Professional Doctorates in the UK 2011

Tony Fell, Kevin Flint and Ian Haines
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Summary

This Report on the Professional Doctorate (PD) in the UK was commissioned by the UKCGE to inform debate on the design, validation, audit and relevance of PDs to the needs and aspirations of the doctoral candidate, the requirements of Universities, the industrial and professional employers and society at large. In each chapter the design, development and policy issues relating to PD programmes are reviewed. The first Chapter reflects upon the key contextual developments and current issues for the PD in general. Issues include: comparison between the PD and the traditional PhD; the confusion caused by the burgeoning number of PD titles; the on-going debate on the use (or not) of credit for the research components of doctorates; the issues raised by the emergence in the USA of so-called ‘course-work only’ professional doctorates, not necessarily based on research outcomes; and the societal and economic impact of the successful PD graduate in the Knowledge Economy.

The conceptual basis and core delivery issues of the ‘generic’ third-generation ‘Doctor of Professional Studies’ are explored in the Chapter 2, together with an assessment of the role of the researching practitioner. The EdD is deconstructed in Chapter 3 from a philosophical perspective, with an assessment of the nature of the EdD and the essential features of philosophically sound structures underpinning it. The scope and design factors of the EngD are discussed in Chapter 4, together with the key factors involved in securing industrial and Research Council sponsorship to underpin the research programme, while recognising the prerequisite that industrial partners appreciate the relevance of the research focus and the need to contribute towards it.

Best practice in the design and delivery of the Doctor in Business Administration is illustrated through a series of case studies. The influential role of the Association of Business Schools in the UK in regulating the DBA on a voluntary basis by defining the benchmark is discussed in Chapter 5. The PD in Clinical Psychology is reviewed in Chapter 6 as the touchstone for entry into the profession, closely regulated by the Health Professions Council (HPC). In Chapter 7 the PD in Health and Social Care, also regulated by the HPC, is examined for its impact on practice in the area and for issues of perceived standards and parity of esteem, relative to the traditional PhD. The PDs embraced by the Social Sciences are explored in Chapter 8 with reference to their potential for capacity building of research in the Social Sciences. In Chapter 9 a review of Practice-Led Doctorates in the Arts, Design and Architecture illustrates the different modes for developing, recognising, assessing and valuing research activity in the creative and performing arts.

Finally, in Chapter 10 the need to identify a suitable metric for PDs to provide valid, valued and effective measures of their principal features is discussed. The broader international issues for PDs are discussed with reference to the Bologna convention and practice in Australia. The continuing debate about the emergence of PDs with little training in doctoral-level research in North America is discussed. Questions are raised about whether the key features of a PD could be captured with one set of criteria, about the relative merits of internal and external measures of graduate performance and strategies for measuring the value of practice-focused innovations.

Reference is made in Chapter 1 to the proposal that a longitudinal study of the experience of PD graduates 5 years after qualification be conducted, to assess the impact of PD skills training and research experience on the capacity of the PD graduate to meet the challenges of professional working life. If complemented by employers’ perceptions of the PD graduate’s performance in the workplace, this would permit an assessment of the ‘value-added’ to successful PD candidates, the relative value of different skills training components and the benefit of research experience to the reflective practitioner in the workplace.

The authors of this Report, representing a range of disciplines and professions as academics and practitioners, have identified a clear need for dialogue between employers and sponsors with the academy, in order to strengthen the PD as a valuable and viable strategy for stimulating the continuing professional development of staff and capacity building for research in the community.

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The Editors would like to acknowledge Carolyn Raven, Principal Officer in the UKCGE Office, for her invaluable support, expertise and boundless enthusiasm in compiling this Report. The assistance of colleagues on the UKCGE Executive Committee and on the Special Interest Group Steering Group is also gratefully acknowledged. This Report would not have been possible had it not been for the commitment and professionalism of the friends and colleagues who freely contributed their expertise and insights as authors of individual chapters.
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Foreword

The doctoral landscape in the UK, mainland Europe and around the world has been a matter of intense scrutiny, debate and opinion over the last decade, with many reports produced at Ministerial level, by the funders (especially the Research Councils), Quality Assurance Agencies, interest groups including UUK, UKCGE, Vitae, Industrial Associations and individual Universities and Research Institutes. This scrutiny has recognised the importance of doctoral training and has also valued the role that doctoral graduates play in developing the Knowledge Economy. In the UK especially, there has been an ever increasing diversity of doctoral provision and an inexorable shift away from the conventional 3-year Master–Apprentice PhD, towards an increase in subject-specific and generic training – this to ensure that doctoral graduates are adequately prepared to meet the demands of a variety of career destinations in academia, industry and the public sector.

The rise in popularity of the designated Professional Doctorate reflects both the aforementioned evolution and a demand-led development from various sectors of academia and society. The Professional Doctorate has arisen from the amalgamation of demand for high-level knowledge and skills training, coupled with an in-depth original research investigation associated with a particular profession. Professional Doctorates are therefore focussed, applied and make major contributions in original research to their disciplines.

Despite being the fastest growing sector in doctoral education in the UK, Professional Doctorates are still a minority area in the sector, often misunderstood and viewed with concern by research-driven academics and senior managers at many HEI’s, including some Research Councils and funding agencies. In mainland Europe, few Professional Doctorates have been established and there is limited understanding of their structures and impact. This context makes publication of this Report such a useful and timely document for the University sector, doctoral candidates, employers, sponsors and Regulatory Agencies, both in the UK and further afield. Coming as it does at a time of increased research funding concentration in the UK, the Report should serve as a guideline for senior managers in the academy, employers and policy decision makers to grasp the opportunity to engage with the range of new doctoral provision developing in many professional sectors.

Professor Mick Fuller
Chair-Elect, UK Council for Graduate Education
March 2011
1 Introduction

1.1 Context

Following the first UKCGE Report on ‘Professional Doctorates’ (Hoddell, 2002), the present Report has been written in response to the increasing interest in modes of doctoral education, where the focus of training and research relates to activities arising from the world of work, often but not necessarily associated with a profession. In this early Report, the editor Professor Steve Hoddell recognised the cohort-based nature of the Professional Doctorate (PD) and framed a working definition as follows:

A Professional Doctorate is a programme of advanced study and research which, whilst satisfying the University criteria for the award of a doctorate, is designed to meet the specific needs of a professional group external to the University, and which develops the capability of individuals to work within a professional context (ibid: 62).

The nature of the PD is nicely captured in this working definition, insofar as responsibility for the standards of the PD lies squarely with the awarding Institution, the work-related focus is at least partially vested in the professional group collaborating with or informing the Institution, while enhancement of the intrinsic capacity of the candidate contributing to developments in the professional domain is explicitly recognised. It would be reasonable to suggest that Hoddell’s definition remains an appropriate description of the PD.

The substantial increase in the number and type of PDs in the UK alone, as evidenced in two recent surveys for the UKCGE by Powell and Long (2005) and Brown and Cooke (2010), is impressive – in fact a tripling of programmes reported since 1998 to over 300 in 2009 (ibid: 9). It was however noted that the expansion into specialised subject areas may not necessarily attract cohorts of students (ibid: 25). Notwithstanding the wide variety of areas encompassed by the PD, it is clear that Hoddell’s early definition continues to be valid for many of these areas, and that many of them can be described as being focused in a professional domain of activity.

Many developments in the professional doctorate in the UK over the past decade have emanated from the design of work-based doctoral programmes to support continuing professional development (CPD), the life-long learning of professionals and/or as the entry criterion for acceptance into a professional group, illustrated for example by the DClin Psy (BPS, 2008; Scott, et al., 2004). Developments in other parts of the world, notably in the USA (Stewart, 2009), Australia (AQF, 2007) and Ireland (NQAI, 2006) demonstrate an international response for acceptance into a professional group, illustrated for example by the DClin Psy (BPS, 2008; Scott, et al., 2004). Developments in other parts of the world, notably in the USA (Stewart, 2009), Australia (AQF, 2007) and Ireland (NQAI, 2006) demonstrate an international response for acceptance into a professional group, illustrated for example by the DClin Psy (BPS, 2008; Scott, et al., 2004).

The evolution of new models for the doctorate reflects pressure from specific interest groups, many of them professions where it is considered advantageous, even prestigious, to establish a research-focused award codifying their particular practice-related research interests in a ‘Professional Doctorate’, with the associated attraction of the professional status conferred by the title ‘Doctor’. The PD is a highly structured research award, which supports the acquisition and embedding of generic and practice-related skills, focused on the perceived needs of the professional conducting research in their domain. It is interesting to note the growing convergence of the regular PhD programme with aspects of the PD – given that best practice requires training in generic and transferable skills within current PhD programmes, and that PD programmes have always been characterised by training in research-focused and generic skills – considered in both cases to be an essential prerequisite for proficiency in the effective performance of research.

Many developments in the professional doctorate in the UK over the past decade have emanated from the design of work-based doctoral programmes to support continuing professional development (CPD), the life-long learning of professionals and/or as the entry criterion for acceptance into a professional group, illustrated for example by the DClin Psy (BPS, 2008; Scott, et al., 2004). Developments in other parts of the world, notably in the USA (Stewart, 2009), Australia (AQF, 2007) and Ireland (NQAI, 2006) demonstrate an international response for acceptance into a professional group, illustrated for example by the DClin Psy (BPS, 2008; Scott, et al., 2004).

The first UKCGE Report (Hoddell, 2002) did not consider the increasing development of doctorates in the creative and performing arts – whether under the umbrella of the traditional PhD model, or as Practice-based or Practice-led Doctorates characterised by a strong focus on, for example, the creation of an artefact, a musical programme or some other performance-based output, as discussed here in Chapter 9. The reasons for this omission lay partly in the contemporary publication by UKCGE of authoritative Reports in these and related areas by Frayling (1997), Crossick (2000) and Thomas (2001). Thus at the time it was considered that good practice in the creative and performing arts was well served by these and related publications. These Reports were followed by a comprehensive review for AHRC on Practice-Led Research in Art, Design & Architecture (Rust, et al., 2007 a, b).

It should be noted here that doctorates in the areas of creative and performing arts may be awarded either under the regulations for a PhD, where the artefact or creative product may be accompanied by a critical contextual commentary, or as a special award designated by a descriptive title – e.g., DMus, or DArt and Design. The Practice-based PhD is considered to reflect a research focus on the creative product in its academic context, whereas the focus in a Practice-based DMus or DArt and Design is on the quality of the created product, as noted by Frayling (1997):

[The submission to be assessed] ‘is distinct in that significant aspects of the claim for doctoral characteristics of originality, mastery and contribution to the field are held to be demonstrated through the original creative work’ (ibid: 14).
The key characteristics of doctoral candidates in the creative and performing arts would merit an independent Report in and of themselves. They are discussed here in the broader context of the traditional PhD.

### 1.2 Key Developments

Since the first Report edited for UKCGE by Professor Steven Hoddell (2002), the landscape of higher education in the UK has been significantly transformed. Professor Sir Gareth Roberts published his groundbreaking Report ‘SET for Success’ (Roberts, 2002), following his review of the factors affecting the development of candidates in the UK with so-called ‘STEM skills’ (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). In response, Government policy implemented by RCUK in 2003 led to a framework of protected ‘Roberts’ Funding’ designed to support skills training for doctoral candidates at all HEIs, scaled in proportion to the volume of Research Council funding at each HEI (RCUK, 2010). In fact, Roberts’ Funding was also allocated for post-doctoral researchers – who were later given further support in developing their career aspirations by the ‘Concordat’ (RCUK, 2008), supported by all HEIs in the UK. This long overdue recognition of the legitimate needs of researchers was intended to ensure that appropriate training was embedded into a regularly updated career development profile for post-docs – an aspiration that may, however, take many years to be fulfilled.

The well received Code of Practice (Section 1: Postgraduate research programmes) published by the QAA (2004) defined the principal parameters of research degrees at Masters and Doctoral levels, in a form that embodied a collective statement with the academy of best UK practice in the management of doctoral programmes in particular. This was combined with a set of 27 precepts amplified by explanatory statements covering all stages of the doctoral journey in a form that both facilitated the internal audit by HEIs of their research degree programmes, and constituted the basis for ensuing regulatory Institutional Audit by the QAA of all HEIs on a quinquennial basis. This seminal publication was intended to cover the PhD in its various modes and ‘all forms of taught or professional doctorates’ (ibid: 4). Little reference is made explicitly to the Professional Doctorate, or to other doctoral routes such as Practice-based or Practice-led Doctorates. In precept 23 reference is made to the need for careful consideration of the requirements for the assessment of the PD (ibid: 15). Evidently, in the Code of Practice the reasonable assumption was made that the same principles embodied in the Code for the ‘traditional’ PhD should apply equally to the PD.

In the UK, early definitions of doctoral qualification descriptors were updated in ‘The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland’ (FHEQ) (QAA, 2008)1. Descriptors for doctoral qualifications at Level 8 apply both to PhD/DPhil awards and to PD awards. The PD is brought within the ambit of FHEQ Qualification Descriptors for level 8 with the statement:

‘Doctoral programmes that may include a research component but which have a substantial taught element (for example, professional doctorates), lead usually to awards which include the name of the discipline in their title (for example, EdD for Doctor of Education or DClin Psy for Doctor of Clinical Psychology). Professional doctorates aim to develop an individual’s professional practice and to support them in producing a contribution to (professional) knowledge’ (ibid: 46).

In a discussion document on ‘Doctoral Degree Characteristics’ (QAA, 2011) edited by Gill Clarke and others, a range of issues relating to the PD and the Practice-based Doctorate has been raised. The document states that:

‘One of the objectives… is to emphasise the need for equivalence in the different types of UK doctorate. One of the ways in which this can best be achieved is to demonstrate that doctoral candidates face similar intellectual challenges, both during their programme and at the point of final examination. The UK doctoral assessment (thesis and Viva together) provides evidence of equivalence at the end of the programme in that all doctoral candidates experience a similar format, i.e. assessment of the thesis followed by the closed oral examination, with two or even three examiners (some institutions routinely use three examiners, two of whom are external, if a member of staff is being examined). External examining is a key feature of UK quality assurance processes and at least one external examiner is required at each oral doctoral examination’ (ibid: 15).

In its draft form the document concludes that:

‘All UK doctorates, however, continue to require the main focus of the candidate’s work to be their contribution to knowledge in their discipline, usually through original research, or the original application of existing knowledge or understanding’ (ibid: 5).

The Browne Report (2010) made far-reaching recommendations for HE in England, but did not consider research funding and therefore restricted its comments to postgraduate taught programmes and the potential impact of undergraduate fee structures on the health of

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1. Scotland has produced its own framework, ‘The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework’, which defines the characteristics of the doctorate in general terms and describes the PD in particular in the following way: ‘Professional doctorates also require the equivalent of three years’ full-time research and study to complete and will frequently involve work-based as well as HEI-based research and study’ (SCQF, 2009).
this sector. It suggested that investment be targeted on ‘courses that are a priority for the public interest’ (ibid: 55). In focusing on the public interest (and by implication, employability), this comment was consistent with the employer-led focus of the Smith Report (2010), which commented on the need to ensure access to part-time postgraduate qualifications combined with employment (ibid: 21). Smith also noted that there was significant potential to expand ‘tailored’ postgraduate training for employees as part of CPD, ‘particularly where it is delivered flexibly … to build credits over time’ (ibid: 36). Smith recommended that ‘HEIs should work with the QAA to overcome perceived barriers to quality assuring flexible postgraduate provision delivered partly in the workplace’ (ibid: 36). Smith also noted that the growth of professionally orientated doctorates and masters programmes was helping to meet employer needs in private and public sectors, and recommended that UUK and Sector Skills Councils ‘encourage best practice in development and delivery of courses … to meet the needs of employers’ (ibid: 37).

However, following on from the Browne and Smith Reports, a speech by David Willetts, Minister of State for Universities and Science, made to Universities UK early in 2011 with reference to universities raising undergraduate fees to the highest allowable level, clarified government policy to open up UK higher education to private providers ‘from India to Spain to the USA’. This may eventually lead to pressure for doctoral degree awarding powers to be given to the larger and more well established companies in future – which underlines the necessity for appropriate regulatory oversight.

These expressions of public policy can be interpreted as directly supporting the enhancement of opportunity for advanced qualifications up to doctoral level in the workplace – indicating a key role for the PD in this context, where the acquisition of high-level skills on a part-time basis is at its core.

The European University Association seminar in Salzburg (2005) established the framework for 10 ‘Salzburg Principles’ applying to any doctorate registered in the Bologna signatory area. Following their general acceptance throughout Europe, a ‘Salzburg II’ review has made recommendations for updating this well recognised framework (EUA, 2010; Vitae, 2010a). The Bologna Seminar in Nice, France, on ‘Doctoral Programmes in Europe’ featured one of the first broad, international discussions on the development of innovative doctoral training programmes, including the first EUA Workshop on the PD (EUA, 2006). The outcomes were formulated by the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) as recommendations for consideration by 45 Ministers at the London Ministerial Conference on the Bologna Process (EUA, 2007). There was a strong focus on the PD as an innovative approach to enhanced graduate employability, fulfilling societal needs for lifelong education and training while also catalysing increased cooperation between industry and the academy (EUA, 2006). The high-level BFUG advised Ministers as follows (EUA, 2007):

Programmes known as ‘Professional doctorates’, or practice related doctorates, are doctorates that focus on embedding research in a reflective manner into … professional practice. They must meet the same core standards as ‘traditional’ doctorates in order to ensure the same high level of quality. It may be appropriate to consider using different titles to distinguish between … professional doctorates and PhDs. In order to develop a broad discussion on this topic it will be important to ensure the dissemination of information from those European countries that have experience in this area, and particularly the UK, where the number of professional doctorates is growing rapidly across the European higher education sector (ibid: 15).

The London Communiciqué (Vitae, 2007) inter alia confirmed broad agreement with the BFUG recommendations, underlining the fact that the Doctorate formed the 3rd cycle of the process under Bologna (Fell and Haines, 2009: 7).

The present Report features authoritative accounts of developments in the PD, focusing on the Professional Studies (DProf) generic award, Education, Engineering, Business Administration, Psychology, Health & Social Care, Social Science and Practice-led Doctorates in the Arts, and Architecture, together with approaches towards a metric for evaluating the PD. These and related issues appear as major themes in the ‘International Conference on Professional Doctorates’ (ICPD) series, established in London, UK in 2009, Edinburgh, Scotland (2011) and moving on to Florence, Italy (2012) and other international venues in the years to follow.

1.3 Issues

1.3.1 The Professional Doctorate and the traditional PhD

In outline, at least, there is a similarity of form and duration (ca. 3 years’ full-time study, 5 – 6 years on a part-time basis) between the traditional PhD, now featuring a substantial agenda of taught elements as proposed in the Researcher Development Statement (Vitae, 2010b), and in the PD. The key differences between a PD and a PhD arise from the fact that the balance of time allocated to taught elements (oriented directly towards the specific professional domain involved) relative to the research project or research question, is generally greater in a PD programme than for a traditional PhD.
Often in a PhD the taught elements are not formally assessed, unless drawn from a modular group of research skills forming part of, for example, a Postgraduate Certificate in Research Skills, which some HEIs require to be passed as a condition for thesis submission. By contrast, in PD programmes the coursework, portfolios and taught elements are always assessed as a prerequisite for thesis submission, their volume usually being more extensive than for a PhD. Consequently, the thesis or final report for a PD is generally expected to be shorter than that for a PhD. However, both forms of doctorate are usually regulated by HEIs in similar fashion, with summative assessment according to similar criteria, involving a *Viva voce* with independent internal and external examiners – for a PD one of the examiners may be a practising professional with appropriate research experience. As noted in the QAA discussion document (2011: 15), for both the PhD and the PD there may also be a third examiner in cases where complementary expertise is required for assessment of the thesis and its discussion in the *Viva*.

Although the QAA (2011) discussion document currently states that the main focus of a doctorate is the contribution to knowledge in a discipline, it should be noted that the PD models developed in the UK are distinctive in bringing a multidisciplinary, reflexive focus on professional development. For example the generic DProf pioneered at Middlesex University exemplifies the broad approach to developing meaningful research outcomes or to demonstrate the acquisition of the appropriate research skills held to characterise the independent researcher (Stewart, 2009). Nor is there always a clearly defined relationship between the institutions delivering these programmes, and an established Graduate School equipped to support researchers and ensure quality assurance of the qualifications awarded (CGS, 2008). Evidently there is a wide divergence between these more recent programmes in the USA, which can be described as ‘coursework only doctorates’, and established North American programmes that deliver PDs with meaningful research outcomes and well-qualified researchers, comparable with the best US standards for the PhD (Stewart, 2009a).

There appear to be certain societal and economic drivers pushing this expansion of doctoral awards in the USA, which the CGS among others has proposed to manage through laying down minimal standards for those institutions developing these awards. Early indications are that these so-called ‘professional doctorates’ are being franchised to HEIs in Europe. All of which underlines the need to establish appropriate metrics whereby the status of PDs can be assessed and their quality assured, as proposed in Chapter 10 of the present Report.

### 1.3.3 Nomenclature

One of the concerning issues around the PD is the confusion arising from the proliferation of titles and variation in nomenclature for individual PD programmes. In the most recent survey of PD awards in the UK by Brown and Cooke (2010), well over a 100 titles are listed, some differing only in the order of letters in the abbreviated nomenclature (eg EngD, DEng), others differing in the descriptive title and content registered for ostensibly similar awards at different HEIs. No wonder employers may be tempted to consider the PhD as an oft quoted ‘gold standard’ among the maelstrom of PD awards presented by doctoral applicants for jobs.

### 1.3.4 Taught vs Professional Doctorate

An issue flagged up in the first Report (2002: 14) referred to the ‘taught doctorate’ as a term at that time applied by some professionals in describing the PD. This description reflected the fact that the award included a significant element that is both taught and assessed, together with a substantial project, or linked series of projects, focused on research objectives in the context of professional development,
this being assessed by Viva voce similar to that for the traditional PhD. Typically the taught elements of the PD attract credit in the same way as for other research training awards, thereby fitting into a credit framework regulated by the HEI and external agencies.

Recognising that the research focus of the PD is a hallmark characteristic that defines the researching professional, it is generally considered inappropriate to use the term ‘Taught Doctorate’, but rather to refer to the ‘Professional Doctorate’. This convention is intended to underline the research-based nature of the award, avoiding the pejorative overtones of the descriptor ‘Taught Doctorate’, a term often associated with negative perceptions by the academy.

In a sense, it can be argued that the terms ‘taught’ and ‘doctorate’ should not be combined, since they can be construed as being mutually contradictory when applied to a graduate research degree programme, where there is a strong focus on research activity in a defined professional domain. Any doctorate should embrace a strong research training focused on the production of original and publishable outcomes. It is important that the PD be recognised as a qualification awarded in recognition of the achievement of appropriate doctoral outcomes.

For this and other reasons it is considered that the earlier descriptive title, ‘Taught Doctorate’ should be abandoned. The term ‘Professional Doctorate’ should be used as the established, preferred term for this form of postgraduate research degree.

It is interesting to reflect that the contemporary PhD in the UK often incorporates a programme of taught elements promoting the development of generic and transferable skills as recognised by the QAA (2004), which adopted in full the Joint Research Councils’ Skills Statement (RCUK, 2001). This document has now been revised as the ‘Researcher Development Statement’ (Vitae, 2010b) as part of the Researcher Development Framework intended to represent the required skills of doctoral candidates on a broader aspirational framework for their subsequent careers. Best practice in the management of traditional PhD programmes is now evidenced when skills training is integrated with the programme of research, which is thereby strengthened in its execution. In a typical PD a programme of relevant skills training or development accompanies a sustained period of individual original or applied research, whose outcomes should be publishable.

1.3.5 Credit Transfer – ECTS

The Bologna Process recognises the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) as a means for transfer and accumulation of credit to promote widespread student mobility. ECTS was originally introduced as part of the Erasmus Programme in 1989 solely as a credit transfer system (Vitae, 2010c). However it is generally considered inappropriate for the research components of the traditional PhD in the UK to be credit-rated, as confirmed, for example, by the framework for doctoral degrees in Scotland, which states that: ‘Credit definitions do not apply to research-based doctorates’ (QAA, 2011: 21).

The credit-rating practice with the research component in a PD varies quite widely from one HEI and from one PD programme to another. As noted by Hoddell (2002: 31), some HEIs identify the learning outcomes associated with the PD research component and allocate credit, others not. This raises one of the difficulties involved in comparing the ‘traditional’ PhD with a PD – since the research outputs of the former are not credit-rated, whereas the PD research element may be credit rated, even if only as a convenient proportional measure of the distribution of time allocated during registration between the taught and research elements.

However, a strong body of opinion in the UK advocates that the use of credit in the European Higher Education area should reflect the manner of its use in the UK (Vitae, 2010c). In the UK it is widely believed that where credit is allocated to undergraduate, masters and the taught elements of a research degree, this should be based on outcomes, rather than workload or ‘hours studied’. Although there are widely held views in Europe that credits should be allocated for doctoral research, there is a strong belief in the UK that the research components of a research degree should not attract credit.

1.4 Conclusions and Future Perspectives

1.4.1 Societal and economic impact

The evidence discussed in this chapter, and throughout the Report, indicates that the work-related, external focus of the PD brings benefit to the HEI, the (potential) employer, society as a whole and not least to the doctoral candidate. It can be anticipated that the skill-set of the PD graduate should make a good fit with employability, in terms of enhanced research skills and real-world awareness, consonant with the outcomes of recent Government policy developments adumbrated by Smith (2010) and Browne (2010).

