

European Trends in Doctoral and postdoctoral Education

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Structure of the presentation

- A bit of history and context setting
- European trends
- A forward look
- Conclusions: Key questions

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Global competition

- Main signs of this global competition: rankings and excellence initiatives
- Doctoral education is key in the global competition:
 - Drastic increase in the number of doctoral student in Brazil and China:
 - ✓ Brazil: 100% increase between 2000 – 2009
 - ✓ China: 400% increase between 1998 – 2008
 - But Europe is not training sufficient numbers of doctoral students and many countries rely on international students

Doctoral educational reform in Europe

High political attention:

- Bologna Process (doctoral education included in 2003) => EUA Salzburg I & II
- Growing importance for the ERA: Innovation Union 2010 –The European Commission commits itself to better doctoral training
- Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training 2011 (EC)
 - Three I's: international, interdisciplinary and intersectoral (connection with the knowledge society as a driver for growth)

The postdocs

- **The postdoc is usually a fixed-term position between the doctorate and a permanent academic position.** It is not an obligatory step to advance in an academic career.
- **Postdoc** are usually expected to carry on their research during which they might serve as the junior supervisor of doctoral students. They may have some teaching duties, as well.
- **The European Charter and Code for Researchers recommends** clear rules and explicit guidelines for the recruitment and appointment of postdoctoral researchers, including the maximum duration and the objectives of such appointments.

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The doctorate in Europe

- **Definition:** Doctoral degrees are an intensive training through independent research under supervision aiming at creating new knowledge.
- **The main outcome of doctoral education is an early-stage researcher** (not to be confused with the outcome of doctoral research: the thesis/dissertation)
- The specific research and transferable skills, as well as the developed experience, can be used in a wide range of careers

Supervision – a key aspect of quality

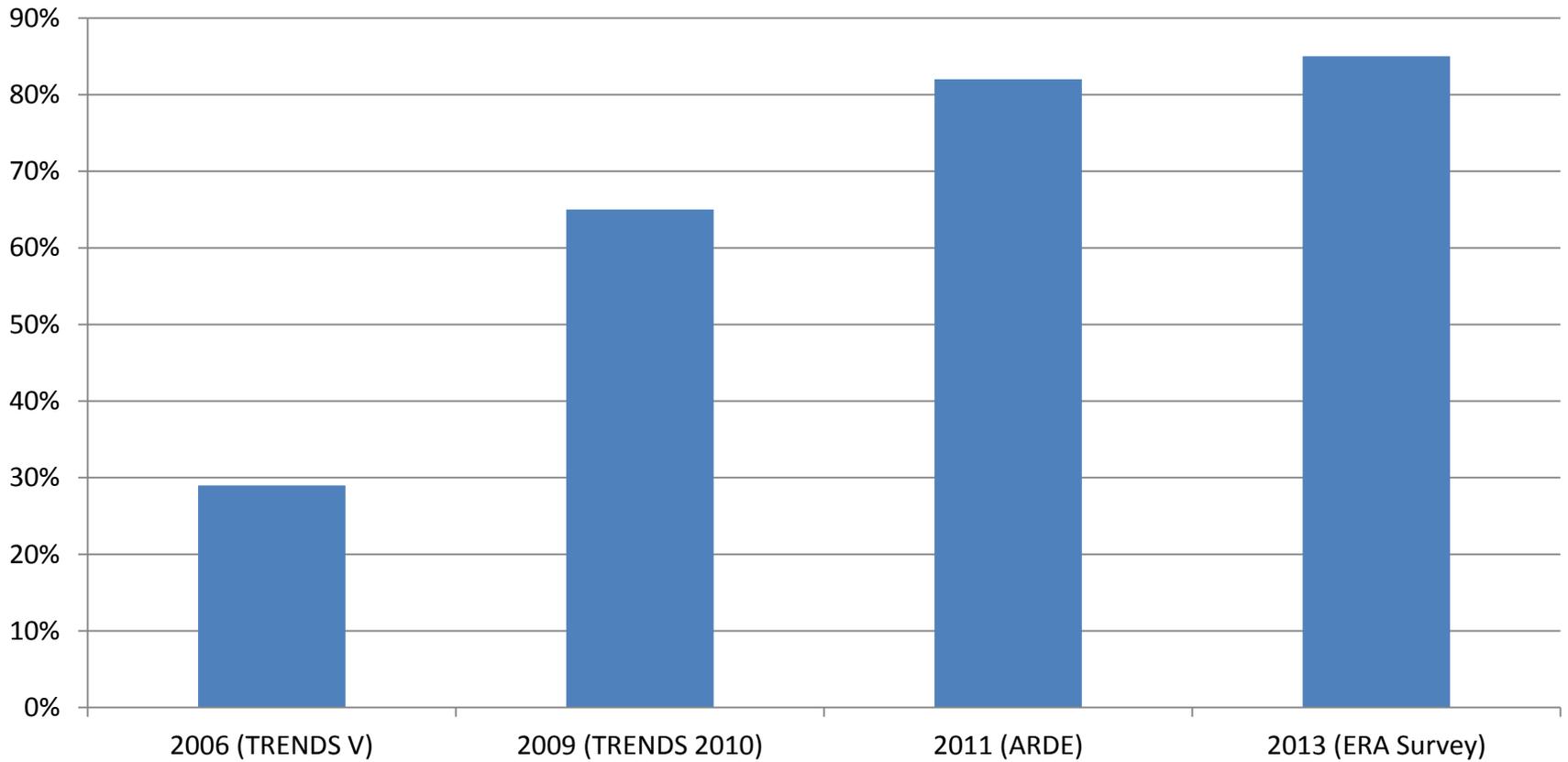
- Good practice: contract between doctoral candidate/supervisor/institution, with clearly spelt out rights and responsibilities
- Multiple supervision is encouraged/required
- Supervision is recognised as part of the workload
- Supervisor are trained and monitored

