IR and IS)
- ❑ Limited discussion of the impact of Bologna on such requirements ... ESRC International strategy ... bilateral initiatives / EU progs ... supports collaboration & mobility
- ❑ What are the workload implications for students?
- ❑ What other issues need to be considered?

Irish case: Implications for social sciences

- ❑ National-level policy developments (late 1990s) ... Higher Ed Authority ... Strategy on STI ... double PhD numbers/market focus
- ❑ Irish Research Council for Human & Social Sciences (2000) ... €12.5m in 2007
- ❑ Focus on supporting individual postgrad researchers (110 in 2007-8) ... limited focus on training requirements, although incr. expected
- ❑ IRCHSS beginning to fund other training events, such as summer schools on research methods ... collaborations
- ❑ Irish University Association ... new research skills statement, 'PhD made in Ireland', internationalisation
- ❑ GREPs - move towards structured PhD programmes ... UCD/TCD Quantitative Social Sciences implications for research training ... academic regulations

Ongoing Issues

- ❑ Diversity of programmes ... disciplinary specifics
- ❑ Research training as a requirement: competing demands (stakeholders)
- ❑ ECTS and doctoral education ... only the research training component?
- ❑ Masters as prerequisite to PhD?
- ❑ Challenge of mobility & placement for social scientists
- ❑ Meeting the needs of the employment market
- ❑ Developing research careers in social sciences
- ❑ Status of postgraduate researchers

Thank you ...

... and now for some questions