The frankly applied nature of the interactions involved in a PD can be expected to transform the candidate’s capacities to contribute new, research-focused ideas in the workplace, while making an impact both on the workplace environment and on the employer’s capacity to develop innovative strategies to resolve professional challenges as they may arise.
1.4.2 Nomenclature issues

Although there has been general agreement over the past decade to replace the descriptor ‘taught doctorate’ in favour of the PD, the proliferation of titles for PD awards continues to be a matter for some concern. There is a strong argument for some over-arching simplification of titles, given the confusion among employers as to the qualification status of the PD graduate. To some extent this is mitigated by the increasing clarity afforded by degree transcripts, confirming the training achievements attained by a candidate, applying as it does both to the PhD and to the PD. One evidently successful development in the quest for simplification of award titles has been established at a number of HEIs, namely the Doctorate in Professional Studies, or DProf, pioneered by Middlesex University and discussed *in extenso* in Chapter 2 of this Report (Costley and Stephenson, 2008; Costley, Elliott and Gibbs, 2010).

It would be appropriate to establish a forum to discuss the merits and demerits of rationalisation of award titles for PDs in the UK. Such discussions could be mediated by one of the regulatory agencies, or an independent body such as the UKCGE, at national level and should involve appropriate representative bodies from the academy, industry and other sponsors.

1.4.3 National guidelines for PD and Practice-based / Practice-led Doctorates

If it were agreed that national guidelines for the PhD should apply equally to the PD award, wherein particular generic issues for the PD were recognised, defined and thereby regulated, this would strengthen the internal HEI structures for establishing appropriate QA processes for PDs. Guidelines of this kind would inform the process of validating, and re-validating, PD programmes, and would also be of value for Institutional Audit of research degrees.

Moreover, application of these national guidelines would obviate, or at least mitigate, the difficulties that could arise, if programmes of uncertain quality were franchised to HEIs or other organisations in the UK from within the UK or abroad – as illustrated by the intervention of the Council of Graduate Schools and other senior institutions in the USA, responding to the proliferation of doctoral training programmes of uncertain quality for professionals (CGS, 2008).

Appropriate guidelines would also be useful for validation purposes with Practice-based and Practice-led Doctorates in the creative arts. It would be timely to review these routes to the doctorate, to include those research programmes where the creative artefact or performance is presented for assessment under the PhD regulations format, and those where a different assessment is made of the doctoral-level originality of the contribution.

The development of systems for measuring and assessing the value of PDs, as advocated in the final chapter of this Report, would be of great value to the academy, students, employers and regulatory authorities in permitting the effectiveness of new and established PD programmes to be defined.

1.4.4 Issues arising from franchising the UK PD

Franchising activities of PDs at UK-based HEIs to institutions both within and outwith the country are subject to regulatory oversight and control, in the same way as applies to all other forms of undergraduate, masters or research degrees. In general the QA structures developed within HEIs operating under the regime of quinquennial audit by the QAA are well established, embedded systems which underpin the quality of academic programmes delivered within the UK or at institutions abroad. Some highly successful franchising arrangements have been established by UK HEIs delivering, for example, the DProf, the EngD and the DBA both at home and abroad.

For the recipient institution of a franchised programme, the QA issues arising are comparable with those for the sponsoring institution itself. There is however an additional dimension arising from the potential mismatch of perceived academic standards, both for the taught elements and for the supervision of the research programme. There is a clear need to build enhanced training and development opportunities into the franchise agreement, focused on the needs of those academics responsible for delivering the programme in their HEI. The need for appropriate training also applies to those professionals outside the academy, who may be involved as practice tutors or advisors, for example, or as external co-supervisors of the research programme.

1.4.5 Perspectives for the future

A number of challenges face the PD going forward. Perhaps most important of these is the need for appropriate generic guidelines based on best practice in the sector, to establish an agreed baseline of standards to inform those responsible for developing, validating and ultimately
auditing professionally focused, research-based doctoral training programmes for the future. Guidelines on appropriate standards for PD programmes in the public domain would also serve as a valuable, independent template for candidates, the academy and external sponsoring organisations. The assessment of the ‘value added’ by PD programmes would be facilitated by the development of an appropriate, agreed framework of metrics for measuring the training outcomes and assessing the contribution of the research outcomes from PD programmes.

Although difficult to foresee the outcome with any certainty, as noted in 1.4.2 above, it is desirable that a discussion forum be established within the academy to explore ways in which the proliferation of titles for research-based awards could be harmonised – both to increase transparency from the candidate’s viewpoint, and to enhance recognition of the intrinsic value of the PD by employers and sponsors.

Given the changes in the climate of graduate education that have occurred over the past decade, it would be interesting and valuable for planning purposes to establish a detailed picture of the position of practice-based and practice-led doctorates through a review in the creative arts.

The leadership role identified by the Bologna Follow-up Group for the UK academy, signalling the importance of UK HEIs disseminating and sharing their experience of the PD with colleagues in the European academy, employers and others (EUA, 2007), presents a significant challenge to all those active in the area of developing, delivering and evaluating the PD. This challenge is also shared by those involved in the regulatory processes for research degrees, in HEIs and Government agencies alike. As with any doctoral training programme, it is essential to ensure that the postgraduate experience of a PD is of consistently high quality and also that the postgraduate is engaged in high quality research, focused on the needs of the workplace and the wider community. Success in developing a closer understanding of the intrinsic strengths of the PD with the European academy and external sponsors, such as industry, would be expected to lead to closer international collaboration and, as is already evident with some programmes such as the DBA, to extend the baseline for collaborative and productive approaches to doctoral training in the international community.

In this context it is proposed that a longitudinal study be conducted of PD graduates 5 years after qualification, to codify their experience of implementing the training and research skills in the workplace, and to put on record their retrospective assessment of the ‘value added’ by the PD journey to their overall capacity to contribute to the challenges of professional working life. In appropriate circumstances, the PD graduates’ perceptions could be complemented by those of their employers, thereby providing a ‘360° appraisal’ of the experience reported by PD graduates in the workplace. Success in capturing and analysing the experience of PDs in particular scholastic domains should enable a number of issues to be assessed, including the ‘value added’ to successful PD candidates by their programme, the relative value of different skills training components and the benefit of research experience to the reflective practitioner.

Interest and support for the UK academy responsible for developing the PD, as expressed by the Bologna Follow-up Group, presents a valuable opportunity to share the very wide range of experience on PDs built up within many UK HEIs. Extension of the valuable role of PDs as part of the lifelong learning agenda and of the continuing professional development of employees, together with the enhancement of research skills, will require sustainable funding to develop and strengthen the research and professional skills base within the European Community.

Future recognition in the UK and Europe of the value of the PD as an alternative and potentially innovative route for doctoral training would be expected to increase the flow of well equipped researching professionals, capable of delivering high quality contributions and able to develop an appropriate leadership role in the world of work.

1.5 Bibliography


2 Professional Doctorates and the Doctorate of Professional Studies

2.1 Context

2.1.1 The purpose and market of the Professional Doctorate

The driving forces behind the emergence of professional doctorates in the USA, UK and Australia were application to professional creativity and purpose that was not manifest in the PhD (Lee et al., 2009, Park, 2007) and also the ability of the professional doctorate (PD) to better meet the needs of the ‘knowledge economy’ (Laing and Brabazon, 2007; Usher, 2002).

PDs can have a distinct if overlapping purpose, in that they already require significant immersion in professional activity and are typically taken by mid- and late-career practitioners motivated by a variety of aims: these include professional extension, developing expertise in practitioner research, drawing together and validating a level of practice and achievement, enhancing the value of a major project or undertaking, developing into a new or cross-disciplinary field, and not least personal satisfaction. Two key themes have been: consolidating and giving structure to experience and achievements and formalising theory and ideas, sometimes associated with rounding off a stage of a career or preparing for a new one (Wellington and Sikes, 2006), and taking forward an application in a disciplined and researching way with the aim of enhancing practice and moving it forward (Costley and Stephenson, 2008).

Discipline-specific PDs such as the EngD and DBA have been identified by Maxwell (2003) as ‘second-generation’ and have moved away from some of the assumptions about academic research traditionally associated with the PhD. They are more accepting of what Nowotny et al. (2003) regard as knowledge produced and used in a process of application such as the workplace, and of Schön’s constructionist notion of knowledge (Schön, 1987). Another group emerged out of the transdisciplinary, negotiated approach, as independent and work-based learning developed in several universities in the 1980s and 90s (Boud and Solomon, 2003). Some PDs, particularly in the field of business and management, are experienced more as practitioner-oriented PhDs that use an action-learning or work-project approach (Usher, 2002; Zuber-Skerritt, 2006). Finally, in the visual and performing arts ‘practice-based’ PhDs and PDs are becoming common, where an artistic work is typically accompanied by a detailed narrative; these doctorates can test the boundaries of ‘doctorateness’, both in relation to the type of evidence that can be accepted and in the interpretation of practice as research (Burgess, 2007), with the latter being a particular source of debate given that the practice-based doctorate’s main reference point is still normally science and humanities’ PhDs (Macleod and Holdridge, 2004; Elkins, 2004).

There are still many questions regarding the positioning of PDs vis-à-vis traditional PhDs and other established forms of doctorate. Boud and Tennant (2006) comment that the PhD is enduringly robust and until other conceptions of ‘doctorateness’ become widely accepted, the PhD model will be the one with which PDs are compared. In the USA, PDs are not always accepted as being on a par with the PhD, although in the UK and Australia the level and extent of ‘challenge’ posed by PDs is generally accepted as equivalent (NQA, 2006). Some kinds of PD are more akin to the ‘senior’ or ‘higher’ doctorates awarded in some institutions (Powell and Long, 2005); the expectation in both is of a practitioner who has made a sustained contribution to their field rather than an early-career practitioner developing towards a senior level, a description that fits candidates for many PDs (Usher, 2002). At the same time several authors, including Boud and Tennant (2006) and Powell and Long (2005), comment that there has been a convergence between some PhDs and PDs, indicating that distinctions based on title or programme structure are unreliable. In the UK all doctoral degrees are attributed in the same academic standards, no distinction is made between PD and PhD (NQA, 2008).

Much of the debate about the value of different doctoral models centres on the value of the knowledge produced and in particular the function of the PhD as licensing its graduates as researchers (Seddon, 2001) and consequently PhD students becoming peer with the researchers under which they receive supervision. Although there is far from a common epistemology underpinning the conventional PhD, there tends to be an assumption of producing ‘mode 1’ discipline-based knowledge (Gibbons et al., 1994, Nowotny et al., 2001) that becomes part of the research stock of the university. The acceptance of ‘mode 2’ knowledge as supplementing the knowledge production that used to be primarily produced, codified and held in scientific institutions, as of equivalent value in the university is far from established.

“Mode 2” knowledge is generated within a context of application. This is different from the process of application by which ‘pure’ science, generated in theoretical/experimental environments, is ‘applied’; any technology is ‘transferred’; and knowledge is subsequently ‘managed’. The context of application, in contrast, describes the total environment in which scientific problems arise, methodologies are developed, outcomes are disseminated, and uses are defined” (Nowotny et al., 2003: 186).
Doctoral level articulation in this context, such as the use of practitioner research to contribute to the academic knowledge-base is highly variable and potentially raises additional considerations.

Common elements appear to be emerging in PDs, for example there are a variety of approaches to knowledge production as articulated by Scott et al. (2004), often across disciplinary and occupational boundaries. Closely allied to this is the focus on individual practitioners and their experience as the starting point. The nature of support also changes from a supervisory one to an advisory one (Boud and Tennant, 2006) as the doctoral candidate becomes regarded more as an ‘autonomous self’ (Tennant, 2004) rather than a part-time student. Many programmes provide formal recognition of prior learning or allow existing work to be used as a basis for development of the individual programme and there has been a move to allow existing works to form the basis of the full doctorate (Chisholm and Davis, 2007), in the same way as the PhD or DLitt by publication.

2.1.2 The generic Doctorate of Professional Studies

The Doctor of Professional Studies (DProf or Prof D) is an example of what has been termed a practitioner doctorate (Lester, 2004), ‘third-generation’ doctorate (Stephenson et al., 2006), or work-based doctorate (Boud and Tennant, 2006; Costley and Lester, 2011). These generic DProf programmes are usually open to experienced professionals from all areas of work, including those from new and emerging professions or disciplines. Key features of the DProf are that it:

- has a practice-based rather than an institutional focus
- is taken by people in work, generally with significant professional experience and expertise
- is normally located in candidates’ work contexts rather than in an academic discipline or specific professional field (the person and their practice context form the starting-point for the doctoral work, rather than a discipline or profession)
- leads to professional or organisational change – often directly rather than through subsequent application of research findings
- produces an original contribution to practice and practical knowledge, which may or may not be formalised in academic publication
- can be concerned principally with the production of knowledge from practice for application back into practice (including transfer to other practice situations).

The DProf differs from the majority of professional doctorates in that it is not based in a specific profession or occupational area. The focus is defined by the candidate’s particular context and area of activity, which may sit within a particular profession or industry sector, or may be more individual in nature (Costley and Stephenson, 2008). The focus is transdisciplinary and transprofessional, and even where candidates have strong roots in a particular profession or occupation, the doctoral project is often broader in focus than would be the case in a profession-specific doctorate.

There is likely to be a role for a range of stakeholders in candidates’ work, for example in endorsing the work as a worthwhile contribution to the professional area. There are benefits from involvement with stakeholders such as organisations and professional groups, where candidates are affiliated and disseminate their work. These important links to professional spheres involve universities in working with professional groups and engaging with employers.

Usually, entrance requirements would include a master’s degree or equivalent experience in a professional-level role to be able to develop and benefit from a work-based programme at doctoral level. Candidates can come from a broad spectrum of roles that include senior managers in business and in the public and voluntary sectors. These include educators and academics, independent consultants in various fields, and established professionals in areas as diverse as engineering, financial services and information technology through to tourism, veterinary medicine, healthcare, counselling and the law. Some candidates will be working within an organisation that forms much of the context for their practice; for others the context will be linked more to a professional community of practice, an industry sector or their own enterprise. Examples of different DProf candidates and their work can be found in Lester (2011) and in the Professional Doctorates UK website (ProfDocsSIG, 2010).

The DProf is attractive to professionals who want to take forward research and development in the area in which they are working. It is often chosen over other forms of doctorate because of its work-based format and that it doesn’t include subject-specific modules: some candidates who have started or investigated PhDs and field-specific doctorates have commented positively that on the DProf they are regarded as full-time workers rather than part-time students, recognised as having expertise in their fields, and supported to decide and direct the focus of their programme. Candidates are also attracted by the challenge of engaging in a transdisciplinary programme that encourages them to focus beyond professional or disciplinary boundaries.

Some fairly representative reasons given by candidates for choosing the generic DProf, rather than for instance a profession-specific doctorate or a PhD, include looking at work issues outside the lens of a particular disciplinary framework, developing their own thinking
through doctoral study that focuses on making connections, multi and transdisciplinary approaches, moving away from a distinctive practice into a related practice, but taking the generic and transferable aspects of the work into the new domain. Here are some examples:

- ‘I wanted to do the generic programme because as an experienced practitioner I am already immersed in the way of looking at the world that… (my) profession offers and I wanted to get a different perspective on things. I wanted to do something different that would change my way of doing my work and my way of framing what I do’.

- ‘All the higher qualifications I have and the courses I attend concern my practice in (my sector). The generic (doctorate) offers an alternative which has allowed me to explore possibilities outside of the paradigm that is so familiar to me and that has really broadened my horizons and enabled me to see things differently’.

- ‘I’d previously embarked on a PhD but given up because of pressure of time from my work. I wanted a programme that was based in my work but also took me beyond the day-to-day pragmatism of being a consultant… to look at the wider issues, to comment on them and to disseminate’.

- One candidate who is a leading and highly-regarded practitioner feels he has exhausted the development possibilities within the bounds of his profession, and instead wants to critique his work and explore political and legal issues that he has encountered that prevent the latest innovations in his field being made available to the public.

- One candidate is a successful and innovative professional who wants to develop her thinking and change public attitudes in her field, leading her to choose a programme where she can extend her capability in the political and academic domains in order to increase her impact.

2.2 Design

2.2.1 Conceptual underpinnings

The DProf grew out of the transdisciplinary, negotiated model of Work-Based learning (WBL) that developed during the 1990s (Osborne et al., 1998). Underpinning this model of WBL are a set of developmental philosophies that can be drawn from the ideas of a wide range of thinkers: Habermas (1981), for example, construes the solution to technical problems as depending on interactive relationships that require the kind of learning that is often promoted by WBL practitioners as being conducive to successful team work and team learning. In formulating the concept of ‘communicative rationality’ Habermas asserted that interactive relationships at work involve processes of learning and arriving at mutual understanding. Dewey (1916, 1938) provides logic for action that is opposed to a theory/practice divide. Some of Dewey’s ideas are being used to develop positions directly relevant to WBL (Hager, 2001). Bourdieu’s social and cultural capital is recast by WBL as the imbalances in society that are reproduced through education are on one hand challenged through possibilities of allowing greater access to H.E. study, but on the other hand perpetuating a system that requires education to follow the needs of the national economy more closely.

More specific influences come from reflective practice (Schön, 1987), action learning (Revans, 1980), and action research (Lewin, 1946) and some of its variants such as soft systems methodology (Checkland, 1981) and participative enquiry (Reason and Rowan, 1981), as well as ethnographic and insider-researcher perspectives (Costley and Armsby, 2007).

Taking these principles to doctoral level leads to a type of programme that is candidate-driven, emerges from context-based concerns, effects professional development for the candidate, and uses an (action-oriented) research perspective to create practical development and change. In the terms of Kitchener and King (1981) this reflects the idea of epistemic maturity, where the practitioner is concerned with the most compelling and effective real-world ‘maps’ of situations and phenomena rather than with either purely theoretical or pragmatically simplified representations. At a practical level it will be concerned with working at and extending the leading edge of a professional or organisational field, with significant impacts in candidates’ profession or community of practice and in terms of their personal professional development. There is also an implication that practice moves beyond a problem-solving, fitness-for-purpose level to a point where it has adequacy for the ‘messes’ or complex problematic situations described by Ackoff (1974) or the ‘wicked problems’ addressed by Rittel and Webber (1994).

The DProf is centrally rooted in the concept of transdisciplinarity and ‘knowledge that is produced in practice situations with the purpose of application to practice; judged by its purposefulness and by social and ethical criteria. Transdisciplinarity and interprofessionalism imply taking a practical context as the starting-point and point of reference for the doctoral work, so that knowledge, insights and theories are developed out of a context and applied back into the same or parallel contexts.
Transdisciplinarity may draw on ideas from different disciplines, but it has a logic that is based on contextual rather than disciplinary boundaries. Scott et al. (2004) describe transdisciplinary knowledge as being concerned with adequacy for complex practical situations that resist analysis and routinisation; this kind of knowledge is reflected in expert practice and is essentially non-predictable, non-deterministic and not easily amenable to being codified.

2.2.2 Practitioner research

Candidates undertake postgraduate modules to planning a practitioner research project that involves e-learning, peer-support, links with the professional environment, mentoring and academic advising. Some universities embrace the use of accrediting learning at doctoral level completely to the extent of becoming a hybrid between a doctorate in Published works and a PD. The use of reflective practice is a key element in the introductory postgraduate elements. An example of the course design of a DProf is found in Costley and Stephenson (2008).

DProf projects employ a researching and reflexive approach to issues encountered by candidates in relation to their work, creating change either directly or through informing practice. DProf research projects start from the candidate and their context and make an original contribution to practice that is of general value, while also supporting the advanced professional development of the candidates and their development (or confirmation) as a leading member of a professional community of practice. While DProf projects often do result in conventional academic publications, their essential output is typically a product, publication, system or framework geared to change in the candidate’s organisation, community of practice or client that also has relevance in a wider professional or public context.

Some projects can be considered as ‘practice as research’, where real-life development or change is pursued in a researching and critically reflective way, both to guide implementation and to produce insights of value beyond the immediate project context. This type of activity is designed primarily to achieve practical results with wider knowledge-generation a secondary outcome; from a candidate’s viewpoint, it generally involves research into an activity that would take place anyway as the basis of the doctoral project.

Projects that can be described as research within practice are embedded in the practice situation so that they produce or experiment with changed practice as well as developing new, more widely-applicable insights. The main difference between this category and the one above is that the research activity is discrete and it is designed within or in addition to the ‘real-life’ project. Action research and soft systems approaches are again widely used, although phenomenological, ethnographic or occasionally quantitative approaches are also used.

2.3 Delivery and Best Practice

2.3.1 Supporting candidates

In general the position of PD candidates as senior professionals has pedagogical implications. Candidates are not generally, by profession lecturers or researchers and become peer as much with their own professional community as with the academic community. This has implications for publication, interpretation and scholarship. There is therefore a changing role of the supervisor in PDs towards a more facilitative approach often with a change of nomenclature to indicate the different relationships. Advisers need to deal with the multi- or trans-disciplinary and inter-professional position of the candidate in relation to support for the subject content of the work, the differing context inhabited by the candidate and the power relationships as candidates feel themselves more as full paying ‘customers’ to the university.

Work based learning generally requires a different set of educational practices than are appropriate to conventional research degrees, and can be said to employ a partnership-based and facilitative approach to higher education as opposed to a hierarchical delivery-based one. The role of the tutor becomes that of a facilitator and an expert in work-based learning and research; while academic staff will sometimes have subject expertise that is relevant to candidates, many DProf candidates will have greater expertise in their particular field of work than anyone in the university.

Academic programme advisers have a similar role to the Director of Studies and are responsible for guiding candidates through the whole of the programme; they will have a good knowledge of how the DProf works and the standards required, and be familiar with methodological approaches and issues relevant to practice-based doctoral work; they do not need to be experts in the same field as the candidate. They provide methodological advice to support the project and ensure its rigour.

Staff involved in supporting candidates for the DProf will generally need to have:

- An understanding of the work-based context of the doctorate, including the way that knowledge is constructed and used in practice-based settings, the restrictions and opportunities provided by the work environment, and the appropriate application of intellectual rigour to workplace projects.
• Skills as a learning consultant in relation to the workplace as well as the academic context, able to negotiate between the demands of the workplace, the candidate, and the University.

• A full understanding of the structure of the doctorate, including the application of accredited learning at levels 7 and 8 at some universities, knowledge of learning agreements and project proposals at doctoral level, and knowledge of how the doctorate fits into university, national and international systems and structures.

• Understanding of the concepts and principles underpinning the paradigm within which the doctorate has developed, as described above.

• Understanding of a transdisciplinary epistemology of practice in which knowledge is created and used rather than created and codified, including knowledge of reflective practice, programme planning, and practitioner-led and action-based research and development.

• Understanding of methodological principles relating to practice-based research, development and change, along with ethical issues that arise during their application.

• A pedagogical approach that respects candidates as independent and self-directed learners, and acknowledges their expertise and capability; advisers and consultants work alongside candidates rather than acting as teachers or supervisors.

A more detailed exposition of the role of the project adviser, as opposed to academic supervisor, is given in Boud and Costley (2007).

2.3.2 Research and Quality

The transdisciplinary nature of the DProf means that it sits outside the usual structure of academic departments and disciplines. Its practice-focus tends to result in a position that lies at the interface between Mode 1 and Mode 2 knowledge. These characteristics have implications for the way that assessment and quality assurance operate, and for the doctorate’s positioning in terms of research outcomes.

As a doctorate the DProf is assessed to the standards for level 8 in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications as interpreted through level 8 criteria (QAA, 2004). While it is at the same level as the PhD, the criteria to which it is assessed are equivalent but different. In particular the DProf often makes its original contribution to knowledge through practice, and its outputs are typically practically focused; DProf outputs can be potential policy documents, strategic documents, books, pieces of art, curriculum innovation, manuals and guidelines or collections of work with an accompanying critical contextual statement that includes methodological information about how the research project was undertaken. The development process, both of the project and of the candidate, will typically be more visible in the DProf both through the presence of early-stage assessed work (postgraduate training, reflective writing and for most candidates the recognition of some previously-completed relevant work), and through candidates being present in the narrative through reflection on their practice and development. There is more emphasis in the DProf on the ability of the output and its potential impact to effect change, meaning that it is assessed for its relevance and impact on practice as well as a piece of research. Academic staff and external examiners need to bear in mind both the rigour of the project as a piece of research-informed practice as well as contributing to the advancement of practice.

The positioning of the generic DProf in terms of contributing to an academic discipline is problematic. Each DProf project has an individual focus determined by the candidate, and it may have claims to contributing to the professional field that the candidate is working in, the process area that the project focuses on (e.g. change management, enterprise, education, communication), or more generally to the study of work and learning. DProf projects include a self-reflexive element contributing to this field regardless of their substantive focus, so they can be seen as sitting within the field of work-based learning as well as potentially producing publications that fit within other professional or disciplinary areas.

The practitioners who engage in the Dprof become researchers amongst their own colleagues bringing ethical implications of insider research and how practitioners negotiate research within a familiar context (Costley et al., 2010). As practitioner researchers, these professional people are insiders in an organisation and/or community where they have insider knowledge not only of systems but also of the individuals they designate, for the purpose of the research, as subjects. This creates for them a different ethical position, than say for researchers able to research and then leave the context of their research space. A university’s approach to ethical considerations for doctorate research is usually that they follow a set of principles and procedures that can assure the university that ethical issues have been considered. The principles are necessarily generic and particular situations are dealt with by ethics committees. The professional areas in which the practitioner-researcher undertakes the research, in some cases have their own codes of practice and may also have ethics committees (this is the case for health and social care workers in particular). A third dimension for practitioner-researchers is the status of both practitioner and researcher, working with and also drawing data from colleagues and friends and then remaining in the same context after the research has been completed.