Assessment – key aspects

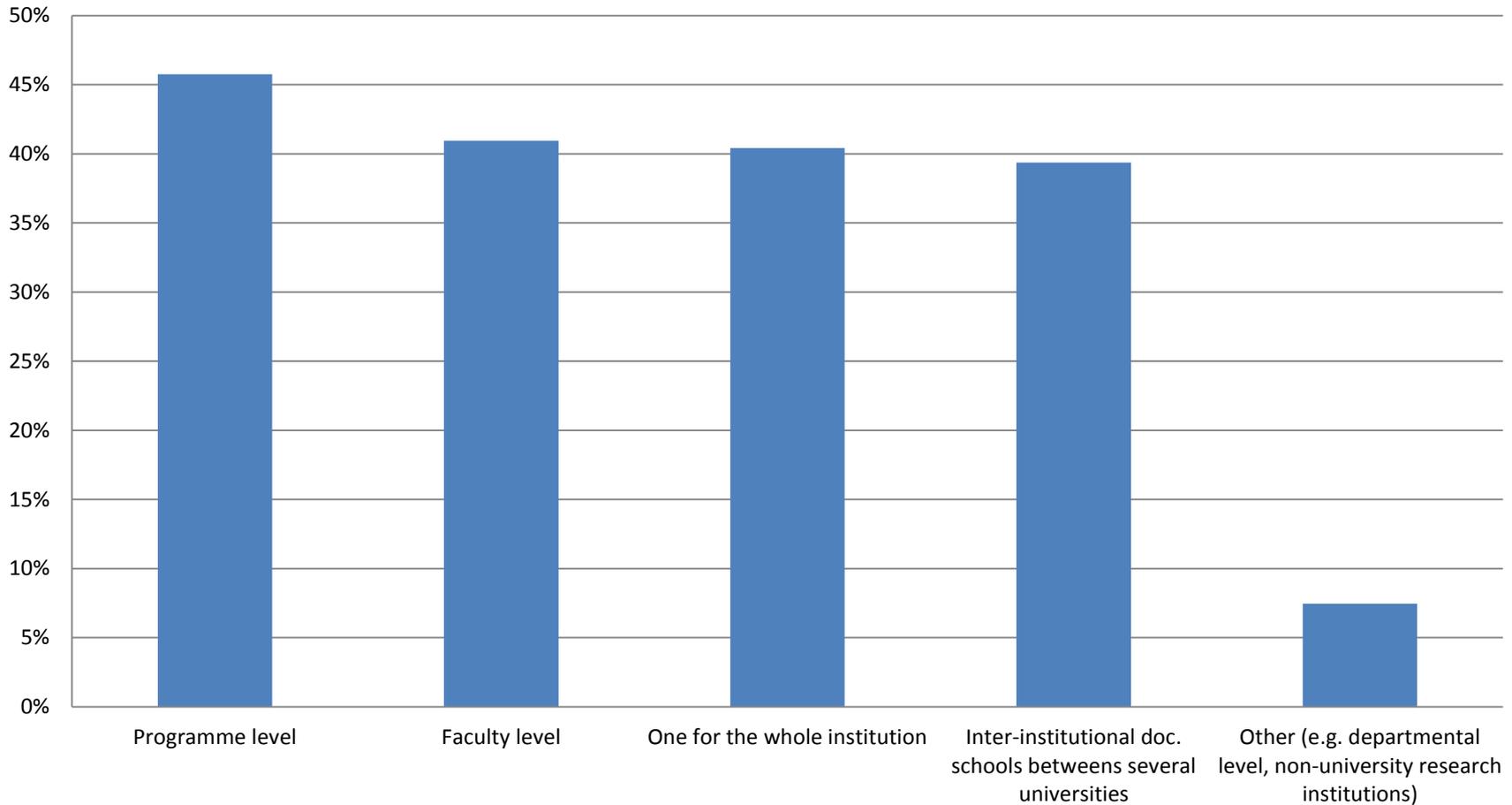
- Objective
- Transparent
- Done by an expert committee
- With one (or more) international member(s)
- Without the supervisor
- Public defence

