

TECHNOLOGIES, EDUCATION ET CREATIVITÉ V

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Developments in Doctoral Education & Training**

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Foreword

Almost two decades have passed since the beginning of an intensive change, referred to by some as a “quiet revolution”: the transformation of doctoral education. During that time, numerous activities have taken place, but also many documents, recommendations, policy papers, and institutional strategies have been drawn up in Europe and beyond – all related to the modernisation of doctoral education. They all dealt with a number of relevant issues, aiming to bring about changes that would improve doctoral education in response to the changed needs of our society, in order to better support the careers of early researchers, as well as to improve supervision and to provide structural institutional support, which in general includes the professionalisation of staff dealing with doctoral education. A number of national and international projects have aimed at mapping best practices and newly developed principles for doctoral education. Regardless of the diversity of doctoral education across Europe, and the even greater diversity among the different countries and continents of the world, not to mention the cultural and historical differences among higher education systems, we have all witnessed a high level of convergence taking place in the globalised world. Not only has globalisation splashed economic behaviour across countries, but it has affected higher education as well.

The new prominence somehow fits well to a number of developments in universities in particular, and society in general. The pace of social change has increased dramatically in the last two decades, and this required some resonance in the higher education system, especially in doctoral education. The big narrative concerning doctoral education was about the increase in the number of doctoral candidates and early post-doctoral researchers, ensuring that they received adequate supervision, that they had optimal conditions for their individual research interests, and that they were well prepared to choose different careers either in research and the academic sector or in any other non-academic labour market. As we have become more cognizant of these realities, today our concerns have moved away from questions related to what needs to be done, and we are much more focused on how to do it and how to assure a high quality of doctoral education worldwide.

There are a number of relevant texts that are deemed essential for everyone who wants to transform traditional doctoral education into a modernised doctoral education that is better fitted to the needs of all stakeholders as well as the needs of changed and still changing societies. Here we are primarily referring to European documents such as the *Salzburg Principles* (2005), the *Salzburg II Recommendations* (2010), and *Taking Salzburg Forward* (2016) (all prepared and issued by the EUA/EUA-CDE), as well as *Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training* (issued by the EC, 2011), though there are other documents both in Europe and other parts of the world, all of which are focused on how to implement changes and to establish more effective and efficient doctoral education. The purpose of all these documents was

to provide some guidelines on how to implement changes, but also how to continue the implementation of reforms in doctoral education, recognising that this is a process and that, while transforming the system into modernised doctoral education, new issues are still emerging and require more attention.

Dating back to beginning of the current century, the transformation of doctoral education required the active involvement of university leaders, primarily responsible vice-rectors and other senior administrators, but gradually, it became evident that it is equally relevant to get the attention of daily managers of doctoral education whose responsibility is the continuous updating of their activities and being responsive to any new challenges and needs of the university. In a way, the modernisation of doctoral education is an open-ended process that requires continuous work. Some years ago, much of the time and effort was dedicated to the establishment of doctoral schools. Today, we know that, at least in Europe, a significant majority of universities have placed doctoral education within the system of doctoral schools. At the same time, we also know that there is no single model of doctoral schools. There is a high level of diversity among the existing models – across disciplines, departments, faculties, or at the level of the entire university, and there are a number of traditional, cultural, and institutional reasons for this diversity. Of course, the question of their efficiency and effectiveness still has not been explored. However, it is certain that doctoral schools require a professional management, and this brings the issue of professionalisation in doctoral education to the fore. Another point might be the awareness that early researchers must have an

opportunity for skills training, on a much broader scale than research training itself. The quality of supervision, as the core process in every doctoral journey, has always been the most relevant concern on all levels, from individual to institutional. At the end of this short listing of continuously relevant issues in the process of doctoral education, the last publication issued by the EUA-CDE (2022) shows that research integrity and ethics have a very high priority in many universities.

The international conference Developments in Doctoral Education and Training, held in January 2022 at the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, Mohammed I University, clearly showed that a convergence of relevant issues in doctoral education has been taking place. Regardless of whether we are at one of the European universities, or at one of the Moroccan universities, we share similar concerns. As was stated by the conference organiser, ‘The main focus of the upcoming conference is on the changes and challenges faced by higher education institutions regarding innovative approaches in doctoral training and education’.

Of course, all the above-mentioned concerns, as well as many others that did not gain our attention in this short overview, fall under the umbrella of overall quality of doctoral education. Undoubtedly, the responsibility of those involved in organising and providing doctoral education is to assure the doctoral candidate that they will be able to conduct doctoral research, collect data, publish papers, present at conferences (perhaps for the first time), write a doctoral thesis, assume some administrative tasks, and m

ost likely, gain teaching experience. In order to achieve these outcomes, we all need to be prepared, pro-active, and ready to broaden our experiences and skills regularly. Engaging in academic discussions and sharing best practices can certainly contribute to the advancement of knowledge and the development of doctoral education and research training.

Melita Kovacevic, PhD

University of Zagreb

Message from the Editor (s)

The present volume contains the selected papers presented at the international conference on "Developments in Doctoral Education and Training" which was held online on January 21-22, 2022 at Mohamed I University, Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, Oujda, Morocco. The 2022 DDET conference provided a platform for in-depth discussions and reflections on ways to advance effective higher education instruction to meet the increasing demands of today's graduate students. The event was also an opportunity to encourage maximum exchanges between participants from diverse backgrounds around a wide variety of issues, particularly in what regards postgraduate skill development.

Postgraduate studies are in a state of constant change, recognizing the need to adapt research training to meet the ever-increasing demands of today's digital transformation, knowledge-driven economy, and the ever-expanding career landscape. Doctoral education is a major undertaking that has become the subject of policy formulation and reform initiatives in recent years. These dynamics place new demands on higher education curricula and illustrate the complexity of the skills needed for successful doctoral careers both inside and outside academia.

The e-conference aspired to bring together researchers, educators, and practitioners from a range of academic disciplines to exchange knowledge and discuss recent developments and current challenges in both theory and practice. The intellectual gathering dived deep into the dynamics governing doctoral education and postgraduate research training, with special focus on the changes and challenges faced by higher education institutions regarding innovative approaches in doctoral training and education. More specifically, it delved further into the best practices that enhance the postgraduate research culture in order to educate active and sustainable researchers for the competitive knowledge-based societies of the 21st century.

Another aim of the colloquium was to prompt student researchers to reflect on the processes of their doctoral education, and on the ways they carry out their research. Discussions were geared towards working out the best practices for reviewing existing doctoral programs and identifying opportunities for further development. The event provided a forum that facilitates interactions among doctoral students, stimulates feedback from more experienced researchers, provides guidance on future research directions, promotes the development of a supportive community of scholars and a spirit of collaborative research and networking, and provides wider opportunities to academicians and post-graduate students to interact and create networking.

The proceedings book is intended for academia, researchers, educators, and practitioners working in the fields of innovative pedagogies in general and doctoral education in particular. The

volume covers topics ranging from doctoral education reform, interdisciplinary research, postgraduate skill development, research development and skills, and the supervisor-supervisee relationship. The discussions have important implications for higher education curriculum development, particularly in what regards reviewing existing doctoral programs and identifying opportunities for further development.

Isam Mrah

DDET 2022 Conference Coordinator

DDET 2022 Plenary Speakers

- **Supervision in Doctoral Education: Supporting and Encouraging Excellence**

Dr. Melita Kovacevic || The University of Zagreb, Croatia||

- **New Pathways and New Modes of Supporting PhD Research**

Dr. Geoff Walton || Manchester Metropolitan University, UK ||