2.4 Conclusions and Future Perspectives

The relative newness of PDs means that there are few full evaluations of their impact. PDs reflect the networked society engaging with employers and other stakeholders. For mature professionals the self-managed approach and support systems involving an advisory
rather than supervisory team has significant benefits in relation to both process and professional growth. Rather than the acquisition of additional specialist knowledge candidates tend to emphasise generic and sometimes intangible developments in their capability as primary benefits, as it is these aspects that generally have the greatest value in the longer term.

Candidates are highly motivated to make change and improvement to work situations. The possibilities of DProf research can have a significant influence on practice in that the project can have an immediate and direct impact and this can to some extent meet the requirement of HEFCE to make a social and economic impact arising from research.

There are implications for the university in terms of a need for change in structures and assumptions that better meet the needs of innovative doctoral programmes.

2.5 Bibliography


3 Some Philosophical Issues Raised by the Current Development of the Doctor of Education in the UK

3.1 Context

Early Reports by Lunt (2002) and Powell and Long (2005) placed a spotlight on the rapid growth of the EdD or Doctor of Education award in the UK, reflecting also a change of focus from a given subject or discipline to that of practice itself. Indeed, such developments still remain evident. Of the 54 higher education institutions (HEIs) that are currently exercising their awarding powers for EdDs in the UK, at present one is no longer recruiting, and two of them remain in the process of gaining approval for their programmes. There has also been an obvious growth in the range of 19 distinct titles that are presently offered, reflecting a multiplicity of ways of organising the Doctor of Education award in support of particular communities and interests of individual students. In parallel with such developments there has also been a growth in full-time provision within the EdD from virtually none in 2002 to 16 HEIs offering the EdD in 2010; this being largely reflective of its growing attraction to non-UK based students wishing to develop their practices. Moreover, despite such continued growth, many of the features of EdD programmes in terms of range, the characteristics of the ‘participants’, and the styles of ‘teaching and assessment’ have remained closely aligned to those identified by Lunt (2002). At issue here are some of the implications of the change of focus to practice. As Lee and Boud (2009:13) put it, it is ‘a shift in institutional attention to the practices involved in doing doctoral work and producing doctoral graduates, rather than merely to the production of research outputs’.

Certainly the issue of ‘practice’ was fore-grounded in an analysis by Scott et al. (2004:113-125) of the motivations of professional doctorate students for ‘undertaking’ a range of different ‘trajectories’. Moreover, in drawing on this study, Burgess and Wellington (2010) also based their analysis of the possible impact of the professional doctorate on the motivations of students; impact being conceived either as a ‘product’ or ‘the process of doing’ the doctorate.

However, the language of practice may not be completely adequate here: something much bigger, related to our very Being, is at stake. For example, in reflecting on their experience of the EdD programme, students at Bristol considered that it had helped them to develop a deep understanding of real life professional issues. Moreover, whilst centring their earlier analysis in practice, Wellington and Sikes (2006) ‘A Doctorate in a Tight Compartment’, also opens further questions concerning the impact of the EdD at the University of Sheffield on the ‘lives of students’. Also, in addition to the obvious forms of methodologically and epistemologically grounded practices and references to ‘professional practice’ or ‘educational practice’, the HEI websites representing various EdD programmes also identify ‘professional contexts’ and ‘professional interests’, as well as in some instances projecting the binary separation of ‘practice’ from ‘theory’ or from ‘philosophy’. Indeed, in attempting to understand such practices located in the work place, at a recent conference on work-based learning held in Middlesbrough in July 2010, Boud, alerted his audience to what he called their ‘missing dimensions’ (Flint and Jones, 2011). Boud thus opened thought ‘not on some theory’ of practice ‘that is somehow separated from us’, but on ways of ‘being’ and of ‘living out our lives in the complex languages we create for ourselves’.

In examining the relationship with the language of the Doctor of Education, and of doctoral education more generally, and in drawing on philosophical discourse to address such issues, the intention is to open debate within such ‘wider horizons’. Spinosa et al. (1997: 26) identify this move as one of ‘reconfiguration’, which is directed towards changing what they identify as the ‘disclosive space’ (ibid: 24) in which doctoral education is constituted. The intention here is to sensitise debate to disclosure of the forms of practices of doctoral education that currently deal not just with things, but more importantly with practices.

2. East London
3. Edge Hill and Oxford Brookes
5. This is reported on their website: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/education/students/docstradal/edd/
6. Professor of Adult Education and Associate Dean of Research in the Faculty of Education, University of Technology, Sydney
7. Debate about the ways in which ‘physical and virtual’ space ‘shapes learning and teaching experience’ in Higher Education has also been opened by Lambert (2007), and more specifically some of the issues arising in professional doctorate research from the coded spaces in language has been explored in a number of related papers (Flint and Barnard, 2010; Flint et al., 2009 a, b).
In the spirit of Boud’s implicit challenge, this brief Report on the Doctor of Education is therefore a preliminary exploration of the ways of Being and the complex language that we have created for ourselves in framing programmes of study in the names given to both the ‘Doctor of Education’ and the much broader horizon of ‘doctoral education’ per se. In being reflexive about the language that constitutes the current home for ‘doctoral education’, the approach taken is necessarily deconstructive.

The Doctor of Education already has a long history, marked by obvious ‘discontinuity’ and the ‘contingency’ of episodes (Foucault, 2002:13, 84). While the first ‘Doctor of Education’ programme was at Harvard in 1921 (Lunt, 2002: 4), it was seventy years later that the first EdD programme in Bristol was implemented in 1992 (Lunt, 1992:1). The intention in this chapter is to open further debate about the development of ‘doctoral education’ as a ‘history making activity’, thus opening the possibility of changing both the ‘coordination of everyday practices’ involving the EdD and the language in which the activities of doctoral education are constituted. Moreover, as educational activities that disclose things, people and selves, they also open questions about the style or the names given to such practices in the language in which they are variously constituted (Spinosa et al., 1997: 1-33).

Perhaps the most obvious feature of the current style of language in which the EdD programmes are variously represented on HEI websites is that of its Cartesian structure. In the seventeenth century, in the context of the triumphs of science in the works of Newton and Galileo, and the challenges laid down by Bacon in the Great Instauration, it was hardly surprising that the philosophies of Descartes and Locke had laid emphasis on ‘detachment’, encouraging people to be ‘objective’, in this case about the development of practices. Much of our language remains inscribed by such Cartesian philosophy. We now call it modernism. For example, within the arena of ‘changing practices of doctoral education’, what Boud and Lee (2009: 13) identify as practices ‘in a theoretical sense’ are drawn from Schatzki (2001:2) to embody ‘materially mediated arrays of human activities centrally organised around shared practical understanding’. Indeed, with their language tacitly informed by such philosophical and empirical groundings, and in their consideration of ‘framing’ doctoral education as practice, Lee and Boud (2009:12; emphasis added) view ‘practice’ as ‘a primary building block of the social’. Again, the underlying Cartesian structure of the tradition out of which EdD programmes of study are represented on the websites of the HEIs concerned, is reflected in the language, of ‘core and optional modules’, of various forms of ‘unit’, and of ‘parts’.

Not surprisingly, it is clear that a number of hierarchical structures apparent in the representation of EdD programmes emerge from the Cartesian notion that such forms of doctoral education can be controlled by those who understand its basic features. Such structuring is reflected in the obvious symbolism of ‘stages’, ‘phases’ and ‘levels’, and it is also apparent in the structural distinction made by some programmes between ‘taught’ and ‘research’ modules, together with the modalities of assessment used and the length of the final thesis. The significant range of the latter, from 30 000 – 80 000 words, reflects the variance in the ways of organising assessment within Doctor of Education programmes.

At the heart of such practices, according to the claim made by Lee and Boud (2009: 14), is to be found the ‘knowledgeable subject’. Although any possible telos for such a subject, in terms of an object of knowledge generated through research has already been thrown into question. The various identities such a subject may assume all connote some form of on-going temporal movement, including, ‘knowledge workers’ (Tennant, 2004;Usher, 2002), ‘self-managing learners’ (Stephenson et al., 2006), ‘entrepreneurs’ (Spinosa et al., 1997), carers within ‘an ethic of care’ (Gibbs and Costley, 2006) and so on. Paradoxically, in the ahistorical Cartesian worldview of the subject, the on-going temporal movement suggested by these identities not only throws into question the telos of any final object, but also points to the possibilities of making history.

Indeed, while the notion of neat building blocks of social practice or any other epistemological structure, may continue to provide something of an ideological lure, in fact, they prove to be without foundation: of necessity, there is always a remainder in any form of

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8. The horizon in which the language of the ‘framing’ is constituted will also be significantly enhanced later in this Report by reference to Heidegger’s (1977, 1996) understanding of this term. The language of ‘framing’ is borrowed from Stambaugh’s (1992: 31-34) translation of Heidegger’s (1977, 1996) understanding of technological framing (das Ge-stell). It greatly extends and reconfigures Boud and Lee’s (2009) understandings of the same term.

9. The term is borrowed from Michel Foucault’s (2002) ‘Archaeology of Knowledge’ in which Foucault alerts his readers to its converse, ‘continuous history’, as ‘the indispensable correlative of the founding function of the subject – in the form of historical consciousness – (that) will once again be able to appropriate, to bring under its sway, all those things that are kept at a distance by difference, and find them in what might be called his abode’ (ibid: 13).

10. In fact Schatzki’s (2001) writing is based on readings of Wittgenstein, who makes no reference to theory himself in his own writings.

11. Framing used here – note re change of meaning in later use derived from Heidegger

12. Bath and Nottingham

13. Huddersfield, Anglia Ruskin, Keele, Lincoln, Manchester Metropolitan and Stirling

14. Nottingham; Liverpool; Hope; London, Metropolitan; and Sheffield

15. Aberdeen, Anglia Ruskin, East London, Newcastle, Nottingham Trent and Roehampton

16. Durham, Edinburgh, Nottingham, Sheffield Hallam, Stirling and Sussex

17. Wales, University of Bangor

18. Belfast, Queens University; Durham, East London, Exeter, Glasgow, Gloucester, Huddersfield, Keele, King’s College, London; Leeds, Leeds Metropolitan, Leicester, Newcastle, Sheffield Hallam, Stirling
knowledge that stands beyond our capacity to know and to control (Peim and Flint, 2011, Flint, 2010). Such structural incapacity, which hitherto has remained largely a tacit force for developing understandings of practice (Flint, 2011), then places its own particular burden on the design of both doctoral education and EdD programmes. This is particularly the case when HEIs take seriously the locus of research for professional doctorate students as practice at the workplace, rather than historically holding onto Cartesian forms of disciplinary knowledge, whose locus for development has been the university. At issue here continues to remain the very language in which doctoral education and EdD programmes are constituted.

3.2 Design

The language of a design for doctoral education suggests some form of schema that is intended for action in practice. The inspiration for the argument developed in this section came from a preliminary discussion of the findings for this Report with a group of EdD programme leaders in the UK, convened by Burgess at the University of Leicester in November 2010. Provisionally, the group were presented with a proposed schema for the design of EdD programmes in the UK, which held that HEIs could be divided into three broad categories, according to whether their programmes were ‘first’, ‘second’ or ‘third generation’ professional doctorates. In fact, such a possible schema was opened to question by the group, who indicated that in their experience curriculum design was a matter negotiated with each individual within the framing of programmes of study, and was continually open to change during the entire course of each individual programme. What follows is a brief deconstructive examination of this standpoint, illuminating once more, as with the modernist language considered earlier, that the possibility of history making in and through doctoral education is always there, but still awaits a more complete articulation.

The now familiar notions of ‘first’ and ‘second generation’ professional doctorate programmes arose from Seddon’s (2000) and Maxwell’s (2003) studies in Australia. The term ‘third generation’ was subsequently introduced the following year in an Anglo-Australian paper on the ‘organisational development’ of professional doctorates, which fore-grounded the management of ‘study’ by ‘learners themselves’ (Stephenson et al., 2004). The EdD programme leaders’ deconstructions of these categories began to articulate a particular style that informed their work with Doctor of Education students, which provisionally appeared to be negotiated and individualised.

In Maxwell’s paper (2003) the precise location for the temporal distinction between first and second generation had been the organisation of the HEI, which in terms of the curriculum was considered to mark the point of intersection of three institutions, namely, those of ‘the university, the candidate’s profession and the work-site of the research’ (ibid: 285) that were seen to meet in ‘specific and local ways’. In the UK a number of HEIs now reflect such intentions referring to ‘everyday practice’ and ‘professional contexts’19. Despite the caveats, however, in the expropriation of such discourse has arisen ‘meta-narratives’ of ‘first and second generation professional doctorates’, whose precise locus is that represented by the structure of ‘programmes of study’. On this reading, therefore, the discourse on ‘first and second generation professional doctorates’ remains located within the ‘disclosive space’20 constituted by a Cartesian worldview: it claims to promulgate understandings about that object and subject identified and differentiated as two distinct structural forms of ‘organisation’ for EdD programmes.

Similarly, although ‘the study of the Middlesex University (UK) professional doctorate’ (Stephenson et al., 2004) was based on ‘case studies’ of the experiences of ten ‘learners themselves’ (ibid: 2, emphasis as in the original) it also theorised a meta-narrative of a ‘third generation of professional doctorates’ (ibid: 1; emphasis added). In its aim of making a ‘contribution to the development of theories about work-based learning and personal, professional and organisational development’ (ibid: 2), it too, located itself within the Cartesian tradition. The reason for the meta-narrative of theory was the obvious need for ‘control’ over the issues of ‘content, research method, context, assessment, and partnership between university and profession’, which is theorised to be in the hands of the ‘participant within a generic framework of procedures and support offered by the university’ (ibid: 1). In terms of epistemology, ‘its generic form’ is further theorised to have ‘application to any field’ based on the predicate of ‘a form of trans-disciplinarity’, which was seen to have ‘evolved and researched within the community’ over the last twenty years (Costley, 2000; Stephenson et al., 2004:1), although there remain many sceptics.

Unintentionally, in remaining in the Cartesian tradition, however, both this emerging discourse of third generation professional doctorates, and indeed Maxwell’s discourse concerning first and second generation of such studies tend to dissipulate and cut off the very possibility of history making by candidates in and through doctoral education, to which the argument will return in the next section.

Rather than expressing ‘incredulity’ towards such ‘meta-narratives’21, in locating themselves in forms of postmodern account, the leaders of a number of EdD programmes in the UK at the meeting in Leicester last year, simply understood their work with individual students as ‘improvisational’ within the structural framing of their own particular programmes. For example, in one organisation, at one extreme,

19. Dundee, East Anglia, Exeter, Edinburgh, the Institute of Education, Keele, King’s College, Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan, Nottingham Trent, Plymouth, Sheffield, Stirling, Sussex, University College, Chester, Warwick, Wolverhampton
20. Phrase borrowed from Spinosa et al. (1997: 22)
one of the participants made the following observations: ‘In working with one of my students I have to be almost instrumentally directive. I am conscious that at the moment much of my observation may be too didactic’. In another strongly contrasting case, in the same organisation, in working with another student it was pointed out by the same participant that ‘all that is required are some pointers to reading and occasional meetings in which I am able to give encouraging feedback about the progress made’. Their anecdotes had suggested that the on-going work of students could be understood as a matter of ‘negotiation’ in ‘being in the flow of events’ (Spinoza et al., 1997: 10). As these observations, and the title of Boud and Lee’s (2009) book, ‘Changing Practices of Doctoral Education’ suggests, the self that emerges in such post-modern narratives is one that embraces change as an enduring good.

Of the difficulties that any such postmodern predilection in language carries with it, however, perhaps most significant for this argument is the fact again that such a tendency purports to mark the ending of history. Moreover, in considering our relationship with language, the design of EdD programmes that are intended for action in practice, whether ontologically grounded in some form of Cartesian or post-modern form of intentionality, is found to be always at risk of being caught up in the ‘framing’ (Flint, 2011a; Peim and Flint, 2009). It opens questions concerning what lays concealed beneath the trompe l’oeil of change as an enduring good. In the ‘framing’, as conceived by Heidegger (1977, 1996) as only one form of revealing, our language and ways of being are always in danger of being levelled-down, circumscribed, delimited and inscribed by means–ends structures and subject-object relations in accord with the principle of reason: ‘nothing is without reason’ (Peim and Flint, 2009; Flint, 2011 a,b,c). In such framing everything in practice – all possible beings, including ourselves and our language – becomes a resource, which is ‘available for use’22, ‘merely to be optimally ordered and efficiently disposed of in a dangerous spiral of ‘constant overcoming’ (Thomson, 2000: 306; Flint, 2011a,b,c). In fact, ‘science as research’ in both its ‘disciplinary’ and ‘trans-disciplinary’ registers, which has remained until now the locus for doctoral education, is always aligned with the ‘will-to-power’ in the production of knowledge and the ‘principle of assessment’ used to ground such studies (Peim and Flint, 2009). Counter-intuitively and paradoxically, here is to be found much of the engine of such ‘framing’, re-presented in the calculus of ‘performativity’ (Flint, 2011d). An indicator of some of its effects on the design of EdD programmes can be found in what McWilliam’s (2009: 189) calls ‘timeliness’ in which doctoral education is now staged ‘in discrete units of time’ that signal ‘what is to be done when, how and by whom’. Another indicator is her exploration of ‘risk’ and ‘audit’ cultures mediating doctoral education (ibid: 191-199). The latter raises the issue of the governance and delivery of best practice in accord with benchmarks of quality.

3.3 Delivery and Best Practice

A particularly obvious feature of the literature concerning a ‘benchmark system’ for the ‘quality’ of doctoral education, which may provide grounds for sustaining change in Europe (Snyder, 2007), or frameworks for evaluating the doctoral curriculum in Australia (Gilbert, 2004), and, indeed, the associated emerging ‘climate’ of ‘accountability’ in the US and Europe, which tends to foreground assessment in doctoral education (Brooks and Heiland, 2007), is that in such framing it has been HEIs that have continued to assume the central organising locus for doctoral education. Moreover, in turning to the literature on the Doctor of Education award (Wellington et al., 2005), which illuminates at least some of the multiple layers of complexity that have begun to emerge in ‘approaching research as lived experience’ (ibid: 112-133) and, indeed, in the experience of ‘writing’ and producing what is valued in the ‘thesis’ (ibid: 165-173) and in ‘presenting’ such work at the Viva (ibid: 179-197), it is apparent that the language remains dominated by the Higher Education academy. Despite understandings of the tensions and challenges of innovation within doctoral education in Canada (Maheu, 2008) and the known dangers of accountability driven systems that have been seen to be devastating for development in schools (Schlechty, 2001; Peim and Flint, 2009), such insights tend to have remain locked within discourses concerned almost exclusively with academic work.

In reading the literature, it was a genuine shock to find that the interests of a number of stakeholders in doctoral education at the workplace, including employers, sponsoring agencies, businesses, commercial and public forms of organisation, including local authorities in education, are almost impossible to find. In Cartesian understandings of doctoral education as the highest forms of education possible, reflected in the symbolism of the identity, ‘doctor’, in the context of both professional doctorate and doctor of philosophy awards, such forms of education are considered to constitute an enduring good for society. Moreover, the implicit theological standpoint has remained almost beyond question. Although the underlying metaphysics is rarely made explicit, the theology arises, as Thomson (2000) has suggested, when the highest being, in this case emerging out of education through doctoral research, ‘grounds in the sense of founding beings and establishing’ doctoral research ‘as the source from which beings issue and by which they are justified’ (ibid: 304).

Similarly, Thomson’s argument suggests that by ‘codifying and disseminating an understanding of what beings are’, through research-based doctoral forms of education, the underlying ‘metaphysics’ involved provides our own particular ‘historical epoch of intelligibility with its ontological bedrock’ (ibid: 298). Doctoral education that is embodied in a foundational understanding of being as presence, therefore, ‘grounds in the sense of giving grounds to beings’ mainly through the exigencies of the knowledge economy and epistemology. Being deconstructive and sensitising readers to the ontotheological home of language in which doctoral education is currently constituted, therefore, opens questions and the possibility of debate concerning the levelling down of ‘disclosive space’ in the framing,

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22. Heidegger (1977: 17) uses the term, Bestand, which is translated as ‘standing reserve’
which is always in danger of ‘reducing all intelligibility’ in the name of ‘doctoral research’ to that ‘bivalent, programmable ‘information’ that can be ‘stockpiled’ (Heidegger, 1998: 139-41; Thomson 2000: 306), and open to commodification.

Deconstruction, as one way of keeping alive the heritage of doctoral education, suggested by Derrida, recognises that our ‘desire to master something that was formerly present’ is ‘destined to fail’. Being as presence has always been an illusion; being is only ever a trace. Paradoxically, our ontotheologically structured language of doctoral education, which only ever leaves ‘cinders or ashes or traces of a disintegrated past’ (Kavanagh and Dooley, 2007: 7), is always in danger of becoming a driving force for further cybernetic forms of research constituted in the framing (Flint, 2011a).

3.4 Concluding Remarks

The object of this chapter, then, has been to sensitise readers to the metaphysical ontotheological language that is home to both the EdD and doctoral education and to begin to open debate regarding some of the implications of the ‘framing’ in which many forms of practice are currently being developed. If it has sensitised readers to the form of the ‘disclosive space’ in which the EdD and doctoral research are currently constituted, it might ironically be regarded as ‘history making’ in Spinoza and his colleagues’ (1997) understanding of the term. Similarly, in sensing from the chapter that there is a danger of losing something in doctoral education from the ontotheology of the framing in the way it serves communities, it also points to the possibility of the retrieval of something lost, which is another way of making history.

More importantly and concretely, in the Derridean sense of keeping alive the heritage, the dissemination of the titles of research undertaken within EdD programmes, which is currently presented in accord with academic tradition, carries with it the challenge of ‘reconfiguring’ discourses in ways which alert the multiplicity of different agencies in the workplace to their own history making practices. Currently such debate is being opened and shaped within the ‘Special Interest Group for Practice focused Doctoral Research’23.

Moreover, the possibilities of any such history making practices are not confined to the UK. HEIs already have networks of Higher Education based on the EdD in Hong Kong24, the TESOL Centre in Dubai, the University of Hong Kong and Fontys OSO in Tilburg (the Netherlands), respectively. In addition Durham University and the Institute of Education offer ‘intensive summer schools’ for professional doctorate students from a range of different countries around the globe and three other universities in the UK are also active in marketing the EdD to international students25.

Hence, in concert with Castells’ (2000) understanding of ‘The Rise of the Network Society’, it has been suggested that the technological framing of EdD programmes and of doctoral education in its relationship with Higher Education, the workplace, and their aligned national and global networks continues to extend possibilities of ‘technological know-how’ as a basis for ‘productivity and competitiveness’ (ibid: 502). However, it has been argued that the possibilities of ‘making history’ in the EdD and doctoral education are not matters of attaining ‘mastery’ through such institutions in our society, as suggested by Castells (2000: 13). Rather, in this deconstructive chapter the possibility of ‘making history’ through the development of the Doctor of Education and doctoral education has been viewed as a matter of sensitising ourselves to the ‘disclosive space’ in which such programmes are constituted. For example, in being reflexive about the space produced for doctoral education and extending the horizons in which understandings of the ‘framing’ of practice and the language of practice can be understood.

More importantly, if readers wish to continue to develop the Doctor of Education award, it has also been suggested that such history making is about the possibility of reconfiguring doctoral education at the workplace. The moves towards second and third generation structures for professional doctorates and the debate that is opening in the Special Interest Group, SIG2 for practice focused research, all point towards such possibilities. In practice, however, that may prove to be more a matter of what comes to shore in the future that is always unknowable, Derrida’s ‘monstrous arrivant’27, which is quite distinct, of course, from the programmable tomorrow that appears to have become part of the warp and weft of our doctoral programmes.

23. The SIG can be found at http://www.professionaldoctorates.org/ (accessed on 21st December, 2010). Professor Costley, who is vice-chair of the SIG, has already set up a meetings to discuss this issue with key agents in the field.
24. In Hong Kong alone seven HEI’s are currently running EdD programmes, Bristol collaborates with City University, Hong Kong; Durham, Leicester and Nottingham work with the University of Hong Kong; the University of Technology, Sydney works with Hong Kong Management Association; the University of Western Australia bases its operation in Hong Kong Baptist University, and along with these Nottingham Trent is currently in negotiations with Hong Kong College of Technology.
25. Hull, Lincoln and Newcastle-upon-Tyne
26. The Special Interest Group for Practice-led Doctoral Research was first set up following the First International Conference on Professional Doctorates hosted by the UKCGE and Middlesex University at Cavendish Centre, London, 9 – 10th November, 2009.
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4 The Engineering Doctorate

4.1 Context

The Engineering Doctorate (EngD) came into being because the products of traditional post-graduate research programmes in general, were regarded by companies in engineering and manufacturing as lacking business awareness and the transferable skills training so successfully championed some years later by Roberts (2002). The PhD had been widely criticised in these industries for its narrow focus and failure to adequately prepare graduates for an industrial career; a view supported by Government and expressed at the time in the 1993 White Paper ‘Realising our Potential’ (OST, 1993). The impetus to set-up the EngD came primarily from a Science and Engineering Research Council (SERC) commissioned Report by Dr. John Parnaby of Lucas Industries (SERC, 1990), which on thorough analysis of UK academia and industry, and with reference also to best practice at the time in the USA, Japan and Germany, concluded that the engineering and manufacturing ‘market’ required individuals who combine business awareness and practicality with the critical and analytical abilities of a doctorate level researcher (Nealley et al., 2002).

4.1.1 Development of the EngD

Established in 1992 by the Science and Engineering Research Council (SERC), predecessor to the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), it was conceived as a high quality, broad-based doctoral research degree with a taught component which would enable ambitious early-career individuals and recent graduates to achieve a ‘fast-track’ progression to senior management positions in industry. The programme offered higher stipends than a traditional PhD and required a minimum of 70% of time to be spent on a project with the sponsor company. EngD students are commonly called Research Engineers (REs) in recognition of the special nature of the training.