The rise of doctoral schools

Universities with doctoral schools



Different positioning...



EUA European Research Area Survey 2013

... But 10 common features

1. A stimulating learning/research community
2. High quality infrastructures
3. Open to the world (international and collaborative)
4. A sound admission process
5. A good induction/orientation programme
6. Quality supervision
7. Formal monitoring of progress to completion against published criteria
8. Clearly defined examination processes, involving external examiners, assessment of criteria and declared outcomes
9. Advice and complaints procedures
10. A robust internal quality assurance system

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A forward look

1. Development of new doctorates:

- A range of innovative doctoral programmes are emerging as a response to a changing and fast-growing global labour market (professional doctorates, European doctorates, doctorates in performing arts, etc.)
- Diversity of doctoral programmes reflects the diversity of European higher education and the autonomy of institutions to develop their own strategies and priorities
- **Original research** remains the main component of all types of doctorates but discussions are underway about the professional doctorates and the other new types that are emerging.

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Ten questions

1. Does the NQF provide appropriate definition of the doctoral level, in line with other NQFs in Europe?
2. Does your university define the expectations of a doctorate?
3. Is there good inter-institutional cooperation?*

 - a. Are all doctoral institutions able to provide the **appropriate research environment**? If not, what can be done to alleviate this?
 - b. How to ensure critical mass?

4. Is the system sufficiently internationalised and if not what can be done about that aspect?*

5. Does the system promote or hinder inter-disciplinarity?*
6. How to ensure that doctoral students are properly funded to ensure appropriate time to degree?*
7. How best to position your doctoral schools?
8. Is supervision in line with European best practice?*
9. What is the status of your post docs and how do you support them?
10. What should be the process of internal/external quality assurance look like?*

References

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- EUA (2015) Principles and Practices for International Doctoral Education (FRINDOC)
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- LERU (2014) Good Practice Elements in Doctoral Training
- QAA (2015) Quality Code for Higher Education
- QQI (2016) Report of the Expert Panel on the QA of Research Degree Programmes in Irish Higher Education
- QAA-Scotland: “Building a research community”, 3 volumes
- 11th EUA-CDE Thematic Workshop: The Impact and Outcomes of Doctoral Education Reform in Europe, 18 January 2018

Credits

- EUA-CDE and Doctoral Education, by Alexandra Bitusikova, 9th EUA-CDE Annual meeting, Tarragona, 16-17 June 2016
- How to Set up a Doctoral School, by Prof. Mick Fuller, 9th EUA-CDE Annual meeting, Tarragona, 16-17 June 2016
- The EUA Council for Doctoral Education, by David Oliva Uribe, Strafford-upon-Avon, UK, 4 April 2017