Progress and assessment

Average agreement: 78%.

But 26% of students did not agree they had received an appropriate induction.

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Responsibilities

86% to 89% of students claimed a good understanding of their and their supervisors' responsibilities.

However, only 60% of respondents agreed that their institution values and responds to feedback from research students and this is a key area of enhancement for the sector.

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Research skills

This was the highest scoring scale, with average agreement of 85%.

Professional development

Average agreement was 76%, and it is very encouraging to see that four-fifths of students had taken ownership of their own professional development during their programme.

69% of respondents had developed contacts or professional networks which was the lowest score for this scale.

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Opportunities

Health sciences (56%) and STEM students (54%) are more likely to say they have received training to develop transferable skills than respondents from the social sciences (39%) and arts and humanities (37%).

While the proportion of students receiving advice on career options increases with year group it is concerning to find that up to 60% of students may never have this opportunity.

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Teaching

Just over half of students taught or demonstrated at their institution during their research degree programme, rising to 61% in STEM subject areas.

62% of these had received formal training and 57% agreed they had received appropriate support and guidance for teaching.

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Motivations

Interest in the subject and improving prospects for an academic research career are the top two motivations for students.

While 59% of respondents anticipate a career in higher education, this ranges from 53% of UK domiciled students to 68% of non-EU students.

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Using PRES for enhancement

Student surveys are only worthwhile if the results are used to inform **quality enhancement.**

PRES provides a vital initial indicator of where to look for **best practice** and where enhancement is required, but it is always important to triangulate survey results with **other sources** – and types – of information, e.g. further qualitative insights from students on specific issues.

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At Bath Spa:

- 88% of students are **satisfied** with their experience overall;
- 93% are confident they will complete on time;
- 90.7% agree that supervisors have necessary **skills and knowledge**;
- 91% understand their **responsibilities** as a research student;

Research skills

- 92% Research methodologies
- 90.5% Critically analysing and evaluating findings

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At Bath Spa:

- 81% have developed **contacts**;
- 83% have managed their own **professional development**;
- 72% are aiming for a **career in higher education.**

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At Bath Spa:

Areas for development:

- Have a suitable **working space** - 55%
- Given appropriate **support for teaching** - 44%
- Have access to **specialist resources** - 63%

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Quality Assurance in UK Higher Education

Jules Forrest, Quality Assurance Manager

13 March 2018

Overview of Quality Assurance

- Quality Assurance in UK
- Quality Assurance at BSU
- Challenges and Benefits
- Key areas & how it works
  - Programme approval, review & monitoring
  - External Examiners
  - Collaborative Provision

External Quality Assurance in UK

- QAA – UK owned, global reputation
- UK Quality Code
  - **Enhance the quality and secure the standards of UK higher education wherever delivered in order to maintain public confidence.**
- FHEQ, subject benchmarks, characteristics
- Professional, Statutory & Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs)
- Peer review, Peer-led & co owned, autonomy eg External examiners
- Student involvement
- Encourage enhancement

Quality Assurance at BSU

- How does BSU meet Quality Code expectations?
- Quality code chapters
- Risk based, proportionate, relevant
- Annual cycle of QA
- Student engagement in QA
- Collaborative Provision and Partnerships

Why do we do it?

- Assurance of academic standards and quality of provision
- Reputation: national and international
- Recruitment
- High quality student experience
- Robust & efficient process and procedures that support strategic initiatives, eg curriculum development

Programme approval & review

Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective processes for the design, development and approval of programmes.

Quality Code Part B: Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality: Chapter B1: Programme Design Development & Approval

- Indicator 1: maintain strategic oversight of the processes for, and outcomes of programme design development and approval, to ensure processes are applied systematically and operated consistently.
- Indicator 6: Higher education providers involve students in programme design and ex processes for programme development and approval.

External Examiners

Higher education providers make scrupulous use of external examiners.

Quality Code Part B: Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality, Chapter B7: External Examining

- Indicator 3: Degree awarding bodies expect their external examiners to provide informative comment and recommendations on:
  - Good practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment observed by the external examiners
  - opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students
- Indicator 14: Institutions make external examiners' annual reports available in full to students

Research Degrees

- Research degrees are awarded in a research environment that provides secure academic standards for doing research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols. This environment offers students the quality of opportunities and support they need to achieve successful academic, personal and professional outcomes from their research degrees.

  Quality Code Part B: Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality: Chapter B11: Research Degrees
- Indicator 3:
  Higher education providers monitor their research degree provision against internal and external indicators and targets that reflect the context in which research degrees are being offered

What are the challenges?