The first EngD Centres were established at Warwick, UMIST and Swansea/Cardiff in 1992, followed in 1993 by two further Centres (Cranfield and Surrey/Brunel). In total, 22 EngD Centres were created, based at 14 universities. By the time of the EPSRC review of 2007, EPSRC data showed that some 1230 REs had enrolled on the programme, sponsored by over 510 companies across a range of research areas and industry sectors. Some companies had sponsored at least six REs, which EPSRC (2007) noted as an indication of ‘repeat business’ and thus a clear indication of the success of the EngD.

4.1.2 EPSRC funding arrangements

The EngD has undergone a number of changes in the way that it is funded by EPSRC since its inception. The initial mechanism of funding individual studentships were replaced by block grants (providing institutions with greater flexibility), which in turn were replaced by a Collaborative Training Award (CTA) which brought together a number of schemes, including the EngD and some MSc’s, into a single account held at university level. The EngD programme constituted a significant proportion of EPSRC’s CTA portfolio at around £70m, approximately 30% of the £216m total in 2004 (EPSRC, 2007).

Following a significant review of the EngD in 2007, and as part of a wider change in approach by EPSRC to the support of doctoral training, the EngD was absorbed into a new scheme of Industrial Doctorate Centres (IDCs), which can incorporate a number of different modes of doctoral training, including PhDs, the EngD and other professional doctorates. In all, there are currently 18 IDCs, including a number of new EngD Centres, plus some existing Centres which have been integrated into an IDC with a broader overall research theme (EPSRC, 2010). However, some universities have opted to build their EngD programmes into a Doctoral Training Centre, DTC, rather than an IDC. This approach reflects the deep concern held by some EngD centres that the EngD is still perceived as being a lesser doctoral degree than the PhD. It could be argued however, that this approach risks obscuring and even limiting the positive benefits of the EngD; providing well-rounded and integrated research and skills training, thereby preparing REs for a career in industry.

4.1.3 Scope of the EngD

All EngD programmes are themed and range from steel technology, high performance engineering metals and manufacturing systems engineering to transport infrastructure, environmental technology, nuclear engineering and photonics technology (EPSRC 2007). As a result of the 2007 Review, this range has widened to include large-scale complex IT systems, efficient fossil energy technologies, technologies for sustainable built environments and digital entertainment.
While originally envisioned as a vehicle for recent graduates or early career professionals, the EngD has in reality enjoyed a much wider appeal and has been found to be suitable for individuals of all ages and career stages. Whilst still a full-time programme (only one instance has been found of part-time study being offered), REs have some flexibility in where they study. Many spend the majority of their time based in the sponsoring company, generally only attending university for the taught components, progress reviews and meetings with supervisors. This is particularly the case where the RE is employed by the sponsoring company. However, there are also REs who conduct a significant proportion of their research at university, with the agreement of the sponsoring company and where it is practical to do so.

4.2 Design

EPSRC intended that the EngD programme would provide a research and training programme achieved through partnerships between academia and industry, with the following objectives (EPSRC, 2007):

- provide Research Engineers with experience of rigorous, leading edge research in the business context
- develop competencies which equip Research Engineers for a range of roles in industry
- provide a mechanism and framework for high quality collaboration between academic groups and a range of companies
- contribute to the body of knowledge on a particular technical discipline, industrial sector or multidisciplinary theme

The professional development of the RE is an important component of the training, and for this the EngD takes as its base the principles developed in the Parnaby Report (SERC, 1990) which states that the holder of an EngD should demonstrate competence in the following areas.

- Expert knowledge of an engineering area
- Appreciation of industrial engineering and development culture
- Project and programme management skills
- Teamwork and leadership skills
- Oral and written, technical and non-technical communication
- Technical organisational skills
- Financial engineering project planning and control
- The ability to apply knowledge to new and unusual situations
- The ability to seek optimal, viable solutions to multi-faceted engineering problems and to search out relevant information sources
- The evaluation of the environmental impact of industry and how to minimise it

These ‘EngD competences’ thus provide the basic foundations for the assessment of an RE’s professional development, though inevitably Centres have interpreted and modified them in a manner that best fits the context of their particular theme and changes in the landscape of engineering research. The competences can be demonstrated through either the taught component of the work or through the research, and often through a combination of both.

4.2.1 The taught component

The taught component typically represents about 25% of the RE’s time and is designed to perform a number of functions – the development of specific technical skills and knowledge needed to support the RE’s research, formal training in research methods and professional development, including such generic transferable skills as project management, team-building and leadership. The taught component is usually modular and drawn largely from an existing MSc, MBA or Diploma course, with each module having a duration of one week with an assignment to be completed at the end. In some cases, training in the more generic transferable skills and research methods elements may be provided through separate courses run by the department, the wider university or accessed through professional bodies.

Despite the taught component and an emphasis on learning outcomes, the EngD is essentially a research degree and REs are required to achieve the same standards of academic rigour and quality as in a PhD. As such, whilst minor shortcomings in the course work may be tolerated, weaknesses in the research are not (UKCGE, 2002). However, the EngD does differ fundamentally from the traditional PhD in the objective of the research effort. Whilst a PhD candidate must demonstrate a significant contribution to knowledge in their chosen field, the objective of the EngD candidate is to demonstration innovation in the application of knowledge or a significant contribution to practice. Thus, there is greater emphasis on the value or impact of the research outcomes from an industrial/business perspective.

4.2.2 The research component

The research component typically accounts for 75% of the RE’s time. The research must be industrially relevant and may be structured around one, large project or a number of smaller projects connected by a particular theme. The nature of the EngD programme demands
a high degree of flexibility in the structure of the research component, particular where more than one project is undertaken. Submission of the work is often therefore in the mode of ‘thesis by portfolio’ rather than ‘thesis by dissertation’. The considerable variation in approach to presenting the research work is discussed in detail in Section 4.3.

Since the aim of the EngD is to achieve industrially relevant research, REs are assigned an industrial as well as an academic supervisor. The industrial supervisor provides an essential ‘reality check’ on the work of the RE, and ensures that the RE’s research efforts are properly resourced and supported within the sponsor company. Some Centres prefer the term ‘mentor’ to ‘supervisor’, to better reflect the reality that an RE, with the potential to rise quickly to a senior management position, should also be expected to rapidly achieve expertise in their research and expect stimulated debate and discussion with their mentors, and not simply guidance as implied by the term ‘supervisor’.

4.3 Delivery and Best Practice

Whilst the basic structure of the EngD programme across Centres is broadly consistent, in order to adhere to EPSRC’s original vision and criteria, considerable variation exists at the detailed level. The taught component for example, varies markedly in how it is delivered. Some Centres employ a highly structured approach, with REs required to achieve a set number of taught courses/modules per year or by key stages in the four-year registration. Some advocate completing most or all of the taught components within the first two years, whilst others prefer to distribute them across all four years. In some cases, the first few months, or even up to the first year, will be dedicated to initial training in research methods and technical coursework, with the research project starting only on completion of this part of the taught component. The degree of variation in this respect suggests that there is no clear ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ approach, and that different solutions may be appropriate to particular themes or for more or less technical fields.

Similarly with the research component, there is considerable variation in the mode of delivery. As was indicated earlier, the nature of the EngD requires greater flexibility in how the research is presented and it is common (though not universal) to employ a portfolio approach instead of, or as an alternative to, the traditional ‘thesis by dissertation’. The ‘thesis by portfolio’ approach presents the research as a (structured) collection of documents, but there is also marked variation in what constitutes a portfolio. The portfolio approach is especially well suited to research done through a number of related projects rather than one large one. Equally however, presenting a single project as a series of documents relating to key stages or aspects of the work enables the RE to write up the work as each stage is completed. The approach is therefore not exclusive to the multiple project route.

The ethos of ‘writing up as you go’ that the portfolio approach facilitates, encourages on-going development of the REs writing skills, increases the likelihood of on-time completion and enables the RE to better cope with inevitable life changes, e.g., a promotion or job change for REs doing the EngD as an employee with the sponsor company. A consequence of the wider appeal of the EngD to all ages and career stages is that inevitably many REs begin the EngD with commitments and families, and may already hold a position of considerable responsibility at the sponsor company. A further advantage to this approach is that each submission to the portfolio represents a deliverable which promotes ‘buy-in’ from the sponsor company.

4.3.1 Variations in the thesis by portfolio approach

The main area of variation with respect to the portfolio approach is in what makes up the portfolio. In a number of cases, the approach is a combination of dissertation and portfolio, i.e., the main body of the research is presented as a ‘thesis by dissertation’, the length of which varies from the equivalent of a PhD thesis to something significantly shorter, but it is accompanied by a variety of other documents. These documents may include a first year research outline, annual progress reports, assignments and published papers. Some Centres stipulate that the RE should publish a minimum number of research publications during registration. In some cases, Centres require some form of transfer document or ‘qualifying thesis’ as a condition of continuing beyond a certain point.

In other cases, the portfolio approach is used more flexibly to address issues important to industrial sponsors. The degree of industrial involvement in the EngD can be problematic with respect to exposing commercially sensitive information to public scrutiny. One approach that has been adopted is that only one summative document from the portfolio is placed in the public domain (aside from any published papers the RE produces) after examination. This document is in essence a mini-thesis, encapsulating the major aspects and outcomes of the research, but with any sensitive information omitted. Only the examiners and the mentors (supervisors) have access to the full portfolio. An EngD portfolio may also include a ‘personal profile’ or reflective document, which provides an opportunity for the RE to reflect on their personal and professional development during the programme and to explicitly demonstrate the achievement of the ‘EngD competences’. The remainder of the portfolio typically contains documents addressing specific aspects of the research work, which together provide a structured and complete exposition of the research, plus assignments and published papers.
4.3.2 Assessing the EngD

The assessment of Professional Doctorates in general has been the subject of on-going debate for some time. The UK Council for Graduate Education in its earlier Report on Professional Doctorates (UKCGE, 2002) drew particular attention to the fact that they are generally assessed in a fairly conventional fashion, despite recognition that the aims and purposes of these programmes differ considerably from that of the PhD. The national qualifications framework (NQF) provided by the QAA provides the baseline requirements for the attainment of doctorate level, i.e., ‘doctorateness’, and there are valid arguments for a broadening of the assessment criteria to take account of the professional nature of these newer doctorates (Bourner et al., 2001). The EngD has made some progress toward this goal. For example, it is common practice for the examination of an EngD candidate to comprise a panel of three examiners – an internal academic, an external academic and an industrial examiner. The role of the industrial examiner is to ensure that the industrial relevance and appropriateness of the research for industry purposes is considered, as well as to assess the degree of innovation in the work and its business value. All three examiners may also be required to assess the RE’s professional development, particularly with respect to the ‘EngD competences’.

4.4 Conclusions and Future Perspectives

The EngD is widely acknowledged within the community that it serves, and in particular by EPSRC, to be a highly successful programme. Part of this success is owed, not just to the quality of the institutions that host the EngD Centres, but also in the degree of regulation of the EngD programmes provided by EPSRC. The establishment and operation of the EngD Centres must meet criteria set by EPSRC, which cover a range of areas from the entry qualifications of the applicants to the structure and content of the programme itself, and this has provided a much needed consistency across the Centres, regardless of theme, which is invaluable in maintaining quality and building a sound reputation and brand for the degree.

4.4.1 The quality and standing of the EngD

With regard to the standing of the EngD compared to the PhD, the key issue is quality and there are a number of mechanisms by which this is tested. The entry qualifications of applicants are generally the same as for a PhD, and indeed some Centres express a preference for a Master degree and not just a bachelor degree. Minimum marks are generally set for the taught component, which are independently moderated by the MSc, MBA or equivalent Examination Board. Because there are still relatively few EngD graduates, most EngD candidates will be examined by PhD holders. Whilst it is important for them to recognise the differences between the EngD and the PhD, they otherwise examine the candidate to the exact same standard as for the PhD. Experience has shown also that the industrial examiner can be a highly critical assessor. Further, since professional development is also explicitly assessed in many cases, the EngD is subject to scrutiny on a more holistic basis.

Where there are issues to be addressed with the EngD for the future, it is around the perception of the EngD within academia as well as in industry. As was previously indicated, REs can face particular challenges related to, for example, family commitments, promotions and job changes (which can sometimes arise because of the positive effects of doing an EngD) and there can be a higher tendency for delays in the completion of an EngD as a result. This is yet to be recognised in the way in which universities and EPSRC measure success in terms of completion rates. The applied nature of much of the research done by EngDs can also limit REs from publishing in the more learned academic journals. Traditional measures of value, which are largely based around research outputs, also need to be revisited to take account of the wider value that an EngD provides, for example, through their impact on their sponsor companies and on industry, and the UK economy more generally.

4.4.2 The effects of the 2007 Review of the EngD by EPSRC

It is important to note the changes brought about by the 2008 funding round, informed by the 2007 EPSRC Review of the EngD. A number of established EngD Centres appear to have effectively ceased to exist in 2008/9 as EPSRC rolled out its new programme of Industrial Doctorate Centres (IDCs) and the ‘refreshing’ of its portfolio of Centres, though some have continued (with EPSRC funding) in a different form. In some cases the focus of the Centre has changed, and some Centres are now supported by a consortium of universities rather than just one. A small number of Centres, are so far continuing without EPSRC funding, but the website of at least one Centre states that it is no longer recruiting. Others are utilising other EPSRC funding sources (with EPSRC’s approval), for example DTAs, to provide EngD studentships.

The Review concluded that the changes in regime with respect to the EngD programme were a response to the concern that the EngD only addresses a small segment of demand within the UK economy. The broadening of its application was deemed necessary to meet EPSRC’s strategic plans and would also improve visibility of the EngD ‘brand’: the Review indicated that the EngD was still poorly understood outside of the sectors participating in it, and that the brand was still not widely recognised. However, at a time when
universities and industry alike are already severely constrained financially and with limited options for alternative funding, some highly successful and established EngD Centres could be at risk. Following a further review in 2009, EPSRC recognised that the changes had had a detrimental effect on Manufacturing Engineering in particular, and following a new call in Spring 2010, five new EngD Centres have been awarded to the universities of Strathclyde, Warwick, Sheffield and Swansea, and a consortium involving Nottingham, Birmingham and Loughborough. The new Centres will recruit their first cohort from October 2011.

Recent events and the climate of public spending cuts suggests that the biggest challenge to the EngD is its dependence on EPSRC funding and the support of industry. The outcomes of the 2008 funding round serve to illustrate the vulnerability of Centres to changes in research priorities and the need to widen the EngD’s exposure to different industry sectors in order to garner broader support and recognition of the value of the EngD approach to doctoral training. The consortium approach now being seen in some instances, is likely to be increasingly favoured (and is encouraged by EPSRC) as a means of combining resources and potentially delivering better efficiency and a more rounded training experience. The challenge for the universities involved will be in the efficient co-ordination of their efforts to ensure a joined up approach to promotion of and recruitment to such programmes and well-integrated and seamless provision for students. The details of the EPSRC Call make it a specific requirement, for example, that the student cohort should be based on one site and that particular attention should be paid to maintaining the ‘cohesion and dynamic of the student cohort’. Doctoral training is but one area where traditional competition between universities may need to be set aside in favour of greater co-operation.

One way in which the EngD could achieve wider recognition and at the same time enhance its contribution to engineering as a ‘profession’, is to develop closer links with the professional bodies, for example, the Institute of Engineering and Technology (IET) and the Institute of Mechanical Engineers (I MechE). Accreditation of the EngD by such bodies can accelerate an RE’s progress toward Chartered Engineer (CEng) status. CEng is widely recognised in industry and association between CEng and the EngD may be a positive step in enhancing the EngD ‘brand’, at least within industry.

### 4.5 Bibliography


5.1 Context

As the MBA became less of a degree for senior executives and more of an entry qualification for a management career, a gap was created for a higher degree that the DBA, which first appeared in the UK in the 1990s, has successfully filled. However most people did not, and do not, see the DBA primarily as a vehicle for career enhancement, largely because they have already established themselves as managers before commencing a DBA. The research conducted by Scott et al. (2004: 144-145) confirmed that the most common reason for embarking on a DBA was ‘intrinsic personal/professional affirmation’. Though the title ‘Doctor’ is thought to confer status at work, it is not seen as a trigger for promotion in the workplace.

The key characteristics of the DBA award have remained largely unchanged. It was typically distinguished from the PhD by being a part-time doctoral programme for practising managers and professionals; though full time DBA programmes are now available. The DBA was not intended primarily as a vehicle for training future academics, although it sometimes provides a route towards a doctorate for academics who have found themselves in the academy without one. It is normally expected that DBA researchers will be researching their own roles or organisations within a variety of sectors of the economy and will produce knowledge that contributes to extant academic fields of inquiry and makes a contribution to managerial, professional or organisational practice. As the Association of Business Schools (ABS, 2005, §2.2) revised guidelines on the DBA say:

The DBA has a dual purpose – to make a contribution to both theory and practice in relation to business and management, and to develop professional practice through making a contribution to professional knowledge. The DBA therefore seeks not only to make a contribution to knowledge but also to inform and impact upon practice.

The ABS guidelines were first published in 1998 and although they carry no regulatory force they have provided a benchmark for the development and design of DBA programmes, though various other benchmarks have appeared since. In 2001 the QAA published descriptors for Doctoral awards, introducing credit points at doctoral level, though few DBA awards formally carry credit points. The ESRC provided a system of accreditation for the research training provided to DBA students. It is not known how many institutions applied for accreditation but only four were granted accredited status. This system will disappear when the ESRC’s new structure of research training comes into effect in 2011.

In 1999 there were seventeen universities offering DBA programmes (Bareham et al., 2000: 396). By 2005/6 this number had risen to 28 (although only 15 of those programmes had more than ten students). The current figure, according to ABS is 32. A small number of universities have stopped offering the DBA but a slightly larger number have begun to. An informal survey of the Internet suggests that about half the 32 universities are post-1992 universities; and the remainder are pre-1992 institutions. The initial impetus for professional doctorates came, perhaps surprisingly, from the pre-1992, rather than the post-1992 universities (UKGCE, 2002 §3.19).

It is rather more difficult to discover how many people are studying for a DBA. The HESA figures distinguish between doctorates by whether they are research and taught doctorates. Using this distinction they report for 2008/9 that there were 3,475 students taking the research route in business and management and 275 taking the taught route. The problem of course is that most DBA programmes resist the classification of being a taught doctorate. HESA defines a research based doctorate as one obtained ‘through advanced supervised research written up as a thesis’ and a taught doctorate as one not assessed primarily through those means. Others define a taught doctorate as one where subjects other than research methods, such as finance, operations management and marketing, are taught, and are and assessed by assignment. Some define a taught doctorate as one where the training provided on research methods are assessed by assignment, rather than through the medium of a research based thesis. Whichever definition of a taught doctorate is used there is doubtful wisdom in regarding DBAs as taught doctorates.

The full scope of the DBA award in the UK is revealed in ABS’s recent analysis of HESA statistics for the year 2008/09, in which they estimated that there are:

- about 660 people studying for a DBA
- about half of whom are from the UK
- about 255 are women
- and about 5% are distance learners
The number of DBA programmes has grown steadily since the 1990s, but only a minority of universities in the UK offer the programme and the number of students compared with full time PhD students is still quite low. This reinforces the impression that the DBA is a niche programme for senior managers and professionals who wish to add a research and academic capability to their existing managerial talents.

5.2 Design of Programmes

DBA programmes are designed in such a way as to develop students’ personal, intellectual and academic abilities through researching their work-based issues or problems and through this research process professional and management practice become changed. Therefore, a shared admission requirement of UK-based DBA programmes is that applicants possess good experience as (senior) managers or consultants. Frequently, depth of experience is equated with a particular number of years of activity in a field and degree of seniority. However, there is some discrepancy between institutions in how the required length of service/experience and levels of seniority are defined. Applicants are also usually required to have a Masters qualification in a management or business related area, which often means that most applicants possess an MBA degree. For non-English native speakers, there are also additional requirements of competence in the English language acquired prior to their DBA entry. These are usually measured in IELTS or TOEFL points or can be interpreted as measured assessments of success gained from studying English language at university. Most universities recruit once a year or every two years and their mode of delivery is therefore based on ‘cohorts’. Most DBA programmes are delivered in a part-time mode enabling students to continue to work full-time. The length of the programme, however, varies. Completion of DBA studies is possible within a range of 3 years to 5 or 6 years. It appears that this difference in the length of study is linked to the design and assessment (see 5.3) of the doctoral programme. Those programmes that are of shorter duration tend to be built on a strict sequence of elements which are aligned to a set of fixed deadlines for assessed pieces of work; with the volume of the ‘thesis’ element being kept shorter compared to those designed to last 5 years or longer, where the thesis element is frequently almost as long as a traditional PhD thesis in the social sciences.

The design of DBA programmes focuses on the transfer of knowledge and learning from academic context to professional and management practice and vice versa. To achieve this, DBA programmes are based on a series of elements which facilitate such exchange. These elements can vary in form, content and sequence; yet most of them entail the teaching of research skills and competencies, including issues of methodology and research philosophy. These inputs serve the purpose of introducing students to a variety of philosophical traditions and related research designs, enabling students to select and apply appropriate methods to enhance and deepen their analytical ability. The delivery of the research training and other elements of DBA programmes takes a variety of forms such as regularly sequenced workshops, seminars or action learning sets. In most cases the translation of acquired research skills and knowledge is assessed by means of documents, reports, portfolios and a thesis element. This is notwithstanding the fact that some programmes contain elements that may be represented as ‘content teaching’, such as ‘advanced leadership’ or ‘contemporary issues in management’ or ‘advanced management studies’ etc. As noted above the general trend is to classify DBA programmes as research degrees as they are built on structures that equip students with research skills and the capacity to apply them in their professional work-based practice. In this regard, many programmes are at least partially, if not centrally, based on the facilitation of action learning (i.e. action learning sets), which provide a platform for conversations and learning between students and between students and academics as a continuous and supporting network to provide an ongoing structure of support and learning. It is our contention that the trend of DBA design is ‘away’ from the teaching of ‘content’ toward a stronger emphasis on research training and education.

5.3 Delivery and Best Practice

One of the major characteristics of DBA programmes is their variety. However they all have one thing in common: workshops and training sessions associated with the DBA are taught in blocks of between two days and a week’s duration. The content of the workshops and training events differ. All programmes include training in research methods, but some also include workshops on subject or discipline based matter such as strategy or operations management. Where programmes include subject/discipline-based-teaching-and-learning, the relevant modules mostly precede the research-based part of the DBA. They are assessed either by coursework or examination. In these cases a typical sequence would be:

- subject/discipline workshops or modules
- research training workshops or modules
- research proposal
- researching and writing a thesis.

The research training in most programmes covers similar areas, but the workshops or modules draw upon the application of these concepts nomenclature to include:

- introduction to management research
- modelling business
• developing as a researcher and developing your research
• organisation theory and research philosophy
• critical issues
• interpretivism and qualitative methods
• positivism and quantitative methods
• pragmatism and mixed methods
• writing a thesis and preparing for a Viva voce

The composition of the research element in DBAs varies from programme to programme but in all cases it takes the form of a thesis or dissertation. Although some professional doctorates in other fields use portfolios to present the output of research, we found no example of this amongst DBAs. At one extreme in the range the research element is presented as a single document and follows a similar pattern to that found in PhD programmes. That is to say the student produces a research proposal that goes through an approval process and then researches and writes the dissertation that is typically 50 thousand words long. In some cases the research element may be divided into sections in different ways as illustrated in the examples below.

Example A
• Preparation of a research proposal
• Production of a critical literature review and research objectives or hypotheses
• Production of a document that incorporates a methodology section, data collection and analysis and conclusions.

Example B
• Project 1 – a literature review
• Project 2 – an empirical piece of work
• Project 3 – an empirical piece of work
• A linking document that highlights the contribution that has been made to theory and practice.

Example C
• A series of documents that cumulatively create a single piece of work on a unified topic.
  • Document 1 – scoping, justifying and planning the proposed project
  • Document 2 – a critical literature review and the development of an initial conceptual framework
  • Document 3 – a piece of qualitative, preferably interpretivist, research relevant to the project
  • Document 4 – a piece of quantitative, possibly hypothetico-deductive, piece of research relevant to the topic
  • Document 5 – an empirically based thesis, using whichever methods and methodology are appropriate, that fulfils the main research objectives of the project (about 30 thousand words)
  • Document 6 – a critical reflexive pieces reviewing personal development during the DBA
• The cumulative length of all the documents is about 80 thousand words, or more.

Example D
• Presentation of a 25,000 word transfer report at a formal research seminar
• Conduct and writing up of three separate but inter-linked, empirical pieces of work
• The addition of an introductory chapter, a final summary and a reflective overview chapter; the whole lot not exceeding 60,000 words.

The relationship of the timing of the research training modules and the various stages of the research element differs. Some programmes deliver the research training before the research element: in some cases, DBA programmes in the UK offer students training in research in parallel with, and in support of, their own developing research projects, others providing the training both before and during the research. When the research modules precede the research then they are, of course, assessed by coursework or examination. When the modules are delivered during the research process they can, as in example C, be assessed through the assessment of the research documents.

All of the DBA programmes include some element of critical reflection on the research activities and on the professional development. Some programmes however have a greater emphasis on career development.

