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## **Doctoral Programmes for the European Knowledge Society**

### **An EUA Report**

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*The outcome of a major EUA project involving 48 university institutions from 22 countries, the report provides a broad view of the current landscape of doctoral programmes across Europe with the aim of stimulating debate in the academic community and influencing the policy agenda. It reflects the great diversity of programmes in Europe, a diversity which shows the dynamism of the continent's universities.*

The main findings address three issues: the structure and organisation of doctoral programmes; supervision, monitoring and assessment; and mobility, European collaboration and joint doctoral degrees. The analysis focuses on connecting these issues with innovations and good practices in university experience across Europe.

It will be presented during the EUA conference "Research in European Universities: Strategies and Funding" to be held in Uppsala, Sweden, 20-22 October 2005.

#### **Findings**

Universities consider doctoral studies to be a crucial source of a new generation of researchers and to serve as the main bridge between the European Higher Education and Research Areas. The report underlines the fundamental differences between the bachelor and master levels and doctoral programmes as the third cycle, where learning through undertaking original and independent research is the essential component, and stresses the importance of acknowledging this difference in discussions on reform in the context of Bologna.

Institutions recognise that they have a responsibility to offer doctoral candidates more than core research skills in particular in view of the rapidly changing labour market for young researchers. This makes it vital to include the teaching of transferable skills designed to prepare candidates for careers outside academia. The report shows a general trend towards restructuring programmes, while at the same time emphasising that changes are progressing at different rates in different countries with some only now beginning to take up the discussions.

The re-organisation of doctoral training can only be successfully achieved with adequate financing. This is one key reason why universities highlight the need for more "joined up" government. Effective coordinated action involving higher education institutions, government ministries for education and research, innovation and technology, national research councils, and the European Commission is essential to create a globally competitive research environment.

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The European University Association, as the representative organisation of both the European universities and the national rectors' conferences, is the main voice of the higher education community in Europe. EUA's mission is to promote the development of a coherent system of European higher education and research.

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### **Background**

Doctoral training has gained greater importance in the context of the Bologna Process since the Berlin Communiqué (2003) which, on a recommendation from EUA, included doctoral and postdoctoral studies as the 'third cycle' following the bachelor and masters level.

The EUA project on doctoral programmes marked an important step in the Association's work on this crucial issue. The first outcome of the project was the Salzburg Seminar (February 2005) which identified ten basic principles for the future development of doctoral programmes which were fed into the Bergen Communiqué adopted during the Ministerial meeting in May 2005.

In Bergen, EUA received a mandate to follow up its work on doctoral programmes over the next two years and will therefore present a follow-up report to the next Bologna Ministers

meeting in London in 2007. EUA will also work more specifically on doctoral careers through a new targeted project, and continue to support members through 'hands on' workshops for universities on priority issues, for example the organisation of doctoral/graduate schools in a European context.

- [EUA Report Doctoral Programmes for the European Knowledge Society](#)
- [Executive summary](#)
- [EUA Doctorate Programmes Project - background](#)
- [EUA Bologna Seminar on Doctoral Programmes in Europe \(Salzburg, February 2005\)](#)
- [EUA Conference "Research in European Universities: Strategies and Funding" Uppsala, Sweden, 20-22 October 2005](#)