- Responsive to business needs
- Partnerships
- New/diverse initiatives
- Bureaucracy
- Effective engagement with students

Useful Reference Points

- Internal/BSU:
  - BSU Quality and Standards A-Z
  - Course Approval Process
  - Collaborative Provision Handbook
  - Qualifications Framework
  - Review Process for BSU Partners
  - Academic Regulations
  - Register of Collaborative Provision
- External:
  - Quality Code - Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
  - Higher Education Academy
  - Subject Benchmark Statements
  - National HE networks, eg. Consortium Validating Universities (CVU)

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Any Questions?

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Thank You

Jules Forrest
Email: j.forrest@bathspa.ac.uk

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13 March 2016

OUR VISIT TO BSU IN PHOTOS

University of Girona (UdG)

Girona, Spain
21-25 November 2015

Universitat de Girona

OVERVIEW

The Universitat de Girona is a public institution devoted to excellence in teaching and research and to participating in the progress and development of society through the creation, transmission, diffusion and criticism of knowledge related to the sciences, technology, the humanities, the social sciences and the arts. It is deeply rooted in Catalonia and Catalan culture and is one of the primary economic and cultural motors of the region. At the same time, it pursues a vocation of universality and openness to all traditions, and cultures. The University, located in the city of Girona, is a part of the Catalan public university system.

The Universitat de Girona offers programmes of study at different levels (Undergraduate, Master's and Doctoral), as well as its experience as a centre for research through its 110 research groups, 24 departments, 28 research chairs and 12 research institutions most of which operate in the Science and Technology Park. The Science and Technology Park is a very important unit as a link between academia and private sector, the main objective of which is promoting research to meet the needs of society and industry.

The University strictly adheres to the Bologna process which encourages the member states of the European Higher Education Area to elaborate a framework of comparable and compatible qualifications for higher education systems, which should seek to

describe qualifications in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile. It is peculiar of small universities, while KTH and Heidelberg University are more independent and have their own research culture.

THE MAIN STRENGTHS OF PhD EDUCATION AT UNIVERSITAT DE GIRONA

The following issues were presented and discussed at UdG: the Social Council of the University of Girona, the Science and Technology Park, standards of quality in doctoral education, Erasmus Mundus Masters on Vision and Robotics and Tourism Management.

The main points of PhD education at UdG can be summed up as follows:

1. As far as the University of Gerona lacks the funding opportunities that bigger universities such as KTH and Heidelberg University enjoy, it makes extensive use of educational and research programs of the European Union, particularly Erasmus Mundus. This practice enables them to launch new master and doctoral programs and attract international students.
2. Science and Technology Park was established to bridge the gap between the University and market. It provides the link between research-production-society, so research programs are developed based on the demands of production and society. On the other hand, the research outcomes themselves can promote new production lines, trends and demands in society. As a result, the research groups may establish new companies. The Science and Technology Park which hosts more than 90 companies helps to obtain necessary research funding and provide employment for PhD students.
3. The requirements for admission, research monitoring process, selection of supervisors and their responsibilities are similar to

those in other leading European universities. However, unlike other universities, the University of Girona has a good practice of shifting the educational component to master program which enables the PhD students to allocate more time to research.
4. The inclusion of an invited member from abroad in the specialized council for defense is an essential requirement.

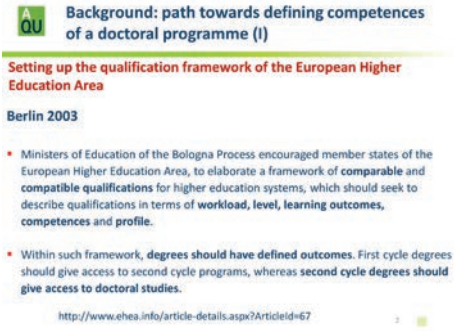
FEEDBACK FROM UdG

The Armenian visitors seemed lively, interested and engaged with the sessions and asked relevant and interesting questions throughout.

Our PhD students especially appreciated the attention and questions in response to their presentations. It's always useful to receive feedback from people from another discipline or from a lay audience.

It was a very pleasant experience having the group here for the visit. We all enjoyed their friendly company

UdG BEST PRACTICE IN PRESENTATIONS[3]
(some of them)



[3]For more presentations please visit: http://tempusveritas.am/?page_id=514

Background: path towards defining competences of a doctoral programme (II)

Setting up the qualification framework of the European Higher Education Area

Bergen 2005

- **Framework for qualifications in the EHEA (QF-EHEA):** it comprises **three cycles,** a **generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences, and credit ranges in the first and second cycles.**
- QF-EHEA **facilitates movement** between degrees, **national and international recognition,** and **provides the broad structure** within which national qualifications frameworks will be developed.
- From QF-EHEA, **national frameworks should be elaborated** by 2010 (closest to the operational reality to describe the qualifications within a given education system).