One common feature of all DBAs however, is the use of a Viva voce to examine all or part of the research output. The DBA Viva voce arrangements are much the same as the traditional PhD Viva though DBA candidates tend to be assessed against a set of formal programme learning outcomes rather than the PhD’s test of an original contribution to knowledge (UKCGE 2002 §3.5-§3.7). Interestingly, as part of the process of convergence between DBAs and PhDs, some universities have instituted sets of learning outcomes that describe good scholarly and research practice in the assessment of PhDs.
What then, out of this diversity, constitutes best practice? We are tempted to claim that it is the diversity itself that presents best practice. All of the programmes we have reviewed share a common basic idea of what a DBA is about as we have argued in the section on Design. They share some common principles, and we do not consider it a problem if different institutions operationalise those principles in different ways. These common principles may be summarised as follows:

a) learning at doctoral level requires the student to conduct independent research
b) DBA candidates should be able to take a holistic perspective on their research as well as being able to focus on specific research questions using technically rigorous and appropriate methods.
c) DBA researchers should be sufficiently familiar with the different modalities of research (hypothetico-deductive, interpretative, action research for example) to be able to use them as appropriate.
d) the purpose of the DBA is to help students change practice as well as to understand it. The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it (Marx 1970: 30).
e) the intellectual challenges of seeking to both understand and change managerial and organisational practice are higher than those of seeking to understand alone, and this provides motivation to practicing managers and professionals to study at doctoral level.
f) DBA students, as with PhD students need effective and responsive supervision.

In relation to the need for effective and responsive supervision for DBA students, we believe best practice can most usefully be identified, through its relationship with:

- the selection and appointment of DBA supervisors,
- induction and ongoing training of supervisors,
- the allocation of time to supervise, and,
- the opportunity for supervisors to meet and critically discuss their supervisory, and where appropriate, their assessment practices.

Most universities have detailed, formal criteria for the appointment of supervisors and provide mentoring for those who are new to doctoral or professional doctoral supervision. Training and development events provide an induction to supervision, ‘away-day’ events enable staff to exchange and review their experiences of working on professional doctorates.

5.4 Conclusion and Future Perspectives

Since the emergence of DBA programmes in the 1990s in the UK, many universities have developed their own approaches and philosophies about how to provide doctoral level education that can be aligned with project-based, practice-oriented concerns about developing practice. The emphasis of such programmes is to ground research problems in ‘the real world’, which includes the collaborative co-production of knowledge between practitioner-students and academics with a view to designing research projects that connect with the challenges of the student’s workplace. The development of vocabularies of 'engaged scholarship' (van de Ven, 2007: ix), the ‘impact’- driven agenda of research assessment in the UK and the increasing importance of providing evidence of ‘relevant’ research have all served as drivers to propel DBA programmes onto the policy agenda of UK, European and also international bodies and networks. The notion that ensuring the ‘quality’ of student experience and standard of this doctoral qualification are safeguarded has become an urgent issue in the quality agenda of the QAA and also within the European context, where, for example, the Salzburg Principles (February 2005) have articulated a set of 10 principles to be applied by all members of Bologna Process28. These principles define a common purpose and a set of practices for doctoral programmes which acknowledge diversity in approaches and structures, but also stress the importance of transparency and quality (e.g., regarding the treatment of doctoral students and new researchers; the crucial role of supervision and assessment etc.). While these principles are helpful in setting a general agenda and were taken forward in the ‘Dublin Descriptors’, a Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (Third Cycle Qualifications), they appear to take the traditional PhD model as their point of departure and thus issues of how to design and assess practice-based or professionally-based doctoral modes remain unaddressed as yet.

Additionally, accreditation processes (frequently based on the accreditation of the institution, rather than the programme) play an important part in making visible the quality of DBA programmes. Here, EQUIS and AACSB are examples of accreditation bodies who take the delivery of research training and the size of doctoral programmes as indicators of institutional engagement in the creation and dissemination of knowledge. Concomitant with the existence of influential accreditation bodies are emerging networks of doctoral providers such as the EDAMBA (European Doctoral Programme Association in Management and Business Administration) and specifically the recent announcement of a International Executive DBA Council (August 2010), indicating that universities are developing structures to ensure that commonality of purpose and vision are protected, while also safeguarding the position of their ‘brand’ in an increasingly competitive market place for doctoral level education.

28. These principles are being revised by EUA into ‘Salzburg II, although at the point of writing nothing more concrete has yet emerged.
The internationalisation and diversification phase of DBA programmes ‘development is evidenced by the increasing number of ‘international students’ (i.e., non-UK; non-EU), institutional collaborations (be they between universities or between universities and private or public organisations) across national boundaries, all of which provide opportunities to expand and disseminate the model of ‘engaged scholarship’. Yet the operations of such collaborations is based on the meeting of sometimes quite diverse assumptions about the very nature of knowledge and practice and how to research them, in the context of changing social and institutional relationship. In this regard the existence and ongoing growth and development of DBA programmes in the UK and beyond could be seen as expressive of an emergent area of forms of knowledge and collaboration that are interdisciplinary and transcending traditional boundaries (Gibbons et al., 1994; Nowotny et al., 2001).

Yet, it remains difficult to obtain reliable and systematic data about the different models and approaches of DBA programmes in the UK and beyond. Indeed, the EUA Report (2007) on Doctoral Education in Europe mentions practice and professionally based doctorates only in one paragraph under the heading of ‘new developments’ (ibid: 16) and points to the UK to provide a systematic accounts of its experience in designing and developing such doctoral programmes. A case in point is, perhaps, attempts to develop DBA programmes, based on the principle of doctoral study for senior executives, who are given the structures to reflect upon and to develop their learning and experiences in and through research, disseminated and to open to scrutiny on a public stage.

It appears therefore timely to call for a research programme that can provide accurate description of current practices and approaches, while also providing analysis of tacit knowledge and meanings activated in relationships, project design and research agendas.

5.5 Bibliography


6 The DClin Psy

6.1 Context

Practice-based professional doctorates such as the DClin Psy are most common in health-related professions and in the performing arts. However, the DClin Psy is different from other practice-based professional doctorates since it is the required preparation for candidates to apply to the Health Professions Council (HPC) for registration, which forms their ‘licence to practise’ as clinical psychologists in the UK. This fact makes the DClin Psy different in entry requirements, student profile and stage of professional career, structure and curriculum of the degree and assessment arrangements. While it is generally agreed that most professional doctorates provide an opportunity for higher level learning and development for already qualified and experienced professionals, the DClin Psy is distinctive in that it provides the means by which individuals are enabled to apply for registration as clinical psychologists.

All clinical psychology training is accredited in partnership by the British Psychological Society (BPS), the professional body which provides curriculum guidance for professional training in the different applied fields of psychology (clinical, counselling, educational, forensic, occupational etc), and is also approved by the HPC which lays down Standards of Proficiency that clinical psychologists must be able to demonstrate. Thus HPC has responsibility for setting the standards of education and training which approved courses must provide, while the BPS provides accreditation in partnership, which courses may also seek to achieve since it allows graduates to apply to become Chartered. All DClin Psy courses aim to produce professionally qualified clinical psychologists eligible for Chartered Psychologist status, and for eligibility for registration as clinical psychologists, the latter being required for use of the protected title, and for employment in the National Health Service, or other related employment. Students who join the programme are normally registered as university postgraduate students, working with an NHS contract in the region.

6.1.1 A brief history of clinical psychology training in the UK

To set the context of clinical psychology training, it may be useful to consider briefly the relatively short history of professional training for clinical psychologists in the UK, which has evolved from a one-year Diploma qualification to a three-year doctoral qualification. The first formally recognised course in clinical psychology was the one-year Diploma at the Maudsley Hospital, London, which started in 1947. At about the same time the BPS organised a so-called ‘in-service training’ route which enabled psychology graduates to work as clinical psychologists in regional health authorities while undertaking training and finally qualifying through the BPS Diploma examination. These two routes to training as a clinical psychologist continued for about 40 years. The university route has changed over the years from the one-year post-graduate Diploma in 1947 to a two-year Master’s degree and finally by the mid-1990s to a three-year doctoral (DClin Psy) degree. All clinical psychologists in the UK are now trained at doctoral level through a DClin Psy programme and assessed on the successful completion of three main elements: academic and theoretical courses, substantial clinical placements, and a research-based thesis (including a portfolio relating to clinical research).

This move to doctoral level qualification has a relatively recent history, beginning in 1987 when a polytechnic college proposed the first DClin Psy in the UK. This was at a time when professional doctorates were beginning to be developed in the UK in fields such as engineering, business, education. In the light of this, the BPS arranged an invitational conference in 1989 to formulate their policy on this matter, where a number of key papers were submitted in advance in order to begin the debate. The move to doctoral level training was driven in large measure by professional concerns of clinical psychologists, and at the time, many considered the issue of doctoral status to be pivotal. There was an increasing awareness that the demands of professional work as clinical psychologist required a longer period of education and training, and also that the question of academic title was important. It was proposed that awarding just a Masters degree after 3 years full-time study was inappropriate, and it was also claimed that the profession was undervalued, such that without this status clinical psychologists would be held in lower esteem than medical colleagues. Although the BPS remained neutral over the issue of doctoral degrees in clinical training for several years, by 1993 40% of the 24 institutions offering training in clinical psychology had revised their regulations to include doctoral degrees. These changes in universities had an effect over time and by the mid-1990s, the BPS required all clinical psychologists to train via the DClin Psy, and transferred its own qualifications from Diploma level to doctoral level, accredited by the Open University. Since that time all clinical psychologists have been required to undertake a doctorate (usually named DClin Psy, though there are ClinPsy D and other variants) as their initial professional qualification, and cannot apply for HPC registration (and hence to practise) in the UK without it.

6.1.2 Statutory regulation of clinical psychologists

A further development occurred on July 1, 2009 when the Register for Practitioner Psychologists opened and psychologists became registered by the Health Professions Council (HPC). Prior to that date, the ‘licensing’ of clinical psychologists in Britain had been achieved through a
(voluntary) Register of Chartered Psychologists administered by the BPS. This arrangement required all Chartered Psychologists to have a certain standard and length of training, and all clinical psychologists to have a (BPS) recognised professional qualification, and to abide by the BPS Code of Ethics and disciplinary framework. Although the BPS was itself committed to statutory, mandatory regulation for over 20 years, and devoted considerable time and effort to achieving this goal within the BPS framework, it was not until 2009 that statutory regulation of all clinical psychologists was achieved through registration with the HPC, which sets the standards that registrants have to meet.

These are:

a) the standards of conduct, performance and ethics,
b) the standards for continuing professional development, and
c) the standards of proficiency.

The standards of proficiency determine the nature of the professional training provided by the DClin Psy since they define the skills and knowledge considered by HPC to be essential to work within the particular profession. They include generic standards which apply to all the professions regulated by HPS and profession specific-standards which apply to the particular profession. Since 2009, the professional training and therefore the nature and content of the DClin Psy have reflected both HPC standards and the criteria for accreditation set by BPS.

6.2 Design, Delivery and Assessment

DClin Psy programmes have two purposes: to provide graduates with a professional qualification that enables them to enter professional practice; and to produce graduates who meet their university’s requirements for being awarded a DClin Psy, including a requirement to make an original contribution to professional knowledge. The design of DClin Psy programmes reflects this dual objective which is addressed through three main and integrated components: academic, university-based teaching, learning through placements in a clinical setting, and completion of a clinically-based research project.

6.2.1 Prior qualifications and experience

As the DClin Psy is a professional qualification leading to eligibility for registration (hence to be employed in the NHS as a Clinical Psychologist), all courses must meet the Standards of Education and Training laid down by the Health Professionals Council (HPC) and the Criteria for the Accreditation of Postgraduate programmes in clinical psychology of the British Psychological Society (BPS), as noted above. In addition, all applicants are required to have appropriate prior academic qualifications and relevant experience, that is a psychology degree which confers Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC) of the BPS, in other words a psychology degree of sufficient breadth and depth to provide a sound basis for postgraduate professional training. Given the high competition for places on DClin Psy courses (the success rate nationally for applicants in 2010 was 21%), most applicants will have at least a 2.1 Honours degree, frequently a First Class degree, and a number of applicants will already have a relevant Masters degree or a PhD prior to undertaking the DClin Psy. In addition, applicants are expected (and in many cases required) to have relevant clinically related experience, such as work as an assistant psychologist or a similar role, which enables them to gain understanding of some of the challenges and issues faced by professional clinical psychologists.

6.2.2 Design of DClin Psy programmes

Given the particular function of the DClin Psy and the standards and criteria set by HPC and BPS, the design of programmes is clearly specified. The BPS Criteria for Accreditation (BPS, 2008) specify learning outcomes and objectives under the nine broad headings of:

- Transferable skills
- Psychological Assessment
- Psychological Formulation
- Psychological Intervention
- Evaluation
- Research
- Personal and Professional Skills and Values
- Communication and Teaching
- Service Delivery

Thus the content of the DClin Psy reflects these at both theoretical and practical level. Training is delivered by participation in lectures, seminars and workshops at the university, and most universities integrate theoretical input with clinical activities, including some using
problem-based learning. The BPS criteria require that at least 50% of total programme time must be allocated to supervised clinical experience. This is almost always arranged in NHS settings, though occasionally also in Social Services settings. Given the fact that DClin Psy courses are funded by the NHS and are intended to produce clinical psychologists competent to work in the NHS, graduates are expected to gain the knowledge, skills and competence to work with the range of clients (e.g. children, adults, older people, mental health problems, learning disabilities, substance abuse etc), settings (e.g. primary care, secondary care, residential settings and acute and long-term units), and approaches to practice, as found in the NHS. The aim of the clinical placements is to ensure that clinical psychologist trainees develop their core skills through a wide range of experience and that they have the full range of psychological work in health and other settings. This means that structured professional training and placements include experience of the wide range of psychological problems in different situations, in people of diverse backgrounds and ages.

Although the programmes will be organized in different ways, they all include the requisite academic and clinical input to enable trainees to meet the required learning outcomes and gain the core competencies for practice as a clinical psychologist. Given the commitment in the UK for clinical psychology to be based on a scientist practitioner model, all courses include training in research methods and require the completion of a research-based thesis, drawing on research from clinical settings. In most DClin Psy programmes it is possible to select a research project that reflects individual interests or career aspirations.

6.2.3 Course duration

Almost all courses are full-time and the DClin Psy normally takes three years to complete. However, given current moves to enhance access and flexibility of qualifications there are a very few part-time places on some courses. Here the trainee works as a trainee clinical psychologist and follows a part-time programme which leads to the DClin Psy qualification. A further variant in the DClin Psy occurred at the time when this qualification became mandatory for the clinical psychology profession in the UK. This led to the development of so-called ‘top-up’ doctorates which enabled clinical psychologists who had qualified through a Masters qualification to undertake additional advanced level work and to undertake a research-based thesis, and gain a DClin Psy award. Given the fact that the DClin Psy has been mandatory as an initial qualification for well over 10 years now, the ‘top-up’ DClin Psy has been largely phased out.

6.2.4 Assessment

Similar to other health-related professional qualifications such as undergraduate medical degrees, trainees taking the DClin Psy are required to demonstrate that they are competent to practise and to pass the academic elements of the programme, and also to make an original contribution to knowledge in their profession through undertaking a clinically-based research project.

In most universities the academic parts of the programme are assessed through completion of coursework and assignments, though some universities also use unseen examinations. The trainees’ clinical competence is assessed by professional staff (mainly qualified and experienced clinical psychologists supervising the placements) involved in placements. This often includes evaluation of the individual’s ability to record and reflect on their learning in the clinical setting. At the end of the programme, candidates normally submit a portfolio which includes academic assignments and clinical material from each part of the course. The portfolio includes the clinical research project, part of which consists of a critical evaluation of literature in the field. Some universities offering DClin Psy programmes require candidates to undertake an oral examination; others rely on continuous assessment in the academic and clinical contexts combined with paper-based assessment of the portfolio and within it, the clinical research project. An example of the final assessment from one university DClin Psy course is given below:

- 4 exams over first two years
- 4 clinical case reports
- 1 service-related research project
- thesis: in 3 parts
  1) literature review
  2) empirical paper
  3) critical appraisal

This summative assessment is complemented by formative and continuous assessment throughout the course, in particular of clinical placements and clinical competence.

6.3 Delivery and Best Practice

There are currently 31 course centres which offer the DClin Psy. All courses are full-time and students are funded by the NHS which plans the number of trainees (future clinical psychologists) as part of its work-force planning strategy. The courses are required to meet HPC
standards and criteria, and currently the majority of courses seek BPS accreditation as a quality kite-mark. A central clearing house system is used for giving information to prospective applicants and for organising applications and selection.

Through its five-yearly accreditation visits, the BPS is able to identify areas of good practice in each programme and present a list of commendations. Due to the high competition for places on the courses, the fact that courses are funded by the NHS, and that they are located in well-founded psychology or psychiatry departments, all courses will have a number of areas of commendation, such as those noted below:

‘The programme enjoys a national reputation for excellence in relation to problem-based learning, and its overall approach in this area is clearly providing trainees with an effective vehicle for integrating theory, practice, and values on an ongoing basis. The programme has also shown innovation and inventiveness in relation to the assessment of trainees through direct observation on placement’.

‘Difference and diversity has been fully integrated into the programme in all areas, and continues to evolve as a result of the programme’s long-term commitment to enabling trainees to develop competencies in a way that is culturally appropriate’.

‘Supervisors welcome trainees’ engagement at an organisational level from an early stage in their training, and the institutional observation and reflection that trainees undertake on placement is a highly creative way of engaging them in complex organisational issues of this kind’.

‘The selection process is well thought through, and attracts consistently positive feedback. It has been designed to get the best out of applicants. The visiting team was also impressed with the level of involvement of service users and carers in selection, both in the interview process, and in decision making’.

These courses are highly thought of both within the university departments and by local services in the region. Although each course has its own distinctive ethos and strengths, all meet basic standards and criteria, and share certain elements of best practice such as: arrangements for supervised practice and training of supervisors; integration of theory and practice in trainees’ learning; quality of clinically related research; high quality of staff input and course organization; quality of clinical placements.

6.4 Conclusions and Future Perspectives

The DClin Psy provides the qualification required for practice as a clinical psychologist in the UK. This means that its future is determined and at the present time assured by the NHS. Professional training in clinical psychology is expensive (requiring 6 years for education and training, from Bachelor to DClin Psy). Also, clinical psychologists are relatively highly paid and represent a fairly scarce resource. In 2005 the government responded to proposals to improve the provision of psychological therapies in the treatment of depression and anxiety by introducing its Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme in England. This is a programme based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) for which non-psychologist practitioners (and psychology graduates at Bachelor level) can become qualified through short courses. The development of CBT-trained practitioners means that they work alongside clinical psychologists, offering complementary provision. At the time of writing, recruitment to clinical psychology courses is buoyant (with very high competition for places) and the exigency of NHS workforce planning maintains demand. Given the current uncertain economic pressures within the NHS, it is difficult to predict the future of the profession of clinical psychology. However, the quality of DClin Psy courses and training provision remains high in the UK and is considered to be leading edge throughout the rest of Europe.

6.5 Bibliography


7 Professional Doctorates in Health and Social Care

7.1 Context

Health and social care professions continue to progress within a research and evidence based continuum from a vocational, skills based model typical of the semi-professions described by Etzioni (1969). Kirkman et al. (2007: 61) describe nursing, the largest of the health professions, as having ‘teething problems’ with such academic development and it is quite remarkable therefore that the professional doctorate has been enthusiastically adopted within nursing, and other health and social care disciplines, as they simultaneously establish their academic identities. In 2005 26 higher education institutions offered professional doctorates specific to health and social care, and 62% of professional doctorate provision in the United Kingdom (UK) was within education, psychology, medicine, business and engineering (Powell and Long, 2005). Given that health and social care professionals also undertake professional doctorates within education and business for example, these figures indicate a critical mass of health and social care students potentially ready to complete their professional doctorates. It could be expected therefore that the professional doctorate is fully integrated within the post graduate portfolio for health and social care disciplines. This does not appear to be the case and debate continues regarding its scope and purpose. On the one hand the professional doctorate is welcomed for its potential to enhance practitioner research (McVicar et al., 2006). On the other hand the professional doctorate zeitgeist has brought concerns about the dilution of doctoral standards (Kirkman et al., 2007).

This chapter considers professional doctorate development for the health and social care disciplines in the UK excluding medicine, psychology and dentistry. The professional doctorate’s origins are explored followed by discussion of three critical questions emergent within the professional doctorate literature:

- Is the professional doctorate credible relative to the PhD within health and social care disciplines?
- What are the Student Experiences of Health and Social Care professional doctorates?
- Does the professional doctorate impact upon health and social care practice?

7.2 Design: Professional doctorate origins within the health and social care disciplines

Until the late 1990’s any doctorate, regardless of whether it was a professional doctorate or PhD, was an unusual study choice for nurses, and other health and social care practitioners in professional as opposed to academic practice. Scott (2001) suggests that doctoral study to underpin nursing practice, has, in the recent past, been considered an ideal, rather than an integral aspect of career progression. McKenna and Cutcliffe (2001) also suggest that the number of higher education institutions offering PhDs for nurses at that time was in single figures. By 2007 there were 900 nurses registered on PhD programmes, and yet 4,500 new nurses graduate every year (United Kingdom Clinical Research Collaboration/UKCRC 2007). Lyons (2002) describes similar progression within the social work profession where policy developments and professionalisation have also led to interest in professional doctorate development.

From an international perspective Ketefian (2001) suggests that doctorates for nurses have been available in the United States (US) since the 1930’s with the doctor of education, EdD, established at Columbia and New York Universities. Doctoral programmes for nurses were established in Canada in 1991; earlier than in the UK, but in a similar time frame to the emergent growth of the professional doctorate in Australia. The first UK doctorate in nursing, the Doctorate in Nursing Science, was developed at the University of Ulster in 1994. McKenna (2002) describes the Ulster programme as having a doctoral route, integrating theory, practice and research; the PhD being challenged for focus upon academic career pathways.

A variety of factors have simultaneously enhanced health and social care professional doctorate development in the UK. For example Ellis (2006) suggests the White Paper on Research Policy (Cabinet Office of Science and Technology 1993) paved the way for the UK professional doctorate, with its concerns about the PHD as preparation for a career pathway outside academia. Ellis and Lee (2005) also describe the migration of nurse education from health service management and delivery to the higher education sector in the mid 1990’s as a critical factor, enabling nurses to access post-graduate opportunities.

National Health Service reforms, associated with New Labour policies are linked to the need for doctoral study for health care professionals in the UK. For example Manning and Bentley (2003) advocate the professional doctorate as an alternative to the PhD for professionals wishing to research clinical and professional radiography practice. The benefit the authors suggest lies within a professional practice emphasis and the expansion of a professional knowledge base and expertise from within practice. There has been similar discussion by
Rolfe and Davies (2009) and Ellis and Lee (2005) in relation to nursing. Ellis (2005) attributes development of consultant nurse and therapist roles as a key factor influencing professional doctorate development. These roles were designed to improve health service quality and strengthen leadership while enhancing career pathways (Department of Health/DH 1999). Health service demands associated with improved life expectancy and health technologies have increased requirements for proactive, evidence based responses. Education and lifelong learning are presented as the underpinning solution to the challenges above; to raise clinical standards and enhance research led clinical practice. Within the education and health and social care practice discourse the professional doctorate has emerged to integrate theory, practice and research.

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy/CSP (2005) published practical guidelines about doctorates and the skills and outcomes associated with professional and 'taught' doctorates. While these are intended to inform employers and potential doctoral students, they illustrate one of the factors hindering discussion of doctorates: mixed terminology. One distinction offered is that professional doctorates are more likely to relate to the professional activity of the student, whereas the taught doctorate may involve larger components of university learning. Interestingly the CSP also acknowledge the blurring between the PhD and professional doctorate, while recognising the drivers for research methodologies and wider research training within PhD programmes too (CSP 2005).

Is the professional doctorate credible relative to the PhD within health and social care disciplines?

There has been some dissatisfaction, real or perceived, with the PhD experience in health and social care: considered too distant from the needs of professional practice (Mason and McKenna 1995: McKenna 2002: Ellis 2005). There is also support for the professional doctorate in its potential, actual or envisaged form, to enable health and social care professionals to generate knowledge and expertise directly from their practice to advance that practice (Rolfe and Davies 2009). However the history of health and social care professional engagement with doctoral study is not yet sufficiently established for emergent critique from practising professionals, employers or regulatory bodies. There is not yet a critical mass of health and social care professionals or employers in professional practice with doctorates, to critique the PhD experience and advocate an alternative.

The disquiet that does emerge in health and social care regarding the ‘traditional’ PhD comes from academics, who are concerned about the potential theory practice gap relative to the needs of professional practice. Rolfe and Davies (2009) and Carr et al. (2010) for example describe the ‘traditional’ PhD as particularly ill-suited for practising health and social care professionals. Construction of the PhD as a traditional doctoral route is interesting, as the PhD is not itself enshrined in any established historical tradition. Bourner et al. (2001) for example discuss the professional doctorate’s antecedents as preparation for advanced professional practice.

While the above illustrates some positive discussion of the health and social care professional doctorate there is an emergent counter discussion; focusing upon a lack of clarity about scope and purpose, and concern about the varied nomenclature (Ellis 2005). In a study mapping professional doctorate provision and perceptions in nursing Ellis (2005) describes three emergent academic attitudes towards the programme: enthusiastic, ambivalent and sceptical; the latter including concerns about dilution of doctoral standards. However, while there were concerns about the overall credibility of the programme relative to the PhD, the same study found positive support for the group or cohort delivery of professional doctorates, with enhanced student peer support.

It would appear that mixed messages are also given about professional doctorates for health professionals. For example UKCRC (2007) recommend opportunities for nurses to undertake PhD and professional doctorate study to strengthen flexible research career pathways for nurses (Recommendation 4). Traditionally these have been fixed in either clinical or academic practice trajectories (Butterworth et al., 2005). In contrast information provided on the main UKCRC website implies that professional doctorates are not recommended to enhance research training and career progression (UKCRC 2009). The wider lack of clarity can result in doctoral students and employers navigating the complexities of doctoral opportunity offered by the professional doctorate, PhD and PhD by published works (Kirkman et al., 2007) and the scope and purpose of each doctoral route should be more clearly defined in health and social care and linked to the wider policy and planning regarding clinical careers and research training.

