



Helsinki Conference Discussion Paper 02

Graduate Schools and Different Models of 3rd Cycle Award Workpackage 1 SHARE Network 30th October 2011

What this paper does?

This is a short discussion paper (one of several prepared for the www.sharenetwork.eu conference in Helsinki 4th and 5th November 2011) based on information about Graduate School models and some general issues in doctoral awards across all subject areas. The purpose of the paper is to indicate the general outlines of some of the variables in organising 3rd Cycle awards and doctoral education platforms. An earlier version of this paper was produced by WorkPackage 1 in Spring 2011.

1. Two Paths: “Graduate School” and “Master-Apprentice”

1.1 Graduate Schools

A “graduate school” is an organisational unit in higher education that awards “higher degrees” usually the masters and doctoral level degrees. These are “higher degrees” in the sense that a student typically requires a first qualification from a university, academy or higher technical institute (a bachelor’s degree for example) before beginning to study for a masters or a doctorate. Graduate schools are often contained within a single institution of higher education. They are also sometimes based on collaboration between several institutions. Sometimes a graduate school actually means a physical location or building, but very often it refers simply to an organisational structure that might be spread out over many different places. Some graduate schools are finite projects with a fixed duration limited to 5 or 10 years. Some are established to become enduring institutions that last for a very long time.

The “graduate school” model was developed in the late 19th Century in the United States as a response to the German University models that placed an emphasis on research. The graduate school is generally seen as an American innovation in organisational form. It is closely associated with a particular model of research training, through the seminar, that was first given prominence by German historians such as Ranke who used this model to teach the “higher criticism”. The seminar format involved bringing advanced students and university teachers together to discuss their research work. In Germany in the early nineteenth century the seminar was a semi-autonomous form – sometimes happening in the professor’s home. But in the new American model it became a structured formal class with courses lasting one or two semesters.

The American model of educating advanced students gave particular importance to separating the postgraduate level of research education (masters and doctorate) from the undergraduate level (the bachelor level). The PhD also became a different kind of qualification in America, where it was primarily seen as the career gateway into university teaching and the professoriate. In Germany, in the 19th Century, the PhD did not always entail such a major volume of research and was often a qualification used to enter a high-school education career or the civil service.

There is some debate as to why the American model developed the way it did. But the most important issue is that this model developed differently from the pure “master-apprentice” model in Europe. The key difference was that education at doctoral level involved greater amounts of group work, structured learning and teaching, and was organised through new platforms – the graduate schools – many of which became internationally famous centres of learning and research in their own right, separate from the University itself that housed them. Thus the Harvard

Graduate School of Business Administration established in 1908 became world famous as an institution. With the development of new European and national policies there has been a further expansion and development of the graduate school model around the world, particularly since the 1990s.

The graduate school model is built upon the idea of bringing a community of scholars together to provide the most advanced education. Graduate school models have become widespread in response to the rapid growth of doctoral education globally in recent decades. Graduate schools have also become important because governments are actively seeking to establish structures that promote the training of researchers and the development of knowledge specialists. Some also see in the growth of graduate schools models an attempt to construct systems of control and accountability over the development of researchers and their research.

2.2 New German Graduate School Models

In some countries the term “graduate school” may refer to a platform that deals with doctoral education only, for example the *Graduiertenkollegs* in Germany set up in some sciences and other disciplines under funding from the German Research (Foundation *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* - DFG) in the early 1990s. By about 2001, about 285 *Graduiertenkollegs* had been established, and about 10% of these were based on international partnerships. Later in 2006, building upon these experiments in doctoral education, a different type of graduate school was established in Germany, termed *Graduiertenschule*. These were established by the DFG as part of the “German Universities Excellence Initiative”. These *Graduiertenschule* are much larger organisations and often have up to 200 doctoral students, whereas the first *Graduiertenkollegs* had typically only 20 to 30 doctoral researchers.

These graduate platforms were NOT in the creative arts, but in the other disciplines.

