

## **DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES PROJECT**

### **CALL FOR APPLICATIONS**

**DEADLINE MARCH 15, 2004**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Doctoral programmes<sup>1</sup> are essential to the development of both the European Higher Education and Research Areas, providing a key link between these two processes. Increased support to research is even more important in the context of the ambitious Lisbon and Barcelona goals. If Europe is going to achieve the increase in number of researchers by 700,000 as outlined in the European Commission action plan *"More research for Europe – towards the 3% objective"*, it is crucial to ensure research training of high quality.

Universities are the key actors carrying the major responsibility for training researchers at different stages in their careers. They have to face the new challenges of training young researchers for a variety of careers, not only in the traditional academic market, but also in other sectors of the labour market (including industry, business and enterprise, public organisations, independent research centres, etc).

EUA has devised this project to examine the development of doctoral programmes in view of the increasing demands and challenges in Europe. To address the needs of research training in a rapidly transforming knowledge society, it is important to look carefully at the existing structures of doctoral programmes. The primary objective of this project, funded by the Directorate General Education and Culture, and supported by Directorate General Research of the European Commission, is therefore to help European universities to improve the quality of doctoral programmes.

The two main project aims are:

- to identify essential conditions for successful doctoral programmes in Europe;
- to promote cooperation in the development of doctoral programmes at European level.

The project will have high visibility as it will be the main European project on doctoral programmes feeding into the Bologna Process. Outcomes and results will be presented at a number of major European events in 2004/5.

#### **2. ELIGIBILITY**

The project is open to all EUA member universities.

#### **3. ACTIVITIES**

The project work will be undertaken by six networks of universities:

- Four networks will be working on specified themes (see below). Between six to eight universities will be selected to comprise each of these four networks. Universities are requested to apply on an individual basis, and they will be formed into networks based upon

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<sup>1</sup> In this text, the term "doctoral programmes" is used to signify third-cycle studies comprising original research and normally leading to the award of an academic qualification (doctoral title or doctoral degree.)

the expressed interest of institutions in a specified project theme. One university within each network will act as the co-ordinating institution, and will have additional responsibilities for organising events, writing overall reports, and ensuring that the tight deadlines for project work are met.

- The fifth network will take a comparative approach and work upon **all** of the four themes;
- The sixth network will comprise existing inter-institutional cooperation at doctoral level programmes, and the programme representative is requested to complete the application.

The tasks of the networks will involve analysis of institutional practice, comparison of policy and practice between network partners, and development of guidelines and recommendations based upon agreed areas of good practice or policy. The members of the networks will be expected to participate in two or three project meetings within a period of six months, to undertake background research, and to participate in report writing and the development of recommendations aimed at European universities.

Funding within the project will be available to cover the costs related to project tasks (including staff time and travel costs).

### **3.1 Four university networks to be formed based on the expressed interest of institutions in one of the following themes:**

#### ***Theme I: Structure and organisation of Doctoral Programmes***

This network will focus upon institutional policy for doctoral programmes, in the context of a rapidly changing environment where the conception and use of knowledge, as well as the impact of the Bologna Process, is putting pressure upon traditional structures and practices. The group will compare practice within the participating universities and address issues regarding structural and organisational change. Trends in terms of the length of doctoral programmes, development of recruitment criteria, reform of internal management of doctoral programmes, implications for supervision, and variations between disciplines will all be considered.

##### ***Selection Criteria***

- Demonstrable experience as a research-training institution across a broad range of disciplines;
- Institutional research policy;
- Institutional experience in reform and development of doctoral programmes.

#### ***Theme II: Financing Doctoral Programmes***

This network will examine and compare sources of financing for doctoral programmes from two perspectives. Firstly institutional financing will be compared, taking into account sources of funding, financial management, the increasing constraints on universities as well as the need for larger numbers of trained researchers in Europe. Secondly the perspective of doctoral candidates will be addressed, where questions of the legal status of candidates and their salaries/scholarships, access to social security benefits, and financial drawbacks and benefits of embarking upon a research career will be highlighted. From an examination of successful practice, clear recommendations on funding policy as well as on the status of doctoral candidates are the expected outcomes.

##### ***Selection Criteria***

- Demonstrable financing strategy for doctoral programmes;
- Demonstrable action to fund doctoral candidates;
- Innovative examples of successful funding partnerships.

#### ***Theme III Quality of Doctoral Programmes***

This network will focus mainly upon institutional policy and action to enhance the quality of doctoral programmes, considering quality from two perspectives. Firstly the network will consider quality in terms of programme structure, academic content, and skill development (research skills and techniques, as well as wider employment-related skills). Secondly the network will examine how the

evaluation of quality is taken into account in existing institutional procedures. The group will also aim to identify good practice examples and provide clear recommendations for future practice.

**Selection Criteria**

- An existing institutional action plan to improve quality culture, and in particular relating to the improvement of the quality of doctoral programmes.

**Theme IV Innovative Practice for Doctoral Programmes**

This network will compare experience of developing new and innovative practice for doctoral programmes. Relevant examples which could be developed in a European context should be selected, and may include such initiatives as structured inter-disciplinary programmes, partnerships with industry and business, or the development of graduate (doctoral) schools and the introduction of a European dimension in doctoral training programmes.

**Selection Criteria**

- Demonstrable examples of innovative practice that merit broader consideration at European level.

### **3.2 Fifth network to provide a global overview of all themes**

In addition to the networks to be formed around specific themes outlined in 3.1, one network will be composed to work upon **all** of the themes to provide a wider and more comparative overview. This network should include universities which consider that their policies are rather comprehensively oriented, addressing jointly all the themes mentioned separately above. Emphasis will be put on the complementarity of the themes and on their corresponding practices.

**Selection Criteria**

- Clear holistic policy for doctoral programmes, integrating all thematic aspects of point 3.1 above;
- Well-developed doctoral programmes.

### **3.3. Sixth network "of networks" offering joint doctoral programmes**

An additional network consisting of **existing university networks participating in structured joint doctoral initiatives/programmes** will be formed to examine questions of European cooperation in joint or integrated doctoral programmes.

**Selection Criteria**

This working group is open to networks of universities offering structured inter-institutional doctoral programmes. The application should provide evidence of:

- a minimum of two university partners in two different European countries;
- a clear inter-institutional agreement (e.g. Cotutelle arrangements, joint certificates) with regard to matters such as course requirements and award of qualification;
- an agreed policy between institutions on admission requirements to the doctoral programme;
- well-devised and complementary structure for doctoral courses;
- compulsory mobility for doctoral candidates;
- language policy;
- quality assurance procedures.

In addition, programmes should have been operating for at least 3 years.

#### 4. TIMELINE:

1. Deadline for the call: March 15, 2004
2. Selection of networks (selection committee): April 19, 2004
3. First meeting of selected networks: May 3, 2004
4. Network meetings and action research: June – November, 2004
5. EUA Conference on research training, Maastricht: October 28-29, 2004
6. Final reports: December 31, 2004
7. Salzburg Conference (Bologna Process): January 2005
8. EUA Convention on Higher Education, Glasgow, March 31 - April 3 2005

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i) Except in the case specified in ii) below, a university may only submit one application. The application form is divided into three parts. Part I should be filled out by all applicants. Part II of the application form is directed towards universities who would like to participate in one of the five thematic networks. Part III is for the universities who would like to participate in the network of joint doctoral programmes.

ii) Please note: a university may apply to be a member of one of the thematic networks (outlined in 3.1 and 3.2) and may also participate as a member of a network of joint doctoral programmes (outlined in 3.3).