

# European Doctorate for Health Promotion and Public Health

## Scoping Study Report

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|  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Introduction.....                         | 3 |
| 2. Background.....                           | 4 |
| 2.1. Health as a Global Field .....          | 4 |
| 2.2. European Developments .....             | 4 |
| 2.3. Diversity of University Structures..... |   |





systems (as opposed to harmonising them). Meanwhile, 46 countries within and outside the European Union are involved. Participation in the Bologna Process is voluntary.





for professionals because of its structure and the combination of ongoing work commitments with research (Taylor 2008). Some doctoral programmes in continental Europe now accept students with a Bachelor degree, a common form in the USA (Kehm 2007), called fast-track programmes.







### 3. Methods

In order to obtain a wider understanding of the complexity of developing and organising joint doctoral programmes and to identify recommendations, limitations, and challenges for the next steps of the project, a small scale qualitative study was conducted.

Nine interviews with ten stakeholders were carried out (see table 2; one interview was conducted with two participants) and two written replies to the interview questions were collected. Recruitment of participants was not easy – a total of 37 people were contacted to reach the aspired number of 8-10 interviews.

The data was analysed with the help of the software Nvivo. A thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) was carried out in different steps: the transcripts were read by the primary researcher and a set of codes was developed through deductive (following theoretical considerations and interview questions) and inductive (identifying additional themes brought up by the interviewees) coding. This set of codes (or " nodes", as they are called in Nvivo) was applied to all data. Lastly, the codes were structured, compared and organised into themes.



#### 4.1.2. Benefits for Students

For students first and foremost the experience and opportunity of spending time in another country was identified as a benefit



## 4.2. Core Learning Outcomes of a EuroDoc HPPH

The question, what the core learning outcomes of a EuroDoc HPPH should be was – unsurprisingly – difficult to answer for the interviewees.

(Professor).

Interviewees describe two sets of knowledge and skills they think European Doctorates need to acquire: First, core learning outcomes should be around HP and PH theory and knowledge – i.e. about policies, knowledge about different countries, etc. Doctoral students should reach a shared understanding what HP and PH is.

Second, core learning outcomes need to centre on methodology and research skills, i.e. qualitative as well as quantitative methods and experience towards the context of research in European countries.

(Professor).

One professor says that on top of the normal outcomes of doctoral programmes (to learn about methodology, research process and how to write a thesis), there should be specific outcomes for the European Doctorate:

(Professor).

Jeffery and Elegbe (2011) have proposed some subject areas that could potentially be addressed by HP and PH training (see Jeffery and Elegbe 2011: 9). Furthermore, works of the IUHPE (1999), the ASPHER (Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region) and the CompHP Project (Competences in Health Promotion – see Speller et al. 2012, Dempsey et al. 2011) provide important background for the development of the content of a European doctorate for HP and PH.

## 4.3. Requirements for a European Doctorate

Before a European Doctorate can be developed, some basic requirements and resources need to be in place. These requirements primarily concern the individuals and universities needed for the development of a joint doctorate, as will be described in the next chapters.

### 4.3.1. Partnership

First, a





Another interviewee noted similarly, that the distinction between HP and PH is not clear and needs to be clarified:

(Professor).

Therefore, a decision has to be made very early on whether there should be a focus on HP, on PH, or on how these two can be integrated into a core understanding.

#### 4.3.3. Coordination

The coordinator of European Doctorates has a crucial role in establishing the network of partners, coordinating the development of the programme and finally coordinating the continuous realisation and improvement of the programme. An interviewee who is a partner in a European Doctorate acknowledges the amounts of work that goes into the coordination of the programme:

(EuroDoc Partner).

Coordination, furthermore, needs to be in charge of monitoring the process:

(Lecturer).

The coordinating body/person, therefore, needs to be very committed to the project:

(Coordinator EuroDoc).

#### 4.3.4. Support and Commitment of the Universities

Support and commitment from the universities is crucial for the development and for the continuous existence of the programme.

"

#### 4.3.5. Time and Experience

Two further requirements that were described by interviewees are time and experience of the collaborating partners.

Time is important as the partnership work as well as the actual work concerning the programme can be very time consuming.

[..]

(Coordinator EuroDoc).

[..]

(Professor).

In addition to staff time, experience with joint and/or international programmes and high academic qualifications of the staff are necessary to develop such a complex programme. It needs to be assured that all partner institutes have staff experienced with international supervision of students and high qualifications in the fields of HP and PH.

