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The impact of European developments on doctoral programmes

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About Universities UK

- | 132 members- Principals and Vice-Chancellors.
- | 'Essential voice of universities.'
- | Raise awareness and seek to influence across a number of key areas (UK and EU).
- | Research policy- issues relating to the funding and management of research.
- | Led by the Research Policy Committee (RPC) chaired by Professor Eric Thomas, Vice Chancellor, University of Bristol.



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Broad EU context and policy drivers

- | Move towards a 'knowledge focused economy' based on innovation driving new products and services.
- | Increased focus on bolstering R&D performance and enhancing high level skills.
- | Central role of people and human resources in achieving this agenda. Researchers and R&D personnel becoming centre stage.
- | Increased international competition in globalised R&D, particularly for human resources; and an aging population.



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EU policy initiatives impacting on doctoral programmes

- | Bologna process (creation of a European Higher Education Area). Ongoing.
- | European Research Area objective (internal market for R&D). Recent Green Paper with key focus on researchers. Ambitious goals, stimulate reform.
- | EU's HE modernisation agenda- aim is to stimulate structural reform with greater autonomy and resources.



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Bologna and doctoral programmes- about Bologna

- | Aim- to create a European Higher Education Area by 2010.
- | Series of ten 'action lines'.
- | Intergovernmental process (beyond EU 27) with decisions made at key summits and implemented through follow up work.
- | 2003 Berlin summit new action line introduced on doctoral level qualifications ('3rd cycle'); to 'dovetail' with ERA.
- | EUA mandated with developing basic principles and initiates doctoral project. Further discussions in Salzburg and Nice culminating in decisions at London summit .



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Framework agreed at Nice and endorsed London 2007

- | Structure and organisation- integration and transparency (recognition of importance of Graduate Schools).
- | Improve conditions, support career development and inter-sectoral mobility (link to Charter and Code). Concentrate PhD funding (?).
- | Flexibility and autonomy in admissions
- | Enhancing internationalisation.
- | Diversifying doctoral programmes (professional doctorates).



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Framework agreed at Nice and endorsed London 2007

- | Supervision monitoring and assessment... 'transparent contractual framework of shared responsibilities between candidates, supervisors and the institution'
- | Transferable skills development.
- | Status and conditions of doctoral researchers 'Doctoral candidates are early stage researchers who are vital to Europe's development and... should have all commensurate rights'.
- | Funding doctoral researchers. The need for stable funding and greater coordination.



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Bologna 3rd cycle- what has happened since London 2007?

- | At UK level, in many instances already aligned with the framework outlined in Nice.
- | Early days, though ERA and other discussions give research new focus in EU policy.
- | Bologna activities ongoing through Bologna follow up group.
- | New EUA Council for Doctoral Education (EUA-CDE) created.



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European Research Area developments

- | ERA Green Paper in 2007 with a key focus on researchers
- | Commission launched a 'European partnership for researchers' in May 2005.
- | Give further momentum to Charter and Code for researchers (being taken forward through new concordat in the UK).
- | Attempts to remove obstacles to mobility e.g. pensions issues.
- | Reform of employment and working conditions in member states.
- | Enhancing training, skills and experience.



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2006 Communication on the modernisation of universities

- | Promote geographical and inter-sectoral mobility .
- | Greater access to and portability of loans and grants for study or do research .
- | Bring procedures for the recognition of academic qualifications in line with those for professional qualifications and make .European degrees more easily recognised outside Europe.
- | Strengthen intellectual property management, entrepreneurship as part of a research career.
- | Review national student fee and support schemes and systems for funding universities, to be more focused on outputs and give universities more responsibility for their own long-term financial sustainability, particularly in research.
- | Create greater autonomy and accountability including more autonomy for recruitment.



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Issues going forward

- | Convergent policy initiatives with own momentum and drivers, but is there coherence? Joined up policies.
- | Internal contradictions in EU policy e.g. want more autonomy, but increasingly directive in approach.
- | Continued and concerted political commitment needed at national level and from HE sector, but...
- | Is there over initiative on the policy side at EU level driven by politics, do we need to consolidate progress?
- | Take agenda seriously, embed into strategies.
Translating policy into practice (biggest challenge?).
- | More money! (though demonstrate how it is being used)