



A Tradition of Innovation

Coimbra Group Doctoral Studies Working Group Meeting

Wednesday, 23 October 2019, 10:00 - 12:00
Virtual Meeting

Draft Minutes

Attendees:

Aarhus Universitet (DK)	Stine Kristensen
University of Bergen (NO)	Yngve Brynjulfsen
University of Graz (AT)	Gerald Lind
University of Iași (RO)	Adriana Zait
University of Jena (DE)	Gunda Huskobla (Chair)
Université de Poitiers (FR)	Jean-Marie Pincemin (Vice-Chair)
University of Turku (FI)	Elise Pinta
University of Würzburg (DE)	Stephan Schröder-Köhne
CG Office	Anna Quici

1. Approval of agenda and of the minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting in Krakow as well as the agenda of this meeting were approved.

2. Update on member activities

Graz:

- Doctoral Academy Day (October 24, 2019), Topic: Postdocs. Chances and Challenges. More information [here](#).
- ARQUS – European University Alliance, University of Graz has lead in the Action Line “Research Support and Development of Early Stage Researchers” which will feature some activities in the field of doctoral education (mentoring schemes, exchange programmes, etc.). More information [here](#).
- New Rectorate and new Vice-Rector for Research and Early Stage Researchers since October 1, 2019: series of meetings to discuss the status quo in the field of doctoral studies at the University of Graz with the aim of setting up strategies for future activities.

Iasi:

- Interdisciplinarity: looking for ways to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration at doctoral level, for the Doctoral schools and for our Research Institute; a delicate issue is the evaluation of mixed, multi-disciplinary projects - finding criteria that ensure, at the same time, specific evaluation for the primary fields, and holistic comparable evaluations
- Stimulate the participation of doctoral students to research projects: early involvement in financed research projects

- Conceive a mechanism for dealing with context-related issues that have prolonged effects - especially the high volatility of higher education regulations (for example, we don't have a fully appointed Minister of Education and several processes are delayed - such as diploma equivalence certificates for foreign doctoral students)

Würzburg:

- Funding of the university's biggest Graduate School GSLS (with >700 PhD researchers) is about to be secured (it only needs a last approval of the Bavarian Parliament)

Turku:

- Preparation process of the new strategy (2021–2030, for the first time for 10 years) of the University of Turku is going on.
- For the first time the number of University of Turku Graduate School funded doctoral candidate positions was increased (178-> 180 (1.1.2020-), that is about 10% of all doctoral candidates).
- In 2019, the University applies for the renewal of its right to use the HRS4R logo. The revised Action Plan for 2019-2021 together with the university's Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment Policy (OTM-R Policy) were published on the website in June 2019. A Site Visit connected to the renewal application assessment is Nov 8th 2019.

Aarhus:

- Project: New system for digitalisation of administrative processes for PhD management
- Project: Career development programme for postdocs and junior faculty members at central level
- Implementation: 5 Basic principles for PhD Education at Aarhus University – with focus on independence and academic growth (<https://phd.au.dk/basic-principles-of-phd-education-at-aarhus-university/> including reference to literature / European principles). Supervisors need to accept them, not only management. Therefore: implementation measures necessary.

Bergen: agenda for autumn 2019 until spring 2020

- Digitalisation
- Quality assurance: run a survey on alumni and on drop-outs
- New action plan for PhD education (i.e. drafting of a local strategic action plan only for the doctoral level)

Poitiers:

- Structural changes necessary for 8 doctoral schools which are run together with other institutions as one university leaves the network
- Presidential election in March
- Participation in the next call for European Alliances which will include improving cooperation at the PhD level
- Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions: programme evolvement along with an information session taking place the beginning of December

Jena:

- Conferences on Doctoral Education in Germany:
 - o VolkswagenStiftung: Forces and Forms of Doctoral Education, 5-6 September, highly international with active participants from all over the world (mostly researchers on doctoral education), resulted in rather general recommendations (file "Hannover Recommendations" is attached), possibility to sign up for a network (<https://www.doctoral-education.info>) in order to receive documents, further information etc.
 - o UniWiND/GUAT (national university association on advanced graduate training): Annual symposium, 10-11 October, 10-year anniversary of the network with a strong thematic focus on doctoral supervision
- In Jena:
 - o start of a pilot phase for an "Honours Programme" for students aspiring to an academic career (managed by the Graduate Academy), goal is to give pre-docs a deeper insight into research processes during their studies by financial support, workshops, mentoring
 - o latest university events for doctoral researchers: Welcome Event, Mental Health in Academia, Career Evening "PhD – What next?"