As suggested earlier the language employed also hinders effective discussion of doctorates. For example taught doctorate (CSP 2005) and practice doctorate are used interchangeably. Kirkman et al. (2007) refer to the professional doctorate as a practice doctorate, as do Burton et al. (2009). Focusing upon semantics may seem pointless; detracting from overall evaluation of the professional doctorate. However the practice doctorate concept has a different meaning in the US, where advanced practitioner programmes of study have been recommended to progress from masters to doctoral study by 2015 (American Association of Colleges of Nursing/AACN 2004). Marion et al. (2003) discuss the practice doctorate in terms of preparation for advanced clinical practice and clinical leadership. The design and implementation of a research study for an original contribution to that practice is more difficult to extrapolate. To use the terminology interchangeably is akin to the comparison of apples and pears.
7.3 Delivery and Best Practice

7.3.1 What is the student experience of Professional Doctorates in health and social care?

Looking beyond health policy and practice and research and evidence based practice, it is possible that professional doctorate delivery is attractive for health and social care professionals (Ellis 2005). For example practitioners who have previously undertaken modular, credit bearing masters programmes are possibly more comfortable within a sequenced study route (Manning and Bentley 2003). The professional doctorate experience is described within health and social care (as elsewhere) in terms of cohort, or group based study of modular, or equivalent, taught or facilitated study, used to clarify, refine and critically explore the student’s research focus in preparation for the research element. In contrast Mason and McKenna (1995) described PhD study as solitary, with little support from other students. There is however some similarity between professional doctorate and PhD experience within health and social care in that all doctoral students are expected to engage in training opportunities, though this is not usually the planned, collegiate experience of the professional doctorate cohort.

For the professional doctorate student in health and social care the combination of expected participation in university research training programmes, and the requirement to pass modular or equivalent programme components can lead to over compensation in terms of research training. Some professional doctorate programmes in health and social care may require students to undertake more research training than could be reasonably expected of PhD study; academic teams incorporating more research training and assessment in the light of concerns about the professional doctorate’s credibility. Ellis (2005) is critical of the highly prescriptive nature of some of the professional doctorate programmes surveyed within her mapping exercise.

The profile of professional doctorate students from health and social care disciplines reflects that identified by Bourner et al. (2001); mid or senior career professionals who have accrued significant professional expertise before embarking upon doctoral study. Health and social care professionals are likely to have responsibility for the development of innovative, original, evidence based policies and practices to underpin service delivery, improvement or evaluation. Given the complexity of strategic roles in the prevailing socio-economic climate of health and social care it requires stellar efforts to undertake a doctorate. Regardless of doctoral route health and social care professionals potentially face critical challenges as they integrate professional and doctoral study roles against a backdrop of mid-life events such as divorce, personal or family illness, or caring for elderly parents and relatives.

Other barriers influencing career progression and the development of research/clinical career pathways have been explored by UKCRC (2007). These include busy clinical caseloads and a lack of specific research time within professional work loads. Access to professional doctorate (and PhD) study for health and social care disciplines still contrasts with other subject disciplines; where doctoral study is an established progression using full time PhD scholarships and Graduate Teaching Assistant roles. Clinical research training and scholarships recommended by UKCRC are a positive step forward.

The opportunities above are designed to prepare health and social care professionals for an academic or research career, yet many professionals would want to use their research expertise to advance professional practice from within practice. Ellis (2006) in a UK/Australia study of nurses’ motivations to undertake the professional doctorate found that students were altruistic in the main, and wanted to enhance practice while maintaining professional competitiveness and credibility through the development of research based practices. Clinical leadership and legitimisation of professional roles as a result of professional doctorate study were key factors influencing study alongside the development of practice through research.

The study by Ellis (2006) is an interesting example of students’ perceptions and aspirations within health and social care professional doctorate discussion. There are comparatively few accounts of the professional doctorate experience from the viewpoint of students themselves. Existing accounts tend to explore subjective and personal benefits of study, for example confidence, professional credibility within the multi disciplinary team and critical thinking (Lee and Lythgoe, 2010). While these skills are laudable and equally important to the development of leadership and clinical practice through research, there are challenges in determining their practice impact.

Within the student experience of the health and social care professional doctorate there may also be issues of content and access. Content may focus heavily upon methodological, ethical and structural issues, especially given concerns about programme credibility. While these are critical skills, health and social care professionals also require facilitation of the leadership skills required for practitioner research, to lead research in practice and to become role models of research leadership in practice. They also require expertise and support to deal with ethical and professional tensions arising from real world research as part of their doctoral student experience. Lack of focus upon leadership is a key student theme from Ellis (2006).

There are existing good practices, enabling students to explore practitioner-researcher issues in a confidential and skilled environment, for example the use of action learning and peer support groups, student seminars and conferences, facilitating health and social care
students’ participation within a community of doctoral practice. However for many part time professional doctorate (or PhD) students from health and social care backgrounds access to the above opportunities is challenging in the context of a full-time professional role, involving shift work, notwithstanding family and other commitments. Workshops, blocks of study and residential opportunities undoubtedly help and more could be done in terms of content and access to meet the specific needs of health and social care students: Wellington and Sikes (2006) for example describe positive strategies employed within an education doctorate. The flexibility of virtual learning environments is highly beneficial and offers access to learning and support at a time and place to suit the student; dependent on the skill set of the doctoral student and dependent on effective support and administration for virtual learning. In addition programme content using virtual learning still needs to reflect the challenges of real world research.

Given the professional doctorate ethos of shaping and influencing professional practice, it could be expected that health and social care professional doctorates embrace interaction between the academic and the professional setting; especially in terms of student supervision. There is a continuum of practice within health and social care professional doctorates, ranging from informal mentorship and support to formal written practice agreement to support the student, developed as part of the admissions process. Carr et al. (2010) make the point that many professional doctorate students, within health and social care at least, are supervised by staff who themselves have PhDs. It is difficult to uphold the unique claims of the professional doctorate in terms of process and outcome while this situation continues.

Carr et al. (2010) also state that supervisor and student must be able to successfully negotiate the demands of academic research rigour while addressing the needs and demands of the practice context; for an original study, taking professional practice forward. Boucher and Smyth (2004) explore some of the ethical tensions, which can arise from practitioner research, relating to any doctoral student working in a professional or practice based context. Areas of concern for the authors include the suppression of findings, which may place the organisation in a poor light, or concerns that research findings may change roles or threaten jobs. While these are sensitive issues in any professional context they are more so in the health and social care environment, imbued as it is with political and public expectation. Ellis (2006) found that professional doctorate students thought their research would have negative implications or be discouraged if poor organisational outcomes were identified.

The contribution of colleagues from professional practice within professional doctorate study is controversial. On the one hand there are calls for greater involvement, Kemp (2004) is critical of the disconnection between professional doctorates and industrial/sector colleagues; maintaining that doctoral education remains university driven and university focused. On the other hand Lee (2009), in a case study of student supervisory needs, found that students preferred the confidentiality and separateness of academic supervision and did not want the direct involvement of practice colleagues for supervision and wider programme support. There are exemplars of engagement with practice for assessment and supervision purposes, for example the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, which could be used to explore these issues further.

### 7.3.2 Does the professional doctorate impact upon health and social care practice?

The conventional methods of sharing practice potential have been the dissemination of findings in journal and conference publications, though this in itself is not a guarantee of practice impact. Gijbels et al. (2010) detail the challenges of evaluating impact; related to retrospective, descriptive studies within one educational setting and involving small student groups for example. While such strategies enable local development it is essential to share good practice and to develop a national overview of impact, especially within the context of the Research Excellence Framework/REF, indeed all doctoral routes should have the same kind of scrutiny.

Ellis (2006) used a case study approach to determine how Australian nurses used their professional doctorate experience within the professional context. Key outcomes of study related to the legitimisation of clinical leadership roles and professional credibility and equality; all described as desirable by students. McVicar et al. (2006) discuss the research topics of a professional doctorate cohort and these are clearly relevant to health and social care practice. Workforce development, integration of health and social services and assisted living are examples described. In a similar vein Stephenson et al. (2006) used case studies of professional doctorate students to evidence professional doctorate study application within the professional context. Some of the students were from health disciplines, others were from education and further afield. Earlier discussion about student experience indicates there are benefits associated with the professional doctorate. However there are methodological challenges in mapping professional and personal skill development in relation to tangible benefits for service users and others. This challenge is not unique to the professional doctorate; it is now evident in a wide range of educational programmes. As some global regions move into their post-industrial phase and related socio-economic realities the nature of impact becomes pragmatic and driven by the need to demonstrate value for money. Within that imperative there is a danger that the wider individual and professional benefits of education are overlooked.

### 7.4 Concluding Remarks

Much of the professional doctorate debate within health and social care is based on values and beliefs about what doctoral study currently is; not what it could or should be for practising professionals. Put simply, the rhetoric concerning dilution of doctoral standards is the
wrong approach. It is demoralising for professional doctorate students and those who supervise them and support them, including those silent supporters, families and friends. Argument and counter argument regarding the professional doctorate’s merits for health and social care, some of which has been summarised here, detracts from more fundamental evaluation of doctoral delivery and impact regardless of doctoral route. Powell and Long (2005) ask why distinctions are maintained between PhD and professional doctorate and this paper has considered salient issues, requiring clarification in health and social care.

Three critical questions have been explored; credibility, student experience and practice impact. Regarding credibility relative to the PhD, it is not clear yet whether the professional doctorate does detract from the PhD, or indeed if the espoused process differences relative to the PhD, transfer into impact differences within practice. Neither those for or against the professional doctorate have substantive evidence and further robust evaluation is required for the professional doctorate and other doctoral routes.

Those who really need to lead the evaluation of professional doctorates in health and social care; the students, employers, professional bodies and service users are strangely silent within the current discourse. Discussion is literally ‘academic’ in the sense that it is led by academics. There should be wider clarity and consideration of employer wants and needs and student experiences of professional doctorates and other modes of doctoral study in health and social care. There are wider critical questions to explore regarding doctoral study per se within health and social care practice, and the best way of ensuring professionals have the expertise and professional confidence to inform and underpin practice while contributing to wider professional issues. There needs to be discussion and evaluation of the professional doctorate and doctoral study processes to ensure studies fit for purpose, providing a supportive and stimulating learning experience for students. Ironically, for the professional doctorate embedded within professional practice, there appears to be little employer or student engagement to shape the future.

While professional doctorate programme teams are keen to point out employer and professional involvement within seminar presentations, or informal mentorship, there needs to be more fundamental exchange of expertise in the practice field and vice versa. The current system of part-time study away from the practice setting, whether this involves face to face or virtual learning, detracts from wider professional support and participation in the post graduate community of practice that exists for doctoral students. Furthermore, there is still limited consideration of professional leadership to undertake research in practice, and the challenges of real world research.

7.5 Bibliography


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8 Professional Doctorates for Social Science

8.1 Context

This paper will review the provision of professional doctorates in social sciences broadly understood as inclusive terminology capturing Psychology, Criminal Justice, Professional Practice, Health, Social Care and Social Work. Psychology has a clearly articulated professional doctorate structure and will receive less attention than Social Sciences.

Design issues considered are the regulation guidance by professional bodies, the taught and research element or programmes, learning outcomes, credit accumulation, entry requirements, contribution to professional practice, and the typical weight/length of the research thesis. Issues considered in successful delivery of the Professional Doctorate in Social Sciences will examine supervision, mode of study, progression, funding, impact, the age of austerity for the public sector, continuing professional development agendas and the international dimension.

The definition of social sciences defies easy clarity, as the World Social Science Report, 2010: ‘Knowledge divides’ suggests, it can be constructed as covering a multiplicity of areas. In a UK context, the registrations of doctoral degree candidates’ theses in the British Library, creating an electronic archive, are arranged by broad, general subject categories for ‘humanities, psychology and social sciences’. The Higher Education Funding Council for England’s (HEFCE) Research Excellence Framework (REF) Units of Assessment (UoA) develop descriptors of the scope and boundaries of each UoA, ensuring that all fields of research can be assessed within their collective scope. Currently, these are grouped under four main panels; A: Health; B: Science and engineering; C: Social Sciences and D: Humanities and Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA) categorisation presents significant issues for recording doctoral data. Despite the plethora of categorisation (and intellectual reflection on this process, vide Foucault 1970, 1972), the ‘broad church’ of social sciences captures Education, Social Science, Psychology. The blurred boundaries between health and medicine and health and social care present an interesting mix and one that will receive some attention. Elements of Humanities such as Philosophy vie for inclusion as do Engineering and Medicine, but for the purpose of this review the provision of professional doctorates in social sciences will be excluded. Psychology and Education are considered ‘stand alone’ categories and will receive little attention.

This contextual discussion will include a summary of the history of developments in social sciences’ professional doctorates at national level. Definitions of the professional doctorate given by the United Kingdom Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE, 2002) describes it as ‘a programme of advanced study and research which, whilst satisfying the university criteria for the award of a doctorate, is designed to meet the specific needs of a professional group external to the university’. Usher (2002) identifies ‘a diversity of Doctorates’ from structured models with coursework as well as independent study, to models placing the learner centre stage in defining their learning through portfolios and work-based projects. As Wellington and Sykes (2006) suggest, ‘it is useful to conceive of a continuum of professional doctorates, PDs, to accommodate the diversity in nature, form, content and assessment’ (ibid: 728) of ‘practitioner doctorates’ concerned more with practice development and change (Lester, 2004).

Scourfield (2010) suggests professional doctorates aimed at producing knowledge for professional practice are ‘fairly well established’ in the UK, appearing in the early 1990s (Bourner et al., 2001), especially in education, engineering, medicine and clinical psychology. There have also been significant developments in recent years in business administration and nursing (Bourner et al., 2001; Ellis, 2005; Powell and Long, 2005; Scott et al., 2004; Stephenson et al., 2006).

The first degree scheme in the UK that can unambiguously be termed a professional doctorate was the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (D Clin Psy), which began in 1989 (Scott et al., 2004). This is a pre-service degree and required for practice in clinical psychology (Powell and Long, 2005). Scourfield (2010: 569) suggests the doctorate in education (EdD) is the UK’s commonest professional doctorate degree (Powell and Long, 2005), arrived in 1992, according to Bourner et al. (2001). Doctorates in Business Administration and Engineering are well developed (Scott et al., 2004).

Central to the heart of the D.Prof is professional practice. It has been described as developing ‘researching professionals’ rather than ‘professional researchers’, and as part of the move towards the knowledge economy in higher education, and can be seen as part of the transformation from ‘autonomous scholar’ into ‘enterprising self’ (Rose 1998: 168). Fenge (2009: 166) argues that professional doctorates enable an immersion in an area of doctoral research that was situated in a world of professional practice and that could be doctoral study in a tight compartment (Wellington and Sykes, 2006).

Bourner et al. (2001) identify twenty areas in which professional doctorates can be distinguished from PhDs. The summary by Scott et al. (2004) highlights the distinctive contribution of the professional doctorate under just three main themes: the production of a portfolio
rather than one thesis; different knowledge criteria, namely knowledge that is relevant for the workplace; and (in theory) a combination of written product and practice performance as the end-point of doctoral study. Powell and Long (2005) note three kinds of professional doctorate title: first, those naming a specific professional field (e.g. DSW); second, D Profs in a specific area (e.g. D Prof in Health and Social Care) and, third, generic D Profs (Scourfield, 2010: 576). The identity professional doctorates emphasises the importance of the connection with practice (Neuman, 2005), and the notion that students exist within two communities of practice, namely the academic and the professional (Wellington and Sikes, 2006).

The diversity of the professional doctorate has lead to the categorisation of first, second and third generations. The first-generation degrees looked rather more like structured Ph.Ds, whereas the second-generation degrees are more flexible, integrated with the workplace and involve a portfolio model of assessment instead of the more traditional professional doctorate structure of coursework plus thesis (Maxwell, 2003) demonstrating change and continuity (Pearson, Evans and Macauley, 2008). Thorpe et al. (2007) have further argued that a ‘third generation’ of professional doctorates can genuinely integrate academic knowledge, professional practice and research skills. Third generation doctorates have seen the growth in reflexivity where, as Cunliffe (2003: 984) suggests, ‘reflexive scholars question the threads of philosophical and methodological certainty implicit in the goal of mainstream social science to provide an absolute view of the world’. Reflexive scholarship is representative of a growing maturity and self-reflexivity of third generation professional doctorates.

In social work one of the main attractions of professional doctorates is in building research capacity (Lyons, 2002; Orme, 2003; Orme and Powell, 2007), and indeed the significance of this measure can be gauged by the College of Social Work’s prioritisation of research informed practice. In bridging theory and practice (Shaw 2007), social work PDs create the opportunity to engage in what has remained largely part-time study (Lyons 2002) and in-service development of applied research (Orme 2003). Powell and Long (2005), in their survey of professional doctorate awards in the UK, found only five programmes that explicitly included social work or social care plus two generic ‘D Profs’ that, in theory, could encompass social work along with a range of other professional groups’ (Scourfield, 2010: 568).

On a continuum the diversity of third generation professional doctorates (Stephenson et al., 2004), established over the past thirty years, are appreciably different in design from PhDs and make significant contributions to professional practice.

8.2 Design

There are over 150 ‘recognised bodies’ within the UK who have the authority to award UK degrees (QAA, 2010a). Adopting a web-based systematic review of professional doctorates in social sciences suggests there are around 90 programmes that exist in this area. Reviewing the provision and delivery of professional doctorates provides evidence and supports the argument that these programmes are most clearly articulated in the field of psychology and education (around 50 and 40 programmes). Powell and Green (2005) have charted the difficulty in the nomenclature of discipline and professionally specific programmes, such as psychology.

Doctorates are not normally credit-rated, partly because of the dominance of original research which can take on an infinite number of guises within doctoral programmes, but also because learning at this advanced level is not linear or simply additive (Denicolo and Park, 2010). However, there is broad agreement from the programmes reviewed that ratings are attached that sum to 540 credits at D level.

Programme learning outcomes for professional doctorates require successful completion of ‘taught’ elements and contribution by research usually in a thesis. A PhD’s outcomes are ‘an original contribution to knowledge’, but PDs have a range of demonstrable outcomes including contributions to professional practice and managerial, organizational and ethical issues. Practice varies, but typically professional doctorates include postgraduate study equivalent to a minimum of three full-time calendar years with level 7 [Masters] study representing no more than one-third of this (QAA, 2008: 11).

The Russell Group offer professional doctorates, but usually within the specified professional field. For example, Birmingham currently has ten programmes leading to the award of distinct professional doctorates under the title of ‘hybrid doctorate’. The majority of professional doctorate programmes ‘frontload’ their taught credits in the first year of the programme, which contradicts the requirement that the credits be spread over the programme. Birmingham also offers a Professional Doctorate in Social Sciences (SocSciD) a programme,

29. Scourfield’s (2010) survey of social work professional doctorates suggests the following universities either have active professional doctorates that incorporate a social work element or offer generic schemes that are suitable for social workers Anglia Ruskin, Birmingham, Brighton, Bournemouth, Cardiff, East Anglia, Glasgow Caledonian, Middlesex, Portsmouth, Salford, Sheffield Hallam, Sussex, Tavistock Clinic/University of East London, University of the West of England. This includes five pre-1992 universities and nine that are post-1992. It is worth noting the research profiles of the social work as represented by the 2001 RAE outcome (looking at social work, social policy and sociology panels), there are two universities with a Grade 5, two with a Grade 4, two with a Grade 3a and two with a Grade 3b. Scourfield (2010: 572) suggests six out of the fourteen universities did not return social work staff groups to the 2001 RAE. The following universities either have concrete plans for establishing a professional doctorate or have expressed interest in doing so in future: Bedfordshire, Chichester, Hertfordshire, Hull, Lancaster, South Bank, Swansea and York.
normally of three years’ duration, integrating taught postgraduate work and/or professional practice with research within a programme of 540 credits. The programme comprises research related work (training and thesis or dissertation) and no more than 180 credits of subject-focused taught modules (a recent change from 120 credits).

Middlesex’s Work-Based Learning DProf consists of 180 credits at level 7 and 360 credits at level 8. All the level 8 work is project-based, although it may not be a single large project: candidates may be able to submit some previous work as accredited prior learning at level 8, or produce two linked projects (Costley, 2010). Although, there is broad unanimity on the need for 540 credits for composition of this is variable.

The majoritity of professional doctorates follow a two stage process with significant pedagogical input, assessment and cohort-based learning in part one with thesis and Viva voce examines independent research in part two. The first part usually comprises of epistemological, methodological and professional practice modules. For example, Brighton offers eleven available awards (Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Podiatry, Social Work, Health Promotion, Health Care, Counselling and Psychotherapy, Midwifery, Nursing, Pharmacy, Biomedical Sciences) built on this model.

Professional Doctorates in Social Work, DSW, (3 to 5 years) usually comprise a research and professional development component of one or two pieces of practice-based research, linked with a commentary demonstrating the relevance of the research to both practice and the practitioner. The nature of this study may include pure basic research or applied research related, for example, to a management or educational setting. This should normally take between 18 and 36 months to complete. Assessment is based on a thesis or portfolio of research, an oral presentation and a Viva voce examination.

The usual total credit value of a Professional Doctorates is 540 credits, of which the taught modules will normally comprise 120 credits, and the research element 420 credits. In all cases the credit value of the research element must exceed the taught element (QAA Code of Practise section 1 2004). In the case of accredited prior learning a minimum total of 480 credits to include the research element must be studied.

In terms of size of output, Scourfield (2010: 576) suggests a standardized feature is the number of words expected adds up to around 80,000. However, there is some controversy area is the amount of M-level work that is incorporated into several professional doctorate programmes. Reviewing the length of the thesis suggests these range between 35 000 words (Lancaster’s Professional Doctorate in Organisational Health and Well-being, Palliative Care and Public Health) and, at the upper end of the scale, 50 000 words (University of Leeds Professional Doctorate in Health and Social Care) and Keele’s (DMedEth) 60 000 words for the final submission of a thesis. The pattern is very similar to that found in the EdD qualification (Fell, Flint and Haines, 2011); Plymouth’s word limit for the thesis states ‘Professional Doctorate project theses may vary in word limit depending on the subject area. The prescribed word limit must not exceed that for a PhD (80,000 words).’

Scourfield (2010: 577) further suggests there is a issue of equity in terms of the ‘doctorateness’ of the whole programme of study, or how far M level qualifications contribute to the professional doctorate and so whether it is clear what level of achievement is demanded of the student. Similarly, there is variation for prior learning, for example, Oxford Brookes offers a Coaching and Mentoring (PT 4 to 6 years) where Masters qualifications may be considered for accredited prior learning.

Fenge (2009), commenting on Bournemouth’s D. Prof programme, observes that no interim pieces of work are submitted during the course of the doctorate, apart from the M.Phil transfer document and Viva. The final thesis (40 000 words) combines four components, emphasising not only research or systematic review of practice (15 000 words), but also evidencing new practice knowledge and development (20 000 words), and a reflective narrative on the process emphasising the integration of the work with the original contribution to knowledge (15 000 words).

Duration of study and mode of study also demonstrates some variation, but is usually two years for the first part and two years for the second part with a maximum of seven years. Entry requirements are normally a good first degree, a Masters degree and two years experience. The pass mark for each taught module is 50% with a Pass/Fail decision. Where module assessment involves more than one element of assessment, a student is also required to achieve a minimum of 40% in each element. Exceptionally, a module may be approved with the requirement that a student achieve a pass (50%) in each of the coursework/examination elements.

One of the opaque areas is the intended contribution to professional practice that the professional doctorate makes and an area for future study. Ellis’ (2007) study reported on the perceptions of senior academics’ working in institutions of higher education towards professional doctorates for the health and social care professions. Arguing that little being little empirical or theoretical work in terms of the doctorates contribution to practice has been conducted, Ellis (2005, 2007) attempts to begin to produce an evidence base in this area by reporting the views of those stakeholders responsible for delivering the curriculum and for improving practice. Telephone interviews and content analysis of programmes suggests there are three board categories of enthusiastic, ambivalent and sceptical views towards
the professional doctorate. The views of senior managers also suggest some variability about the contribution to professional practice that the professional doctorate makes (Fenge, 2009).

Regulatory guidance by professional bodies is articulated by General Social Care Council, College of Social Work, British Psychological Society, broad and generic guidance rather than regulation is provided by professional associations such as the British Educational Research Association and Social Research Association. Discipline based professional regulation is most clearly articulated with the British Psychological Society where Government legislation protects award titles to protect the public from ‘charlatans’ and ‘poor practice’.

Professional doctorates in the broad field of social science also include placement learning. For example, Brunel’s Doctor of Public Health programme (DrPH) combines professional placements in Public Health Research, Policy and Practice with an advanced taught component over 3 years for a research-led coursework module, three placements generating a publishable paper and a final unifying piece of work.

Concerning progression and enhancement from undertaking the programme, there is a significant issue around the contribution of Accredited Prior Learning and Accredited Prior Certificated Learning for professional doctorate programmes. At Plymouth, for example, professional doctorate candidates are not required to undertake a process of transfer from MPhil to PhD’ (Plymouth), although whether candidates are eligible for ‘step-off; or ‘fall back’ awards such as MPhil or MRes that are laid down by individual course regulations and is open to question. There is some discrepancy over internal quality assurance mechanisms, (such as are programmes ‘taught’ or research degrees), validation process mechanisms, and how annual reporting on progress is recorded. Finally, an applicant seeking admission on the basis of a degree, which was not delivered and assessed in English will also be required to provide evidence of English language competence (normally IELTS 6.5-7.0).