The introduction of these graduate school models was in response to perceived problems with the old model of PhD studies. In the early 1990s the German Rector’s Conference and the German Science Council began to speak about certain perceived difficulties with the traditional model of “master-apprentice” doctoral education. Barbara Khem, a Professor of Higher Education Research at the University of Kassel, writing in 2008, described the situation as follows:

Insufficient structure, unclear status of doctoral students, increasing time to successful completion of the degree, high numbers of drop-outs, high degree of personal dependency on the supervisor, lack of interdisciplinary approaches, and insufficient orientation to labor markets outside academia were just some of the problems which could be observed. The German Rectors’ Conference suggested the introduction of graduate programs that would incorporate the model of graduate colleges.¹

The Graduate School model is often seen then as the alternative to the “master-apprentice” model. However, the two models sometimes go together, and the problems that the German Rectors’ Conference identified in the master-apprentice model can also be found in some graduate schools.

2.3 Criticisms of the American Graduate Schools

In America a debate had taken place throughout the 1990s about doctoral education and many of the problems that the German Rector’s described in relation to the “master-apprentice” model were also described in relation to the graduate schools. This debate gave rise to an important conference in 2000 called “Re-Envisioning the PhD”. The criticisms of the PhD model in US graduate schools have been summarised as follows. Doctoral students in the US are believed by some to be:

- educated and trained too narrowly
- lacking key professional skills, such as collaborating effectively and working in teams, and lacking organizational and managerial skills;
- ill-prepared to teach;
- taking too long to complete their doctoral studies and in some fields many are not completing their degrees at all;
- ill-informed about employment outside the academies; and
- having too-long a transition period from PhD completion to stable employment. (Nerad, 2008, p. 288)

In responding to these criticisms many new initiatives have been developed such as “Preparing Future Faculty”² in the 1990s; the “Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate”³; and the “Responsive PhD”⁴. It is interesting to note the goals of the “Responsive PhD” programme established by the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation. These are:

1. to improve the diversity in graduate education and the professoriate;
2. to ensure that academic knowledge is used for social challenges and to promote “public scholarship”;
3. to understand the impact of globalization on doctoral education; and
4. to prepare doctoral students for a range of careers.

2.4 European Graduate School Models: European University Institute & European Graduate School

Describing itself as a “world-class postgraduate and postdoctoral research institute for Economics, History, Law, Political and Social Sciences” the European University Institute (EUI)⁵ in Florence is an example of a graduate school structure that has gained worldwide reputation and has an established model for almost 3 decades. The Institute was set up in 1972 by the six founding member states of the European Community to provide advanced education to doctoral researchers and to promote research. The full-time teaching staff, fellows and researchers are recruited from all over Europe and beyond. The EUI also provides a special EUI doctorate (a four year PhD) and a one-year masters programme in law (LL.M.) The EUI also hosts and funds postdoctoral researchers.

Based in Switzerland, the European Graduate School (EGS)⁶ is a private institution that has gained a lot of visibility in recent years because of its innovative “immersion” model of doctoral education. The European Graduate School has two divisions: “Arts, Health and Society” and “Media and Communication”. Among the subjects it lists as being addressed through the programme are: architecture, art, contemporary philosophy, cultural studies, film, literary theory, literature, media studies, performance art, photography, and video. Part of the EGS model entails bringing doctoral researchers together with leading philosophers and intellectuals during immersive summer schools that are 3 weeks long and involve intense periods of seminars, presentations and lectures. These two examples make clear that the graduate school model in Europe is very diverse and has lots of potential for organisational variety.

3. “New” Doctoral Programmes: The Structured PhD and the “New Pathway” Doctoral Programme.

Part of the experimentation that has happened in recent decades with doctoral education has been the development of new approaches to doctoral programmes. The idea of a programme is usually some structure of doctoral education that includes taught elements and group work especially in the first phase of doctoral studies. Sometimes the new programme approach is based on building a combined master and doctoral programme so that researchers enter into the doctoral work through a first phase of masters work that is directly built-into the doctoral pathway. For example some UK models use the “M.Res.” award (Masters of Research) as a phase in the progress of the research student toward becoming a full PhD student.⁷

The emphasis on new programmes with well-defined phases of learning has been especially significant in the sciences, technology, engineering and medical disciplines where advanced training in specialist techniques and technologies is often a feature of advanced research. Another driver for these new programmes has been the need to put together new interdisciplinary frameworks for researchers to tackle large scale problems in a thematically focussed way such as sustainable development, ecological, public health, societal change, urban renewal or new technology development challenges. These programmes are often based on the idea that the graduates of the programmes have a very different mix of competencies and knowledge types compared to any one individual professor teaching on these programmes.