(Professor).

(Lecturer).

Furthermore, administrative staff and technical support need to be available to make sure administrative processes run smoothly – in the coordinating centre and in the participating universities.

### 4.4. Development of a EuroDoc HPPH

While the previous chapter concerns requirements that already need to be in place when starting with the development of a joint doctorate, this chapter deals with important steps and decisions that need to be made to develop the programme.

#### 4.4.1. Securing of Funding

To secure some sort of funding is a very important step – if not a requirement – in the process of developing a joint doctorate.

(EuroDoc Partner)

Appendix II shows a list of identified funding streams that could be used for the development of a joint doctoral programme. Overall, the interviewees did not know of many funding streams available specifically for the development of (joint) programmes. The most common one mentioned is Erasmus Mundus (see Chapter 2.4.), followed by Marie Curie funds (International Training Network) and some (rather imprecise) references to European funds and the Framework programme. Interviewees also speak of different national

funds that could be accessed – for instance from the national ministries of education, national grants for students, etc. – as well as the need for the participating universities to make some financial commitments.

A coordinator of a European Doctorate says that in his/her opinion, Erasmus mundus is the only funding body for a joint European Doctorate. It has the clear benefit that it is a well-known label, has a very clear and transparent structure and makes the programme visible and attractive within and outside of Europe. Furthermore, it includes a number of scholarships for students.

(Coordinator EuroDoc)

However, another coordinator of a European Doctorate explains that their EuroDoc is not funded by Erasmus mundus at all, but primarily by the Italian ministry for Education, as well as other funding bodies. Most interviewees think that there needs to be a combination of different funding streams – Erasmus, national funds, grants for students, etc. – to develop and deliver the programme. Different streams for mobility and travel of staff and students can be used, as well as streams that support networking and collaboration of researchers. Furthermore, some interviewees have mentioned the possibility to collaborate with industrial partners:

(Professor)

#### 4.4.2. Agreements and Definitions

In order to establish a joint doctoral programme, several legal and structural factors have to be considered and agreements have to be reached. First, the network of partners needs a well-defined, transparent, and solid agreement that all participating institutes can agree upon and can work with. This agreement needs a common understanding of what the programme should be, what the requirements for the students and staff are, how the programme will be delivered, how students will be supervised, how institutes will collaborate etc. Thus, one of the first steps of developing a European Doctorate is to achieve “

[the development of a European Doctorate]

(Coordinator EuroDoc).

As there is likely a huge diversity of structures, requirements and legal frameworks of the participating institutions, this is a very complex process. An interviewee, who is part of a European Doctorate, recalls that this phase of defining the programme was very challenging:

(EuroDoc Partner).

Second, clear indicators have to be defined so the performance of students, staff and the programme can be assessed and compared.

(Lecturer)

Third, an agreement has to be reached regarding the recruitment of students – i.e. the qualification criteria/entrance requirements of students, whether students are registered centrally (a requirement for Erasmus mundus) or not – as well as tuition fees and the formal status of the students. Again, in the different European countries, there are diverse regulations regarding tuition fees – some countries have no tuition fees for PhD students at all (f.e. Finland, Norway, Greece), other countries have very high fees (f.e. UK). Furthermore, some countries employ their doctoral students and pay a salary, while others have specific national grants for PhD students.

(EuroDoc Partner)

Most interviewees express the opinion that there should be equality for all students within the doctoral programme, therefore a common solution has to be found whether or not tuition fees are put in place and how high they should be.

(Coordinator international doctorate).

Alternative suggestions to establishing a common tuition fee for all institutions were on the one hand, to split the fees proportionately, depending on the universities the individual students study at or, on the other hand, to pay fees according to the national regulations.

The coordinator of a European Doctorate points out that there is a specific problem with the UK because tuition fees in the UK are higher than the funding Erasmus mundus provides. In their case, the participating British univ[...]-rn •

ECTS), consisting of theoretical courses, methodological courses and thesis related courses, summer schools and workshops (for example see the EuroDocs EDEEM, PHOENIX or NANOFAR) .

An interviewee recalls:

(Professor).

Interviewees rarely thought that EuroDoc students should be required to learn another language besides English.

#### 4.4.4. Mobility

Mobility of staff, but mostly of students, is an issue that has to be considered when developing a joint/European Doctorate. It concerns the travel and accommodation of students, the amount of time and the reasons for time spent abroad, as well as international supervision of students.