8.3 Delivery and Best Practice

Reviewing doctoral supervision across a range of countries, Powell and Green (2010) conclude ‘one thing all countries shared was the notion that certain academic staff members were designated to be ‘in charge of’ doctoral candidates, though it is important to note here that supervision is not always the word used and the understanding of what it means to ‘guide / supervise / oversee / sponsor may vary’. In addition, doctoral supervision is seen as distinct from other forms of supervision in university life although this distinction may vary. Powell and Green (2010) argue supervisors have ‘to engage with a student who will necessarily challenge his/her existing understandings that supervision is not always the word used and the understanding of what it means to ‘guide / supervise / oversee / sponsor may vary’. Powell and Green (2010) suggest this is either a sign of maturity and add to, or change, those understandings of the particular aspect of the world that is under study’. It was also noticeable in the UK the kinds of parameters regarding the qualification, roles and training of supervisors are, in comparison to many other countries, relatively ill-defined and much less centrally regulated.

Powell and Green (2010) argue for a committee to stand outside the pedagogical relationship, typically with research degree committee’s deferring to academic judgement made by others. The qualification and eligibility of supervision is discussed where the QAA Code of Practice (2004) refers to the need for those who are to supervise to have the ‘appropriate skills and subject knowledge to support, encourage and monitor research students effectively’ (QAA, 2004, precept 11). In the UK qualifications to supervise and the appointment of supervisors are ‘custom and practice’ at an individual institutional level. Powell and Green (2010) suggest this is either a sign of maturity or opaqueness. For the appointment of supervisors they argue ‘academia in many of our examples can be seen to be permeated by a culture where reputation and status become imbued with indications of worthiness which may, or may not, have substance’.

Training of supervisors is discussed in the Report on the Review by QAA (QAA, 2007) it becomes clear that the training of ‘new’ supervisors has become commonplace in the UK if not universal (paragraph 34: 8) although the degree of training for established supervisors is less clear. The quality of supervision is discussed by Powell and Green (2010) who conclude ‘there is a lack of evidence regarding the quality of supervision’, goal posts [of best practice] being subtly but significantly moved in the process of reviewing and reporting’ leaving little room for scrutiny beyond the review team’s judgment of quality in the supervisory process.

Powell and Green (2010) suggest ‘supervision is, therefore, primarily an act of pedagogy – not of research’. The criteria and expectations of successful supervision are often negatively defined when there is a challenge raised to the supervisory process and inadequacy defines the necessary criteria.

The process of learning is about critically thinking through peer supervision and ‘cohort’ based group supervision sessions to reinforce identities within a community of scholar-practitioners. Such process has been thematised in terms of mutual respect, trust, understanding, co-operation and a feeling of enrichment from within the cohort (Fenge, 2009: 167). Significant learning styles are developed on professional doctorate programmes, on grounds of both group cohort based holistic learning that attends to academic, professional and personal learning (Mullen 2003) and a reflective dialogical and critical reflective learning (Brockbank and McGill, 1998). Lesham and Trafford (2006) suggest learning moves from the individual to the group through dialogue and storytelling as a cohort based pedagogy for ‘doctoral’ study.
Similarly, there is wide variation on the timing of classes with most programmes having block teaching to suit part-time students, but some have weekly contact and some very little contact with other students (Powell and Long 2005). This ranges from intensive three day sessions, pre- and post-reading and activities, weekend teaching for compulsory, generic and specialist modules. The second stage research of programmes is almost exclusively non-modular and is supported by annual weekend workshops, individual supervision and a virtual learning environment. It opens questions about how students are able to engage in inter-professional communities of learning and practice through the group supervision element, and how this is facilitated as candidates enrol as part of a cohort and attend a series of monthly seminars and group supervision sessions (Fenge, 2009: 166). Action learning sets, distance learning, e-learning and on-line support are all identified in support for learning.

The application of research, with its particular methodological and epistemological approaches in a range of occupational areas also provides an indication of the efficacy of the professional doctorate. The practice-based candidate’s personal, professional and disciplinary backgrounds, as well as giving a sense of immediacy and brevity inform methodological choice. Social science research methodologies provide the yard-stick, but practice-based approaches could be developed (Costley and Armsby, 2010).

8.4 Conclusions and Future Perspectives

Although we are now in exciting times for professional doctorates, there are a range of issues that would benefit from greater consideration. The conclusions that can be drawn from the preceding discussion are similar to those of Powell and Green (2005). There has been growth, diversification, proliferation and lack of clarity in awards and titles. Professional doctorates are not synonymous with ‘taught’ programmes. Further perspectives concern the role of recognition, internationalisation, and policy developments. There are significant issues with the nomenclature of the awards and unification and simplification in this process would be welcomed.

Recognition through Funding Council support for professional doctorates needs to be secured. The relationship between collaborative arrangements between business and higher education (Borell-Damain 2010) is also a burgeoning but re-ordering dimension to professional doctoral research. The contribution of professional doctorates to Europe’s Universities Association DOC-CAREERS project and Vitae’s continued support for post-graduates present significant areas for continued development. Professional doctorates also require cognisance of the joint skills statements published by the Research Councils, and professional framework statements from QAA. Internationally, Bologna and Salzburg principles on Doctorate Education and the Professional Doctorate in a European Context require monitoring to inform programmes for mutual recognition, transparency and mobility and compatibility (QAA, 2008a).

Professional doctorates are fundamental to develop all areas of professional practices’ research capacity and the capability of practitioners to improve (Orme, 2003) to develop ‘scholarly professionals’ (Fenge, 2009). The limitations of available data and issues for further research, policy and practice (Ellis, 2007) and the absence of Senior Manager’s perspective on the effectiveness of programme for researching professionals also present future, fertile possibilities. The ‘age of austerity’ with limited alternatives suggests the challenge of predominantly public sector sponsorship for professional doctorate programmes in financially challenged times.

How far the growth and diversity of different generational doctorates is a result of the widening participation agenda and growth in the higher educational experience of previously marginalized or excluded groups is a moot and mute point. Further research and contributions to the evidence base on the impact of professional doctorate programmes provide fertile ground for further work under the championship of United Kingdom Council for Graduate Education and special interest groups in professional doctorates.

8.5 Bibliography


Professional Doctorates in the UK 2011

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9 Practice-Led Doctorates in the Arts, Design and Architecture

9.1 Context: Terminology, Definitions and the Relevance of Practice

In this contextual section, two key issues should be addressed before proceeding with other issues in this chapter of the Report: the first relates to the use of the term ‘practice-led’ and the second concerns the relevance of a review on the Practice-led Doctorate (PLD) in the Arts, Design and Architecture, including the performing arts, as part of this survey of Professional Doctorates.

9.1.1 Practice-led vs practice-based doctorates

The term ‘practice-led’ has been used in this chapter, rather than the earlier term ‘practice-based’, to acknowledge its wider current use, as exemplified by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), which uses the term to refer to academic research in Art, Design and Architecture where elements of practice are involved, and more specifically to refer to:

Research in which the professional and/or creative practices of art, design or architecture play an instrumental part in an [academic] inquiry (Rust et al., 2007:11).

This generic definition was proposed following extensive consultation with academics working in the area. The AHRC ‘Guide to Student Eligibility’ (2009:16) provides more information about the character of practice-led research:

This definition of research provides a distinction between research and practice per se. Creative output can be produced or practice undertaken as an integral part of a research process. The Council would expect this practice to be accompanied by some form of documentation of the research process, as well as some form of textual analysis or explanation to support its position and to demonstrate critical reflection. Creativity or practice which involves no such processes is not eligible for support from the Council.

The term ‘practice-led’, now replacing the term ‘practice-based’, more strongly emphasises the importance of the research process. According to the Editorial by Biggs (2000):

Practice-based projects are those which include as an integral part the production of an original artefact in addition to, or perhaps instead of, the production of a written thesis. They are naturally of great interest to practising artists and designers, but they are not confined to these disciplines. One may find examples in music, in software design, in engineering, in law; in fact in any subject where the result might be an artefact generated in the laboratory or workplace.

The QAA notes in the Code of Practice – Section 1 (2004: 4) that ‘this document is intended to apply … to all forms of taught or professional doctorate’, without differentiating between practice-based/practice-led doctorates and professional doctorates per se.

It is interesting to note that a variety of terms has been used in different contexts to refer to academic research involving an element of practice in the Arts, Design and Architecture, including: ‘practice as research’, ‘studio-based’, ‘arts-based’, ‘performance as research’, ‘research by design’, ‘research by creative practice’, ‘practice-related’ and ‘practice-focused’. This variety of terminology reflects the differences in approach to the role of artistic/creative practice within academic research, as well as the fact that different terms are used in specific subject areas, such as in the performing arts or in design (‘research by design’).

It is not possible to address such differences within this short chapter, which focuses instead on generic issues and consequences of the fact that in recent years the use of practice in academic research in the Arts, Design and Architecture has become increasingly popular in a number of ways. In this chapter, the term ‘practice-based’, rather than the current term ‘practice-led’, is only used when referring to written sources where this term appears.

9.1.2 Earlier Reports

The earliest Report published in 1997 by the UKCGE in the area of Arts, Design and Architecture was coordinated by the former Rector of the Royal College of Art and Chairman of the Arts Council, Professor Sir Christopher Frayling. ‘Practice-based Doctorates in the Creative and Performing Arts and Design’ is a stand-alone document and does not form part of a wider review on the professional doctorate. Professor Elaine Thomas, Vice-Chancellor of the University for the Creative Arts, edited with others a separate UKCGE Report (2001) focusing specifically on ‘Research
In the present review, the plural ‘Arts’ in the expression ‘Arts, Design and Architecture’, AD&A, is proposed here to embrace all the arts, including the Performing Arts. The AHRC Research Review by Rust et al. (2007), which coined the term ‘Art, Design and Architecture’, touched on the Performing Arts, but not in detail (e.g., ibid: 23). In the present review, the plural ‘Arts’ in the expression ‘Arts, Design and Architecture’, AD&A, is proposed here to embrace all the arts, including the Performing Arts.

A small change in terminology should also be noted, namely that the umbrella term ‘Creative and Performing Arts’, widely used in the 1990s to denote the entire spectrum of Fine Art and Performing Arts, is now much less frequently used. The AHRC Research Review by Rust et al. (2007), which coined the term ‘Art, Design and Architecture’, touched on the Performing Arts, but not in detail (e.g., ibid: 23). In the present review, the plural ‘Arts’ in the expression ‘Arts, Design and Architecture’, AD&A, is proposed here to embrace all the arts, including the Performing Arts.

Doctorates in Creative and Performing Arts and Design were only briefly referred to in the earlier UKCGE Report (Hoddell, 2002: 7): The British Professional Doctorate has developed rapidly – if in a rather unstructured way – as higher education responded to the different research and development needs of specific professions. This gestation coincided with a period in which the PhD itself has been under scrutiny; for example, of its role in the performing and creative arts and in the broader context of training professionals for both industry and the academy.

In an article briefly referring to the differences between the PhD as a research degree exclusively based on independent research, and other doctoral degrees which include major taught elements – such as DMus, EdD and the Doctorate in Design (DDes) – Michael Biggs (2000) observed that ‘practice-based projects or submissions are often confused with professional doctorates’. The inclusion of the present chapter on Practice-led Doctorates in this UKCGE Report reviewing the Professional Doctorate should be clarified at this point, to avoid creating any confusion.

As stated in the first UKCGE Report (Hoddell, 2002: 7), the Professional Doctorate was developed as an alternative form of study at doctoral level, reflecting the fact that the traditional PhD was not always considered to fulfil the needs of industry, commerce or the public sector. By contrast, the Practice-led Doctorates discussed in the present chapter were not developed in response to any specific needs of the professional Arts, Design and Architecture domains, for the ultimate award of a PhD. In fact, the very concept of practice-based / practice-led research in AD&A refers more generally to a specific approach to academic research in these subject areas – this is the key characteristic, by contrast with many professional doctorates.

30. Practice-led research in the performing arts was reviewed by the PARIP (Practice as Research in Performance) project between 2001-2006, directed by Professor Baz Kershaw at the University of Bristol and funded by the AHRC. http://www.bris.ac.uk/parip/introduction.htm. The objectives were to investigate creative-academic issues raised by practice as research, where performance is defined, in accordance with AHRC and RAE usage, as ‘performance media: theatre, dance, film, video and television’. In collaboration with colleagues throughout the UK and Europe, the PARIP project aimed to develop national frameworks to encourage the highest standards in representing practical-creative research within academic contexts. The review outcomes are awaited, as is the book Research Methods in Theatre and Performance (Research Methods for the Arts and Humanities), edited by Baz Kershaw and Helen Nicholson, originally due for publication in May 2010.
The descriptors ‘practice-based / practice-led research’ also refer to a *category of educational provision* and the ways in which such provision is delivered. Interestingly, developments in practice-led doctorates reflect an acknowledgement that academic research in these areas should benefit from an active dialogue with professional practice – and that every effort should be made to encourage such dialogue by encouraging the interaction of interested professionals with a variety of academic contexts. 31

For this reason, the common element between the practice-led doctorate in AD&A and the Professional Doctorate in other disciplines is primarily related to the involvement of an element of practice in both types of doctorate, irrespective of any similarities between them in their structure, content and delivery mode. 32

As discussed in Frayling’s Report (1997):33:

> a distinction can be made between those subjects where there is not (generally) a creative, recordable outcome and those where there is – the wider category of ‘all subjects with a practice element’ could be the theme of a separate Report (*ibid:* 8).

More specifically, Frayling (1997: 13-14) goes on to suggest that:

> subjects with a ‘practice element’ in them, and this includes subjects such as teaching, medicine and engineering, can give rise to doctoral study in traditional forms – by research, in a taught mode or via publications – as indeed can art and design. These are not practice-based doctorates, although the focus of the research can be to advance knowledge about practice, or to advance knowledge within practice […] . By contrast with [the above], the practice-based doctorate advances knowledge partly by means of practice. An original/creative piece of work is included in the submission for examination. It is distinct in that significant aspects of the claim for doctoral characteristics of originality, mastery and contribution to the field are held to be demonstrated through the original creative work.

This chapter will proceed to elaborate on how the focus on practice in the research process affects the delivery of doctorates in AD&A, while maintaining the principle that these programmes remain strongly based on independent research, thus qualifying for the award of a PhD. The special requirement for appropriate research training for candidates engaged in studying for a doctorate in AD&A will also be considered.

### 9.2 Design: Implications discussed in the Frayling (1997) and Thomas (2001) Reports

#### 9.2.1 The Frayling Report (1997)

Sir Christopher Frayling’s Report arose from extensive consultation during the 1990s about the nature and content of practice-based doctorates in Creative and Performing Arts and Design. It was undertaken both to provide a clear picture of the field and to encourage the development of common standards across the UK. Frayling articulated the characteristics of practice-based doctorates and established certain key principles. It addressed the issue of whether scientific research was the only type of research that could lead to a PhD award, and suggested (*ibid:* 8) that ‘it is not longer possible to polarize subjects as conforming – or not – to the scientific method’; also (*ibid:* 15) that ‘there is already a continuum from scientific research to creative practice’.

The Frayling Report (1997) went on to suggest that:

> for this reason, the acquisition of relevant data, the exercise of critical and analytical skills, sustained and coherent argumentation, and clarity and (relative) permanence in presentation… [is more important than the] formation and testing of hypotheses; research questions often arise from a context (*ibid:* 15).

31. The scheme of Fellowships in the Creative and Performing Arts offered by the AHRC between 2000 and 2010 exemplified this strategy.
32. According to Schatzki (2000: 2), practices can be understood to be: ‘embodied … arrays of human activity [materially mediated by artefacts, hybrids, and natural objects and] centrally organized around shared practical understanding’.
33. It is important to clarify here that in using this argument there is no intention to undermine the significance of practice in disciplines outside the arts, design and architecture; or to imply that it is not possible to use practice ‘creatively’ within these other areas. There is no doubt that – through interdisciplinary and hybrid approaches in particular – such boundaries can be seriously challenged and this can have an impact on the supposed difference between Professional Doctorates and Practice-based/Practice-led Doctorates. This argument is only being used here to emphasise that, although practice is the common element between Professional Doctorates and PLD in AD&A, the former is usually presented as an alternative and complementary route to the PhD award, whereas the latter is clearly considered as being within the PhD category.
Frayling argued (ibid: 9) that ‘the notion of training for research, along with the expectation that the fruits of research [should] be communicated so as to make the contribution to knowledge, remain necessary attributes of the PhD award’. He suggested (ibid: 12) that:

a fundamental distinction can be drawn between the award of DMus, or DArt and Design, or DDance Performance, as opposed to a PhD in Music, or Art and Design, or Dance Performance. The distinction is between the quality of the created product or its production in the former case, and the research focus on the created product in academic context, in the latter case.

With reference to the relationship between academic and professional practice, Frayling proposed (ibid: 10) that:

one promising way of reaching a satisfactory definition of a PhD for practice-based work would be to start with the intentions of the candidate. This involves distinguishing the activities of the artist/designer/performer in their professional practice role from the academic research perspective they need to bring to bear on their creative work if they wish to submit the results for a PhD award.

A particularly useful section on ‘Research Perspectives in Art and Design’ in a publication from the former University of Central England (1996: 15) was cited to exemplify this point:

Whereas an artist or designer can simply present his or her end-product, and refuse further explanation, the academic art and design researcher is obliged also to map for his or her peers the route by which they arrived at that product.

Frayling’s Report (1997: 11) concluded that any practice-based research submitted for the PhD award should demonstrate all or most of a linked series of competences:

(i) to undertake a systematic enquiry, creation or design;
(ii) to apply methods and techniques appropriate to the subject, in self-critical and rigorous ways;
(iii) to grasp contingent areas of knowledge, context and performance/production;
(iv) to document the process of origination in a way which is communicable to peers in a permanent and reproducible form;
(v) to develop a sustained and logical argument contextualised to relevant discourse;
(vi) to justify actions and decisions relating to process and product; and
(vii) to perform/produce a work which is valid and original – arising out of the above – and of high quality.

Finally, as regards the issue of demonstrating equivalence of practice-based submissions for the award of PhD, Frayling noted, in summary, that in practice-based doctorates the determination of doctorateness34 is dependent on the exposition of both the artistic ‘process’ and the ‘product’ (which is a significant indicator of the process), through appropriate presentation of the practical work as well as use of documentation of the process. The characteristics of the assessment differentiate between whether the award is a PhD, or a named doctorate (ibid: 16-17).

9.2.2 The Thomas Report (2001)

As for the 1997 Report by Frayling et al., the Thomas Report (2001) for UKCGE on ‘Research Training in the Creative & Performing Arts & Design’ was based on extensive consultation amongst HEI and academic staff who work in this area. Thomas draws extensively on Frayling. To differentiate between professional practice and academic research, Thomas (2001) notes that:

‘Practice’ denotes the exercise of appropriate skills in the creation of an original work in the field or fields of creative and performing arts and design (e.g. drama, dance, music, fine arts, graphics, fiction, poetry, design). ‘Research’ refers to the activity pursued and the procedures followed in the PhD in toto and presented either by means of practice or by means of recognised text-based methods of inquiry in the humanities, or both these means (ibid: 10).

34. The issue of ‘doctorateness’ continues to be discussed in various contexts. The QAA (2010: 1) notes some general points about ‘the changing nature of doctoral education in the UK’, in which student experience is used as a point of reference to compare the various types of doctoral programme leading to various doctoral awards (ibid: 2). The issue of awarding credits and grades at doctoral level (as is the practice in some European countries) is also discussed (p3). The QAA has been conducting a longitudinal review on doctoral programmes since 2006. Analysis of some of the data collected as part of this review is currently available at http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/dottorlProg/progressMarch08.asp.

Some of the issues explored in this review – such as the originality of research submitted for a doctoral award and the relevant qualification descriptors – are discussed in summary form (QAA, 2007). These issues relate directly to the development of standards for PLD in AD&A, although nothing specific has yet been published.
A little earlier, in 2000, the UKCGE had published a Report on issues of ‘Research Training for Humanities Postgraduate Students’ by Professor Geoffrey Crossick, Vice-Chancellor of London University and erstwhile Chief Executive of the AHRB. Both Crossick and Thomas used the term ‘Creative and Performing Arts and Design’ (CPAD) to designate the relevant subject areas. The term was incorporated in the AHRB definition of ‘research’, and also found currency in the emerging Qualifications Framework developed by the Quality Assurance Agency.

The issues which informed the outcomes of the Thomas Report (2001: 15-16) focused on:

- The relationship between practice and critical or theoretical discourses and the concept of reflective self-criticism;
- The need, within a degree, to place any creative practice in its research context;
- The equivalence in the creative and performing arts and design of ‘new knowledge’ and its relationship to artistic quality and innovation;
- The relationships between research and artistic quality;
- The understanding of innovation in interpretative performance;
- The interpretation of the concept of ‘research question’ in the field of CPAD;
- The distinctive features and those common with other disciplines;
- The relative merit of the term ‘method’ against ‘methodology’;
- The appropriate relationship between the written and practical component of a research degree in CPAD;
- The function of any written component;
- The diversity of acceptable forms of the final ‘thesis’ incorporating practice;
- The role and status of an exhibition or performance in the examination and its relationship to the permanent reference for subsequent scholars;
- The special issues facing collaborative research in areas of CPAD;
- The special and common features with other disciplines particularly with the humanities;
- The relationship between masters and research degrees in the sector;
- The matter of employability.

Amongst the most crucial observations made in this Report were the following (ibid: 18):

1. The term ‘thesis’ should refer to the totality of the submission (including all practical and theoretical components) and ‘specification of a word length or a proportion between the written and practical component was unnecessary and unhelpful prior to formulation of the final research proposal’ (ibid: 15)
2. ‘an eclectic approach [to methodology] could be valuable’ and any unconsidered use of methodologies imported from other disciplines (whether these were humanities or sciences) could be problematic.

Thus it seemed inappropriate to advocate the development of a generic curriculum of research methods. It was suggested that ‘focusing on the conditions of the research environment’ and on ‘the dialogue with active researchers and practitioners’ would be a more suitable approach (ibid: 19). The following issues (ibid: 20) were identified as key factors for research training provision:

- The requirements of a research environment;
- The necessity for a critical mass of research students and how this might be achieved in smaller institutions;
- The relationship between established and emerging centres of research;
- The possible need for consortia and collaboration in providing research training programmes;
- The relationship between research training and employability;
- The need for a continuing evolution of research methods in the arts through national debate.

9.3 Delivery and Best Practice

9.3.1 Observations and recommendations (Frayling, 1997)

Frayling’s Report addressed the issue of whether a practice-based doctorate should be understood as a different type of doctorate or not, and recommended that, since the focus of this doctorate is on research, an inclusive approach was not only possible but also more efficient (ibid: 15), concluding that (his emphasis):

> What is needed is a set of nationally agreed definitions of standards for the award of doctorates, framed in such a way that they are sufficiently rigorous to secure demonstration of the qualities outlined above35, but sufficiently inclusive to allow all subjects to find expression within them. Subject specialists, both academics and practitioners, could evolve and agree a subset of specific guidelines/criteria appropriate to particular disciplines.

35. The 7 qualities or ‘competences’ referred to are listed here in section 9.2.1.
Referring back to Frayling’s Report for the UKCGE in 1997, a strong case was made for the development of common standards across the types of award, a primary element is the strong focus on and engagement with practice.

As a research project, such decisions and directions typically would be consequential upon a systematic application of a process and level of self-reflection, critical analysis and synthesis, evaluation, conceptual frame-building, acquisition and application of contextual knowledge and an understanding of the ways the practice is related to theory, in relation to the specific work being undertaken. The Report (1997) emphasized that appropriate forms of documentation are the necessary tool through which the research process can be recorded, so that the contribution to knowledge emerging from this process can become accessible within the discipline and assessed as an outcome of a rigorous and intellectually demanding programme of study (ibid: 16-17).

9.3.2 Observations and recommendations (Thomas, 2001)

This survey identified a number of strengths and weaknesses in the provision of research training for research students in CPAD (p. 23). Important strengths included: ‘Flexibility, provision of access to specialist courses, visiting speaker programmes, contact with professional communities, a ‘safe’ setting for students to explore creative possibilities related to their research, grounding in relevant issues and skills of research, social engagement, together with opportunities for dialogue with both staff and other students’.

Some of the problems identified in existing research training courses included (ibid: 23): ‘The diversity of students’ needs, tension between generic and subject-specific training, scheduling and attendance by part-time students, and the lack of models for ‘best practice’ in CPAD’. Respondents regarded research in CPAD as somehow being ‘special’ and ‘distinctive’, in that their research involved practice which they regarded as being in contrast to the paradigm of research exemplified in the humanities and the sciences (ibid: 25).

Recommendations made in the Thomas Report include: the concept of a needs-based model (ibid: 33), the importance of an active research environment (ibid: 34), the importance of ‘a plan of support which continues throughout the research programme and where individual training needs are satisfied by a menu of institutional, faculty or departmental training opportunities’ (ibid: 35), types of appropriate content for the training programmes (ibid: 37), the importance of transferable skills provision (ibid: 38), the relevance of developing MA programmes with specialized training in CPAD (ibid: 40), the importance of strengthening the research environment within institutions (ibid: 41) and the importance of collaborative provision of research training across disciplines and institutions (ibid: 45).

9.4 Conclusions and Future Perspectives

The term ‘Practice-led Doctorates in the Arts, Design and Architecture’ as employed in this chapter corresponds to the term ‘practice-led research’ currently used by the AHRC, when referring to research in which professional and creative artistic practice is an integral part of the inquiry. This description, as proposed by Rust et al. (2007) in their AHRC Research Review, also covers more accurately the full range of relevant disciplines in Arts, Design and Architecture.