This is again an important change from the master-apprentice model because it tries to break with the idea of reproducing a discipline. The emphasis is on producing new competencies and new types of “knowledge worker”, often not destined to work in academia but in industry, or policy, or public sector, or NGO, or some other professional setting. An important feature of the move to have new “structured programmes” is the emphasis on what are called “transferable skills” which are not just skills and abilities to do with a single discipline or knowledge area, but which apply to lots of different areas of professional life.

(This language of “transferable skills” and “knowledge worker” and “knowledge economy” etc. is of course not a neutral or obvious language. These terms belong to a particular view of knowledge and education in terms of instrumental goals, employability and economic growth. This is dealt with elsewhere in the discussion papers.)

The demands from national government and from European policy initiatives for innovation in doctoral education have created pressure on universities to claim that they have developed and implemented new structured doctoral education and new doctoral pathways. Sometimes the “new” programmes are new in name only and the old established practice of master-apprentice is still the normal way to do doctoral work. Some new programmes entail the construction of new

layers of administration and management which seem to add extra work onto the supervisors without a clear sense of why this work is relevant for an individual research project. Sometimes supervisors prefer the older model because it is the model that they experienced, because it leaves some space for greater independence, and because they are reluctant to get involved with more bureaucracy and administrative tasks.

4. Other Models of 3rd Cycle

4.1 The Professional Doctorate

The Graduate School model has not only been developed for the PhD and for education in how to research. It has also been used to support professional doctorates and professional education that is directed not at careers in research but at careers in the professions and in industry. American business, law and medical schools are long established forms of graduate school that make professional relevance more important than academic research.

The professional doctorate is an increasingly important alternative to the “PhD” – examples include the D.F.A., D.Arch., D.Ed. and so forth. Professional Doctorates have their origins in North America. They were initially developed in the field of education with the purpose of enabling teachers and lecturers to further their professional education at the highest level. They emerged more recently in Australia and in the UK. They are found in areas including education, business, law, psychology, health sciences, humanities, design and architecture.

4.2 Defining the Professional Doctorate

There is no single widely used definition of the Professional Doctorate in the literature or in practice. The *UK Council for Graduate Education Report* (2002) suggests that it is: “a further development of the taught Doctorate but the field of study is a professional discipline, rather than academic inquiry and scholarship... most Professional Doctorates are designed to meet a particular professional need... the research element of a Professional Doctorate is focused on professional practice... it is possible for the work to make an original contribution to the way in which theory is applied, or to the nature of practice within a profession (2002, p. 7) Powell and Long (2005) describe the “Professional Doctorate” as an award: “where the field of study is a professional discipline and which is distinguished from the PhD by a title that refers to that profession” (2005, p. 8)

The University of Ulster in Northern Ireland has a definition of the Professional Doctorate as: “a programme of advanced study and research which, whilst satisfying the University criteria for the award of doctorate, is designed to meet the specific research needs of a professional group, and which develops the capability of individuals to integrate research practice within a professional context”.

4.3 Key Features of the Professional Doctorate

The key features of the professional doctorate are generally:

1. A focus on professional work
2. A focus on the development of the individual in relation to their professional work
3. A significant taught element
4. The specification of learning outcomes
5. Cohort-based pedagogies (in general, UK CGE 2004 survey finds this is not universal)⁸
6. A shorter length of thesis than that for the PhD, but with the same requirement for originality
7. The Professional Doctorate is closely related to the development of practice within the profession concerned and may be accredited by a professional body and result in a professional qualification.
8. reference to profession or professional is usually made in the title of the Professional Doctorate award

The main area of distinction between the PhD and the Professional Doctorate appears to concern both (a) the overall degree of emphasis placed on research and (b) the nature of research. The PhD has most often been made solely on the basis of a substantial written piece of work (the thesis). A Professional Doctorate is usually made on the basis of a portfolio involving a broader range of assessed objects. A fundamental issue then is that in the professional Doctorate the work is aggregated in a different way as a string of components rather than a single cohesive research project. The distinctiveness between the PhD and the Professional Doctorate may be challenged by more recent changes in PhD programmes. The increase in structured programmes, which include substantial taught elements, and measures to

develop generic and transferable skills (a requirement of funding councils in the UK) are, arguably, bringing PhDs more in line with core features of the Professional Doctorate.