Concerning logistical issues, interviewees primarily stressed the costs for travel of staff and students. To get sufficient funding for the travelling of staff and students is seen as a challenge.







Third, an agreement between the universities has to be set up, the programme has to be developed (both the administrative structure as well as the content) and funding has to be secured. This third step entails much work of all the participating institutes, but especially the coordinating body. It includes making final decisions about the content of the programme (including the learning outcomes of students), developing and/or adapting courses, defining supervision and mobility of staff and students, reaching agreements on tuition fees and the appropriate time for students to be abroad, and much more. For this, it is necessary to analyse rules and regulations of every involved institution and nation (Delgado et al. 2010). Delgado et al. (2010) say that it is necessary to have a central administrative unit that takes care of commonly agreed rules and regulations. As many institutions have irregularities in issuing ECTS credits, foreign students frequently have problems getting the right credits for their work (Cippitani and Gatt 2012) – therefore, a clear transfer system has to be in place for a collaborative or joint doctorate (de Rosa 2010).

Concerning the thematic programme, Delgado et al. (2010) stress that it needs to be innovative, address real needs and be up to date. As doctoral studies are on the borderline between original research and organised academic training, it is much harder to formalise the content of the programme than it is for undergraduate studies (Önnersfors 2007). Most crucially, however, the programme needs a clear shared vision that all the partners can commit to, which is in accordance to what interviewees have said in this study.

Delgado et al. (2010) furthermore say that academic staff that will be involved in the doctoral programme needs to be chosen well. Staff should be experienced with working internationally and with international students and researchers.

There are several challenges that have to be overcome along the way, most based on the fact that there is such great heterogeneity and diversity within doctoral studies and university structures in Europe. Issues like development of indicators, development of joint courses, the tuition fees for students, and entry requirements for students are all heavily influenced by the structures of the participating institutes and therefore have to be carefully and transparently negotiated. Difficulties to establish collaborative and joint doctorates mostly centre on national laws and norms that are difficult to overcome (de Rosa 2008). There are many legal obstacles, like the recognition of the degree in all countries. Furthermore, there are differences in the financial policy and economic conditions in the different countries and institutions involved.

Another challenge that cannot be overlooked in this context is the collaboration of many different institutes and personalities that each have their own traditions, cultures and aims for the programme. Cippitani and

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# APPENDIX

## I. Interview Questions

### Part 1: Content of the EuroDoc

- 1) Do you think a European Doctorates (for HPPH) is important or necessary?  
(only for HP PH experts)
- 2) In your opinion, what should the core learning outcomes of a EuroDoc HPPH be? What should the core qualifications of a EuroDoc HPPH graduate be?
- 3) Have you ever considered coordinating and developing a European Doctorate for HP PH yourself?

### Part 2: Development of a EuroDoc

Do you have any experience with the development or organisation of a European Doctorate?

- 4) Which steps would you say are necessary to develop a EuroDoc (for HP and PH)?
- 5) What are the biggest challenges in developing and establishing a European Doctorate (in HP)?
- 6) What kind of funding streams do you know of for the development of a EuroDoc?

## II. Funding Streams

### For Universities:

Erasmus Mundus: Action 1b: Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorate Programmes (EMJD) – includes scholarships (may not be continued, as Erasmus for All has been introduced in November 2011)

[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus\\_mundus/funding/2012/call\\_eacea\\_42\\_11\\_en.php](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/funding/2012/call_eacea_42_11_en.php)

Erasmus for All (starts 2014): A new proposal that is currently under discussion by the Council and the European Parliament and would bring together all existing EU and international schemes for education, training, youth and sport – including Joint degree grants, student and staff mobility and Higher Education grants.

<http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus-for-all/>

Part of Education & Training is ERASMUS multilateral projects that support cooperation of higher education institutions.

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/multilateral-projects\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/multilateral-projects_en.htm)

Marie Curie Initial Training Networks (ITN)

[http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/mariecurieactions/itn\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/mariecurieactions/itn_en.html)

Marie Curie International Research Staff Exchange Scheme (IRSES)

[http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/mariecurieactions/irses\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/mariecurieactions/irses_en.html)

Research Councils UK – Funding international collaboration

<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/international/funding/collaboration/Pages/home.aspx>

### For individuals (students, teachers, researchers)

Marie Curie International Outgoing Fellowships for career development (IOF) – for post docs and researchers

[http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/mariecurieactions/iof\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/mariecurieactions/iof_en.html)