CG Office / Executive Board:

- Euraxess Stakeholder Dialogue on 22 October:
 - o Information on Students and Researchers Directives, Single Digital Gateway, Europass portfolio
 - o Panel, e.g. on influences of the Innovative Doctoral Training Principles (IDTP) on the structuring of the PhD
 - o Croatia plans to promote the topic of brain circulation during its upcoming presidency of the EU Council
- Input of the CG on the MSCA Postdocs action

3. Employability of PhDs / Joint staff training week on doctoral employability with the WG Employability

- Responsible working group members: *Elise, Jean-Marie, Gunda*
- Timeline: **25-27 March 2020** in Groningen (postponing was necessary due to a long-term sick leave of the Groningen local coordinator)
- Announcement and start of registration by the end of November/December
- Preliminary programme will be published soon (including poster session, testimonials of PhD graduates, train-the-trainer workshop)
- Anna mentioned that she has been in touch with the French “Association Bernard Gregory” which is a non-profit organisation that connects PhDs with industry. Possible synergies?

4. Interdisciplinarity in doctoral research

- Responsible working group member: *Adriana*
- Adriana developed a first draft of a questionnaire for collecting data about interdisciplinarity
- Target group: doctoral and postdoctoral students at our universities and possibly PhD advisors willing to participate
Sample size: it would be good to receive data from 50-60 PhD candidates per university as well as of about 80 supervisors altogether from all participating universities
- Collection of data in order to:
 - o measure attitudes towards interdisciplinary research, skills and preferences, frequency of behavior
 - o measure intellectual capital on three classical dimensions (human, structural and relational) to see if and how interdisciplinarity could help increase an institution's intangible capital
 - o control for influences due to the size of the country or university, intercultural differences, differences between “hard” and “soft” sciences
- Possible benefits and output: better internal knowledge; publishing a group report and an article in a good journal. I will prepare also a short text, literature review type, to explain the importance of the subject.

Next steps:

Questionnaire from Adriana to WG members for feedback; content analysis of outputs and articles

Other working group members who would like to get involved more?

5. 3MT Competition Timeline

Timeline Date	Information
Proposed (member institutions to choose):	
October – November 2019	Announce date of institutional final and start to promote
January – February 2020	Department/School/Unit level competitions
March 2020	Institutional finals
Fixed:	
31th March 2020	Deadline for video submissions for CG Final
1st – 3rd April 2020	Eligibility check by the group of technical experts
4th – 17th April 2020	DS WG members vote for top 3 entries
10th – 12th June 2020	Coimbra Group Final

Short review on the Finals 2019: It was great to have a jury. It raised the feeling of fairness. Still, the jury had a hard time to decide between three excellent presentations. It was suggested to award one first prize and two runner-ups in the future (i.e. not differentiating between second and third prize) and to adjust the prize money (less differences in the amounts, e.g. 1.500 € for the winner and 1.000 € for both runner-ups).

6. Report from the activities in the “YEBO!” project on the internationalisation of PhD Studies at South African universities / Planned side-event in Montpellier

- Report from Workshop 3 in June (*Gunda*): “Developing a toolbox for managing international collaborative programmes”
 - o Intense workshop, heterogeneous SA university landscape (mostly SA universities plus Ghent, Montpellier and Jena/CG)
 - o Presentation on behalf of the Coimbra Group: “Challenges related to international collaborative programmes in Europe – Can a “one size fits all” approach work?”
 - o Additionally short commenting inputs on other presentations and facilitator of workshop session on developing a sample framework agreement
 - o Thank you for your input at last meeting, discussions on terminology and different national standards and science systems
 - o Material available on YEBO PhD platform <https://yebo.cut.ac.za/> and [here](#) (and I will upload the presentation file in our intranet)
 - o **Possible task for the working group:** revision of the Coimbra Group Template for joint supervision making it available for download on the CG website again
- Report from the IEASA Conference Cape Town / Side-event of the YEBO! project in August (*Gunda*):
 - o Written report in the last newsletter edition of the CG newsletter (<https://www.coimbra-group.eu/are-universities-prepared-to-face-the-challenges-of-the-fourth-industrial-revolution/>)
 - o Internationalisation of Higher Education in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)
 - o Workshop on “Challenge accepted! The internationalisation of doctoral studies as a response to the fourth industrial revolution” (with Uppsala, Stellenbosch, University of the Western Cape)
- Further project news (*Anna*):
 - o planned side-event of YEBO! and the Working Group Doctoral Studies at the Annual Conference in Montpellier 2020
 - o Training session 10-15 March 2020 on research visibility and capacity in Cape Town, call for contributions
 - o Possibly invitation of a YEBO! partner to the staff training week in Groningen

7. Project proposals / abstract submissions (e.g. SWAFS Call)

SWAFS call: The 2020 call in December 2019 (application period 10 December to 15 April) focuses on skills related to open science and entrepreneurship. Application is only possible for “experienced projects” which have already developed or implemented joint PhD curricula (e.g. under Erasmus+ or ITN).

8. Any other business

News from Cristina La Rocca / Padova on the “Italian case” (see minutes of the Krakow meeting): Improvement with respect to the pressure to complete a PhD in 3 years. It is now possible to obtain an extension for a fourth year.

9. Date of next meeting

- 25 March 2020 in Groningen (in conjunction with the planned staff training week)
- Possibility to hold virtual meetings with the whole working group or subgroups inbetween