4.4 Other Models of 3rd Cycle: The Fellowship Model

The “Fellowship” model is used here as a term to refer to some new models of 3rd Cycle education that move away from the PhD degree award and instead focus on the construction of a platform for advanced practitioners to embark upon a programme of work within a higher education institution or a network of institutions. The emphasis appears not to be on achieving an examination award. Rather, the emphasis is placed on the production of a new situation within higher education where advanced practitioners can conduct new experimental and often interdisciplinary work.

The Fellowship model is very different from the traditional “master-apprentice” model because the emphasis is on the already advanced level of achievement of the “Fellow”. In some cases the community of “Fellows” becomes the key aspect of the educational situation. When the community of the Fellows is a key feature of the Fellowship model, then the organisational platform used becomes very important because it must bring highly achieved individuals, sometimes from very different disciplines, into meaningful dialogue. One of the tasks that SHARE might take on will be to provide a case study description of a Fellowship model because there is relatively little information available about this type of organisational platform.

5. General Debates on 3rd Cycle Education

There has been a lot of activity and debate on the 3rd Cycle across all disciplines in the last decade. This is partly because of the Bologna Process, and partly because of the significance attached to “knowledge” and “intellectual property” in current economic planning. It is also partly to do with the emphasis on “human capital formation” as the key policy framework within which education is described.

“Human Capital” theory comes from the “Chicago School” of economics and it has become a dominant way of thinking about education planning and policy because of the adoption of these ideas by bodies such as the OECD. Human Capital theory places the emphasis on the generation of people through education who can add value to the economy by virtue of their ability to generate new knowledge and apply knowledge in new ways and so forth. It is a controversial model – even though it is the dominant policy language.

Part of the controversy lies in the way in which education within human capital models becomes an instrument of economic wealth formation; and emphasises individual life projects (career building) rather than social, communal or citizenry-based life projects (society-building, public good, social justice, equity, inclusion, cohesion etc.)

All this attention on doctoral education, particularly within the dominant model, has given rise to a range of debates and issues. (See for example the European University Association’s work in this area⁹) Among the issues being debated in respect of the doctorate level in general are:

1. the employability of doctoral graduates
2. the relevance of the research undertaken by graduate students
3. the relationship between teaching at undergraduate level and graduate research
4. the career pathways for researchers after the doctoral award
5. the commercialisation of research and the ability of graduate researchers to recognise potential
6. second language competency and doctoral level study
7. international mobility during doctoral studies
8. team work in research and education
9. combining interdisciplinary competencies and disciplinary expertise

Within those perspectives that challenge the dominant human capital formation model the kinds of issues that arise are:

1. the role of educated elites in the larger society
2. the public good served by advanced education and research
3. the space for critical intellectual work that questions orthodoxies
4. the ‘flexibilisation’ and ‘casualisation’ of knowledge work (i.e., loss of security in jobs, expansion of task loads, and loss of status by academics in management and leadership of education)

5. the transfer of public wealth into private ownership – state meeting the costs of corporate training through public monies
6. the reduction of education to training

6. SHARE's contribution to these debates

SHARE is committed to developing debate from across the many different positions and perspectives on what doctoral or 3rd cycle education can be.

SHARE believes that the first task in enabling debate is to support exchange of information and ideas.

While SHARE is committed to the priority of the creative arts, SHARE also proposes that we can learn from the experience and experiments in 3rd cycle education in other disciplines.

¹ Khem, Barbara (2008) "" in Maresi Nerad, Mimi Heggelund (eds.) *Toward a global PhD?: forces and forms in doctoral education worldwide*, Seattle: University of Washington Press. p.23.

² <http://www.preparing-faculty.org/>

³ See <http://www.ams.org/notices/200305/comm-carnegie.pdf> and <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/previous-work/professional-graduate-education>

⁴ THE WOODROW WILSON NATIONAL FELLOWSHIP FOUNDATION SEPTEMBER 2005 (See: http://www.woodrow.org/images/pdf/resphd/ResponsivePhD_overview.pdf)

⁵ <http://www.eui.eu/>

⁶ <http://www.egs.edu>

⁷ <http://www.ukcge.ac.uk/links/resourcespinfo/discussionpapers/papers/fiveyearsofthemres2001>

⁸ The UKCGE survey 2004 reports that some programmes are not universally cohort-based.

⁹ <http://www.eua.be/cde/Home.aspx>