A significant difference between Professional Doctorates and Practice-led Doctorates in the Arts, Design and Architecture relates to the fact that these Practice-led Doctorates are classified as a constituent part of the PhD award, recognising the importance of the research element. Whereas the Professional Doctorates, including as they do substantial taught elements and a significant research project, are generally classified as an award whose name reflects the scope of the programme. The common feature can be seen to be that in both types of award, a primary element is the strong focus on and engagement with practice.

Referring back to Frayling’s Report for the UKCGE in 1997, a strong case was made for the development of common standards across the UK. The picture painted in the mid-to-late 1990’s is reflected in the following statements:

‘It is to be hoped that the outcomes of the QAA Working Party will effect a resolution of the current confused and incomplete picture. Our survey revealed some areas of well developed practice that could form the basis of generic regulations/guidelines which would engender consensus in action as well as better defining what a British PhD actually is. Such regulations would need to touch upon: (i) how to frame proposals to achieve registration, (ii) details of the arrangements for confirmation of PhD registration or transfer from MPhil to PhD, (iii) the characteristics of the original work and (iv) the means by which it is submitted for examination, (v) the form, nature and length of the commentary, allowing for word count equivalence in non-text forms, (vi) guidance on Vivas and composition of examination team’ (ibid: 19-20).

Frayling et al. introduced some of the complexities of the relationship between artistic practice and academic research, which is the core characteristic of Practice-led Doctorates in AD&A. The Report also emphasized the importance both of process and of outcome in the
research, as well as recognising that the contribution to knowledge should be sufficiently evident in the product (artwork or artefact). The Crossick review on Research Training in the Creative and Performing Arts and Design (2001) gave valuable insights into the factors involved in setting up an appropriate training process for research students in the Humanities. A later AHRC Research Review of Practice-led research conducted by Rust et al. (2007) put the ‘landscape’ of research in AD&A into perspective as regards current AHRC policies illustrated by examples of practitioners. The QAA review on the changing nature of British doctorates (2006) was followed by an extensive QAA review of doctoral degree characteristics (2011), which also addresses the locus of practice-led doctorates and professional doctorates in the UK.

It is clear that there is an urgent need for a comprehensive review of Practice-led Doctorates in AD&A, informed by the outcomes of the QAA review on doctoral degree characteristics (2011) and supported by a fresh consultation among academic institutions, staff and students conducting research in this area. This overdue review should revisit definitions and assumptions about the nature of Practice-led Doctorates in AD&A – to focus on the specificity of the contribution to knowledge in this area, plus the relationship between academic research and artistic/creative practice. The organizational and procedural arrangements involved in the delivery of this form of doctorate in AD&A should also be considered – from recruitment to examination, including issues of supervision, research training, general support and the quality of the research environment. The outcomes of such a review would inform discussion on appropriate conditions for the development, funding and publication of doctorates in the Arts, Design and Architecture, to engender a wider appreciation of the contribution of research in the creative arts to society as a whole.

9.5 Bibliography

9.5.1 Sources quoted in this Chapter


9.5.2 Resources relating to practice-led research


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10 Towards a Metric for Measuring the Value of Professional Doctorates

10.1 Introduction

Clearly, as the preceding chapters illustrate, there exist in the UK a wide range of differently constructed professional and practice based doctorate awards in a variety of professional fields. This chapter attempts to outline some of the issues that need to be considered in deciding how to measure the value of a professional doctorate (PD). In doing so, we will take a UK perspective, but consider trends and evidence from Europe, including the Bologna discussions; Australia which has a well developed history in PD education, and the USA where there is contemporary debate about the place of PDs in graduate education. The recent Strategic Leaders Global Summit (2010) in Brisbane, Australia had representation from 17 countries, and recognised the need for assessment frameworks designed specifically for masters’ and doctoral education. It agreed on 10 principles, including the value of a quality metric. In an increasingly global educational arena it is necessary to consider the range of issues affecting different countries in designing the metric.

In this paper we show how existing policy statements, guidance notes and other documents often either ignore the PD or conflate it with the PhD. Perhaps there is more variance within PDs than between some PDs and PhDs. However, our intention is to view the design of a PD metric from the perspective of the PD. This will involve attempting to define what the range of PDs aim to do. We contend that the facets that need considering for a PD can vary from those of a PhD because of their focus on practice rather than theory, and unless this is clarified the PD is likely to be measured with a yard stick which is skewed towards the very specific imperatives of the PhD. There are a number of ways of approaching the question of what needs to be considered in determining the value of PDs, ranging from the meeting of an individual’s educational need, through satisfying employers’ requirements, to improving the greater good for society and the world. We might also consider what drivers there are for Universities to offer PDs, and what they are setting out to achieve in offering them. Some PDs are connected with accreditation for a profession while others provide Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for the professional field. Thus professional bodies have differing interests in the outcomes of PDs. With this range of stakeholders, and recognising that ‘value’ depends on the importance placed on each of the perspectives, we wonder who should decide what will be considered, and how a fair and transparent metric can be constructed?

In this chapter we look at some of the current contextual issues such as UK government policy and then we consider various different stakeholder perspectives on the value of PDs which are inevitably contrasted with the long-established PhD. We then look at the various outcomes and impacts they may bring. Our aim is to encourage further debate about what needs to be considered in developing a sensible metric for measuring the value of PDs.

10.2 Policy Issues

The government has an important and far reaching interest in recognising the value of any educational process. In the UK the agenda for education has changed over the last 25 years from an emphasis on education for its own sake through lifelong learning to the current focus on skills for employment (HEFCE, 2009). PDs can be described as fairly explicitly meeting the needs of the current agenda. However, as a doctoral level qualification and practice based research degree, governmental research-related departments’ influence is also of importance. Examples of inconsistencies with this include the ESRC’s recognition of the importance of PDs (2005) but their refusal to fund them (2009) and the UK’s National Institute for Health Research which supports health related researchers through fellowships for PhDs, but not for PDs. This is an indicator of what types of knowledge are perceived as acceptable. The more discipline-based, theory driven research of the PhD is prized and accepted in some professions more than research from professional, practice focused doctorates. HEFCE’s ambition to include impact or benefit of research to society and economy in the forthcoming Research Excellence Framework, REF, illustrates their wish to make research and post graduate education more useful. The draft template for impact includes such items as external reports and documents which are often an outcome of professional doctorates. The Browne Report (2010) has only one small section on post graduate education, but states that HEFCE’s place will be to target ‘investment on courses that are a priority for public interest’ (ibid: 55).

Government are also concerned with the assessment of quality and standards of PDs. Measures of quality and standards can be thought of as incorporating the foundational elements of a PD metric. But part of the problem is deciding what constitutes quality and what are deemed appropriate standards. The QAA (2004) Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education lists in precept 4 a range of indicators and targets that should be considered in monitoring the success of the management of postgraduate research programmes including submission and completion times and rates, withdrawal rates, and feedback from research students, employers, sponsors and other external funders. The QAA Framework for HE Qualifications (2008) outlines qualification descriptors at doctoral level which include ‘a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at
the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice’ (ibid: 24). Its recent draft ‘Doctoral degree characteristics’ (QAA, January 2011) has been published partly to ‘emphasise the need for equivalence in the different types of UK doctorate’ (ibid: 15).

In the US where multiple agencies dictate doctoral standards (e.g., professional accrediting agencies, regional university accreditors, or state agencies), the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) produced the 2008 Task Force Report on the Professional Doctorate where they highlighted some of the issues certain to face this degree, not just in the US but globally and particularly for health care professions doctorates:

‘...different agencies define differently how the core characteristics [of the professional doctorate] are met, they inevitably will include in their standards matters not included in the core characteristics’ (ibid: 2).

Ultimately, the political decisions about the overall framework for evaluation of the PDs will be made in a climate with some differing perspectives from across various disciplines. But until the PD community itself comes to some conclusion, the PhD community may very well define the PD by indicating where it falls short of the PhD, and that would be unfortunate. The much awaited National Research Council’s Report (2010) on doctoral programs in the US has recently identified 20 major variables for measuring doctoral program quality, but already some Deans are coalescing behind only 7 of the indicators: 1) median time to degree; 2) average six-year completion rate; 3) average number of doctorates awarded per year; 4) proportion of first-year students with full financial support; 5) proportion of graduates with academic plans (meaning postdoctoral fellowships or faculty jobs immediately after leaving the program); 6) proportion of under-represented minorities on the faculty; and 7) proportion of under-represented minority students (Glenn, 2010). Moreover, PD students were not calibrated in this data. However, few of these indicators are useful in measuring the value of a postgraduate programme much further than to the individual and the university in terms of completion rate. Whilst completion fulfils students’ aim to achieve the award, PDs may offer some outcomes of value when only partially completed if the PDs wider aims to improve practice and the work context are met.

The Bologna seminar on ‘Doctoral Programmes for the European Knowledge Society’ (EUA, 2005) whilst recognising ‘the rich diversity of doctoral programmes in Europe’, provided a similarly restricted view of doctorates, with candidates as ‘early years researchers’ doing research in ‘a research environment’ (ibid: 2). The 2010 update on achievements (EUA, 2010) continues in this vein with only a mention that there should be ‘measures to facilitate cooperation between providers of doctoral education and the non academic sectors’, which may take place in ‘industrial doctorates or similar schemes’. The PD, albeit less prevalent (or non-existent) in other parts of Europe, is not acknowledged in these papers. Clarke and Powell (2009) explore the definition of quality and remark ‘any notion of quality… needs to accommodate the differing needs of the different stakeholders’ (ibid: 20). We suggest the present quality measures do not do justice to the professional and organisational effects that PDs aim for.

In the UK, Vitae have recently (2010) published the researcher development framework which outlines twelve sub domains of capabilities that doctoral candidates must acquire. In Australia, the 2007 Council of Australian Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies Guidelines for Professional Doctorates (available since June 1998) outlined six such capabilities. There is clearly a developing aspiration to benchmark what ‘doctorateness’ is, even if it is an ‘elusive’ concept (Denicolo and Park, 2010: 5). Standards of quality can be considered at a universal level (inclusive of all PDs) and at the disciplinary/professional level (where, for example, the DCPsych, EdD etc. would have additional separate standards related to their individual focus). Thus, there are two options: 1) establish broad standards for any doctorate (much like the QAA and Vitae have now) or 2) establish unique standards that have particular meaning for the PD independent of the PhD. While the first option may seem the most logical, especially in light of the debate over the Bologna 3rd Doctoral Cycle which aims to formalize doctoral degree parity and qualification across the European Union, there is a plausible argument that the aims of the PD warrants a more descriptive definition separate from the PhD (Benelux Bologna Secretariat, 2009).

In summary, on one level it appears that in the UK PDs are valued by the same criteria as PhDs e.g. the common qualification descriptors. While these criteria are quite sympathetic to the ethos of PDs, they have been developed from the original PhD perspective on knowledge creation. Also, how the PD is valued in practice is likely to depend on how the various stakeholders conceptualise it and its quality, especially those with the power to influence their uptake.

10.3 The Academy View of PDs

The fascinating debate between various interested parties on the possible introduction of the EngD at Cambridge reproduced by Taylor (2008) illustrates nicely the concerns that some academics and academic institutions have regarding credibility of the PD. In the UK Council for Graduate Education’s ‘Quality and Standards of Postgraduate Research Degrees’ (2009) ‘…there is some evidence that not all involved with doctoral education are committed to parity of esteem between professional doctorates and the PhD’ (Clarke & Powell, 2009: 21). Stewart (2009), President of the Council of Graduate Schools, has also indicated that the professional doctorate is not considered equivalent to the PhD in the US. In Australia, Pearson and colleagues (1997: 366) suggest the PD is ‘equal but different’ to the PhD’. Again,
issues of the credibility of a newer type of doctorate cannot be easily resolved, particularly in the absence of particular standards or guidelines which ensure the rigor of an individual doctoral degree—and thus the need to heed the call of this paper to begin a more formal discussion about how (not whether or should) the PD can be evaluated differently than the PhD.

Much has been written about the theory and practice divide, which could be described as analogous with a PhD—PD divide. For the PhD the pursuit of largely theory-based original research has traditionally been held as the ideal, but a common criticism is that the resultant knowledge may not be used. The PD, however, requires the generation and use of knowledge to develop practice. Others advocate more practice theory (Nixon and Creek, 2006). As Lee, Brennan, and Green (2009) state ‘These debates (about the professional doctorate) suggest the generation of a different knowledge distinguished by practice rationalities and practice forms of reasoning’ (ibid: 276). Some in the nursing field argue: ‘Where the professional doctorate takes the candidate directly to the clinical field, the PhD tends to take him or her away from it’ (Pearson, Borbasi and Gott, 1997: 367). This statement would likely be true for most other PD areas too. For this reason, based on the work of Gibbons et al. (1994) and later Nowotny, Scott and Gibbons (2001), some scholars have promoted the concept of Mode 2 knowledge generation for the PD, although this conceptualization does not appear to have widely penetrated the global PD community.

Still others contend that it is actionable knowledge that is most aligned with the purpose of this degree, particularly since action research is deemed to be more egalitarian, democratic, and participatory (Adler and Shani, 2001; Drummond & Themessl-Huber, 2007). While making reference to practitioners versus academics but not necessarily PDs, Marti and Villasante (2009) describe a process of action research evaluation that is internally oriented toward the practice itself (‘inwards’), which we would presume is the domain of the PD. Conversely, they describe an opposite external orientation toward transferability (‘outwards’) which again we would also term the process of generalisability and more the domain of the PhD. But as action research is also widely conducted by PhDs, it may not provide our clearest description of PD generated knowledge, and reminds us that the term PD may symbolise for some academics a type of knowledge (practical) that is less esteemed, whatever the nomenclature.

Fink (2006: 35) has declared ‘The Professional Doctorate is attracting increasing attention because of its perceived greater than the Doctor of Philosophy’s focus on meeting the needs of the knowledge economy’. At the first International Conference on the Professional Doctorate (ICPD) in London, Garelick, Naylor and Weller (2009) stated the aim of the DProf PD degree was to create new knowledge at the forefront of practice for use in both professional and organization environments. Dreher (2011a), more recently has clarified the knowledge emanating out of professional or practice doctorates as practice knowledge which is derived from practice-evidence, where professional doctorate students investigate very focused, local problems where findings may have immediate transferability and applicability to specific environments. Stew (2009:1) has clearly indicated that the professional doctorate graduate ‘…is expected to be an advanced practitioner (whatever the field) rather than a career researcher’ and perhaps that is what we ought to seek to quantify. Undoubtedly, the dominant paradigm and discourse in most universities has been that the PhD scholar is the steward of the respective discipline (Golde & Walker, 2006). The place and role of the PD scholar (as practitioner too) does not fit comfortably in this mould.

10.4 The Candidate’s Perspective on PDs

The global professional doctorate is growing, as is its sphere of influence (Dreher and Smith Glasgow, in preparation; Servage, 2009). In the UK there has been an enormous increase in the number of PD programmes (Brown & Cooke, 2010). Notwithstanding PDs that provide a licence to practice, there is a growing reality to student consumers that there is now a credible alternative to the PhD degree. In terms of impact on their careers, Lunt (2009) found from investigations at 12 universities’ EdD, DBA and EngD programmes, that the latter had the biggest impact, and for the others, the value and impact was more uncertain. Other studies have emphasised the personal and professional benefits of studying for a PD (Costley and Stephenson, 2008; Stephenson, Malloch, and Cairns, 2006; Wellington and Sikes, 2006). The Rugby Team (2008) Impact Framework attempts to ‘foster, support and potentially guide existing and new ways of effectively evaluating researcher training and development’ (ibid: 4) and outlines a model with five impact levels. While this is a potentially promising way forward, only one level relates to ‘outcomes’.

Neumann (2005) looked at the difference between PDs and PhDs and found that candidates chose a PD for its perceived career benefits. Additionally, Evans (2009) indicated professional doctorate students have a much higher attrition rate than PhD students in Australia. This is likely to be an important metric for future and long term PD degree viability. While this trend is difficult to substantiate in the US, PhD programs in the U.S. have long had very high attrition rates, often nationally exceeding 50% (Gilliam & Kritsonis, 2006). Financial issues are certainly a barrier to doctoral degree completion in the U.S. (Lee, 2009). If professional doctoral students do have higher attrition rates or lower completion rates than the already high PhD rates, this needs to be examined closely. Candidate demand will only remain if policy constructively enables the PD, so universities can continue to provide worthwhile and affordable programmes, and employers value the resultant graduates. Demand for PDs suggests candidates value it highly, but does not necessarily mean the PD produces high value.
10.5 Employers and Professional Bodies’ Views of PDs

Credibility of the PD with employers varies. While the EdD, DrPH and DCPsych degrees are fairly well established degrees in the UK, Park (2007) indicates employment for professional doctorates is still a double-edged sword in the UK. In Redefining the Doctorate (ibid) he writes of the tension between a highly educated doctoral graduate and the workforce stating:

‘Doctoral graduates usually do bring added value to an enterprise—including specialist knowledge, research, and analytic skills, future potential, maturity—realising this potential is often constrained by a series of potential barriers which employers must confront and find effective ways of dealing with’ (ibid: 19).

With the PD graduate having a doctoral degree less recognisable than the traditional PhD, these employment issues can be exacerbated, particularly if the employer does not have a history of appointing them. In the US, despite the broad acceptance of other health related professional doctorates, the doctorate of nursing practice degree is highly resisted by the American Medical Association (Bein, 2009; Dreher, 2011b). Of all professional areas, medicine has been most dominated by the scientific tradition and thus struggles to accept the more practice based perspectives of the PD.

Many PDs, such as the EdD are in-service CPD, and often sponsored by employers. How much employers understand or recognize PDs is debatable, however, the expansion of sponsorship points to reasonable acceptance. Other PDs are connected to a licence to practice. O’Mullane (2004) differentiates between PDs for institutionalised professions and non institutionalised professions. Institutionalisation will clearly affect the importance of the qualification for the candidate, the employer and the professional body. Some professional bodies, notably those that are health related, prescribe what must be learned and for example, what percentage of the programme should be taught and research based. O’Mullane suggests six ‘measures of significant contribution to professional knowledge and practice’ (ibid:13) ranging from the profession simply being aware of the doctoral aims, to the doctorate’s findings being incorporated into professional practice. Institutionalised professions may require PDs to have outcomes nearer the latter of these.

We suggest one of the chief differences in the evaluation of PDs from PhD programs is the enhanced importance of the PD graduate’s practice performance by the employer and professional body. Those undertaking a PD for an institutionalised profession should be attractive to employers as they will have achieved in- or pre-service professional accreditation for practice. A recent Report, however, indicates that graduate programs are not all that interested in tracking the employment of their graduates, especially PhD programs (Wilson, 2010). Is this because the job market for PhDs is so limited globally, especially with higher education budgets being cut in the UK and similar budget practices occurring elsewhere (Evans, 2010)? Cohen (2010) makes a point about the broad job market indicating there is not so much an oversupply of PhDs as there is a shortage of employers who will hire them. Some even indicate the rise of the professional doctorate has come at the expense of a declining PhD (Obrien, 2009). But we attest that the long term growth (and success) for the PD will rely even more on employment opportunities for graduates largely outside academia and employer satisfaction with the quality of diverse types of PDs. Also, PD graduates’ ability to transform the work environment will enhance (or detract from) future job hiring, especially as economic forces improve. So where an individual PhD program might shy away from sharing 5 year employment data on their PhD graduates for example, we do not think this is a wise strategy for programs that produce PD graduates. Finally, as Johnson (2005) suggested, the assessments and supervision of work-based doctorates could be revisited and adjusted to meet the aims of the workplace, perhaps, through employer assessments both during and post matriculation. Clearly, this changes the balance of power in the assessment of doctoral level provision away from the academy.

10.6 Outcomes and Impact of PDs

If Lee and colleagues (2009) are correct, that the PD graduate should produce different knowledge, then should it be disseminated any differently? In Re-thinking Science: Knowledge and the Public in an Age of Uncertainty (2001), Nowotny et al. (2001) argue that in a Knowledge Society where institutions are transformed to be both learning and researching organisations, and where scientific findings are still ordinarily disseminated, the organisation itself is also ‘deeply embroiled in the work of the activist and community organizations, acting often as their most powerful embodiment across their concerns and issues though media representation’ (ibid: 74). In this way a ‘new researcher’ engaged in Mode 2 knowledge production in an organisation is promulgated into a much wider social arena, where there are lots more players (practitioners, policy makers, and diverse formal and informal stakeholders). We would contend this PD type knowledge (or practice knowledge) is born not at the bench but at the bedside or not in the multi-site clinical trial but in the clinic down the road. Lester (2004) writes of the practitioner doctorate ‘…its focus is on generating practical action which also represents high-level professional scholarship’ (ibid: 2).

Does this mean the work produced from PDs may not ultimately undergo peer review or be published in prestigious journals? Certainly not, but the locus of the work product is designed to make a more immediate applied impact. If one views practice knowledge from the
lens of its potential immediate utility then there may be a moral obligation to properly disseminate it. But by any measure, there needs to be more innovation in this dissemination process. Further, the PD’s sphere of influence, while focused on the particular, can still have immense influence and impact.

PDs enhance practice and consequently contribute to practice knowledge. Theoretical knowledge may also be developed in the process. At the doctoral level these developments must be innovative, and through their complex, work-based contexts they necessarily bring together knowledge from a range of disciplines. In order to practice effectively, the candidate must develop personal and professional capabilities such as leadership that should continue to enhance their future performance. In summary, we may think of the outcomes of a PD as being embodied in the candidate, now and in their future; located in the context of the research and development work; shaping professional knowledge and practice or a combination of all of these.

10.7 Conclusions

To conclude we propose a set of questions that should serve as a framework for further discussion towards developing a metric for measuring the value of PDs.

- Who should decide what will be considered?

Valuing anything depends on the context and perspective of the person, institution or society undertaking the valuation. We have argued that there are different stakeholders for PhDs and PDs, and that their contexts and perspectives vary. Even in asking what a PD (or PhD) is for, there is no simple answer. Governments, universities/providers of doctoral provision, individuals, employers and professional bodies’ perspectives need consideration.

- Can the production of knowledge and the development of practice be encapsulated in one set of doctoral criteria?

The concept of ‘doctorateness’ attempts to define doctorate level knowledge incorporating the range of types of doctorate, discipline, and professional areas. Differentiating between any of these might run the risk of dichotomising them. Not differentiating between them might prevent the full acceptance of the newer PD approach.

- How can the PD approach of practice knowledge development be widely accepted?

The full range of issues that concern PDs needs to be incorporated and accepted, and this depends on influencing long-established, dominant views on knowledge creation and use in the academy and throughout society. For example, faculty credentials to teach and examine in PDs may need consideration.

- Where should the chief emphasis on measuring quality lie – on internal or external measures of graduate performance?

It appears that internal measures (faculty quality/productivity, rigor in admissions process, doctoral student metrics, etc.) predominate in evaluation of PhD quality. Might external measures such as graduate placement and evaluation of graduate satisfaction with program and employer satisfaction with graduates have more relevance? We submit that issues related to quality of provision such as these are one step removed from the really important measure of value, that is, the knowledge and practice emanating from doctoral work and the subsequent impact on the individual and the world.

- How can the wider community, particularly employers and professional bodies, contribute to our understanding of doctoral level professional practice?

PDs produce ‘real world’ knowledge and develop everyday practice in workplaces. This potentially impacts at a micro, meso and macro level. Those most affected by these developments might well be best placed to contribute to our understanding of value.

- How can the benchmarks for scholarly productivity of PDs be more aligned with their applied research emphasis?

Traditional PhD benchmarks are widely understood (e.g., peer reviewed publications in the highest impact journals and funding/grants). PD outcomes may be innovations or practices that change people’s lives for the better. What scholarly expectations are best for a doctoral practitioner in practice?

These primary questions are offered as a catalyst for discussion to assist in the evolution of a PD metric that is both valued and meaningful.
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The UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE) was established in 1994 to advance graduate education in all academic disciplines throughout the UK. It currently has over 120 HEI members. The Council achieves its mission through a variety of activities. It organises two major conferences each year together with a programme of workshops and discussion fora where delegates can consider a wide range of issues relating to all aspects of postgraduate education covering taught and research degrees. It responds to surveys and consultations from government and others and publishes Reports and a regular newsletter. UKCGE carries out surveys and investigations into postgraduate education as well as providing postgraduate data and information to members and other interested parties.

The Council represents an authoritative voice for the HE sector on postgraduate activity in the UK, to develop and disseminate policy relating to postgraduate education and to publicise best practice in delivery and administration of postgraduate programmes. The International Conference on Professional Doctorates in London (2009) and Edinburgh (2011) co-organised with a constituent member (Middlesex University) reflect the Council’s policy in taking a global view of postgraduate education. In recent years this has been developed by two Summer conferences in Florence (2006) and Edinburgh (2008) on aspects of doctoral education, which both focused on international themes.

Special Interest Group (SIG) for Professional and Practice-Led Doctoral Research

The basic concept for the SIG emerged from the first International Conference on Professional Doctorates held in London in November 2009. At the conference it became clear that a significant number of delegates were interested in setting up a SIG as a way of networking support for developments in their professional doctorate programmes. Interest also centres on the ways in which a SIG could move to becoming influential in shaping policy regarding developments in doctoral education. Initially the SIG attracted 85 members. SIG has agreed to work in association with the UKCGE and is managed by a small steering group of members, currently based in the UK, with representation from the UKCGE.

The SIG organises events, initially in London, with a view to opening dialogue on a range of contemporary issues facing colleagues in running professional doctorate programmes. In July 2010 SIG met with an invited speaker, followed by a second event comprising a series of Workshops in collaboration with UKCGE in November, 2010. SIG membership at about two hundred represents professional colleagues in the UK, the USA, Australia, Poland, Canada, Norway, Sweden and Germany. Events and activities are advertised through the UKCGE and on the SIG Website at URL: [www.professionaldoctorates.org](http://www.professionaldoctorates.org)
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