Qualification framework focuses on learning outcomes more than on the specific procedures

Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area

QF-EHEA *vs.* EQF

- The **European Qualifications Framework (EQF)** (valid for the entire education system) sets up **8 levels** defined by a set of descriptors indicating the learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at an specific level.
- The **QF-EHEA** and the **EQF are fully compatible** (London, 2007):
  - **1st cycle QF-EHEA (Bachelor degrees; 180-240 ECTS) = EQF level 6**
  - **2nd cycle QF-EHEA (Master degrees; > 60-120 ECTS) = EQF level 7**
  - **3rd cycle QF-EHEA (Doctorate programmes) = EQF level 8**

Learning outcomes and competences of the third cycle of QF-EHEA: what is a doctorate able to do?

Qualifications that signify completion of the third cycle are awarded to students who:

- Demonstrate a **systematic understanding of a field of study** and **mastery of the skills and methods of research** associated with that field.
- Demonstrate the ability to **conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research** with scholarly integrity.
- Make a **contribution through original research** that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work, which merits national or **international refereed publication (international recognition).**
- Are capable of **critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new** and complex **ideas (critical review, autonomy and leadership of research projects).**
- Can **communicate** with their peers, with the scholar community and with society in general about their areas of expertise.
- Can **promote**, within academic and professional contexts, **technological, social or cultural advancement** in a knowledge based society **(leadership of research teams, with national and international activities).**

Third cycle of QF-EHEA: implications from Salzburg principles (I)

Commitments and challenges of the institution to propose a doctorate programme

- The core component of doctoral training is the **advancement of knowledge through original research**. Doctoral training must also increasingly meet the needs of an employment market **(Doctorate is based on research: it is its leading principle).**
- Universities need to assume responsibility for ensuring that the doctoral programmes and research training they offer are designed to meet new challenges and include appropriate professional career development opportunities **(Revision of university strategies and policies).**
- The diversity of doctoral programmes is a strength which has to be underpinned by quality and solid practice.
- **Professional recognition of doctoral candidates** as early stage researchers.
- **Crucial role of supervision and assessment**: transparent framework of shared responsibilities between doctoral candidates, supervisors and the institution.

Third cycle of QF-EHEA: implications from Salzburg principles (II)

Commitments and challenges of the institution to propose a doctorate programme

- Achieving **critical mass (Enhancement in the number of doctoral candidates: public information; doctoral schools; international-national-regional clusters of universities).**
- Doctoral programmes should operate within **appropriate time duration (3 to 4 years full-time).**
- **Interdisciplinary training** and development of transferable skills **(Ensure wider employability).**
- Doctoral programmes should seek to offer (geographical, interdisciplinary, intersectoral) **mobility and international collaboration** within an integrated framework of cooperation between universities and other partners **(Mobility at doctoral level is part of institutions' overall internationalisation strategy).**
- Ensuring **appropriate funding** to ensure the development and successful completion of quality doctoral programmes.

Third cycle of QF-EHEA: implications from Salzburg principles (III)

Commitments and challenges of the institution to propose a doctorate programme

- **Implementation of a doctoral program** may require **changes in the institution:**
  - **Creation of doctoral schools** (at programme, or better, at institution levels). They should be strategic units responsible for:
    - Guidelines and normative; monitoring; quality management; problem solving.
    - Strategic planning (capacity and talent development; community involvement; internationalisation).
  - **Transferable skills**: university-business partnerships.
- Space for **individual development** of the doctoral candidate.
- Consideration of the **diversity in the offer** (but with **accountability implications).**
- Deal with **individual disciplines** (e.g..; humanities versus STEM; regulated professions): how big is the common ground and how crucial are the differences?

Main aspects to be considered in the design of a Doctorate Programme

Basic elements for the design of a Doctorate Programme

- **Structure and organization** of the Doctorate programme.
- **Skills (competences-learning outcomes)** to be acquired by the candidates.
- Conditions of **access and development of the research career**.
- **Supervision and guidance** of the doctoral candidate.
- Setting of doctoral studies in a research environment that encourages **training activities, communication and creativity.**
- **Appropriate teaching staff, with internationally recognized and active research.**
- **Internationalization** and **mobility.**
- **Commitment to initiate a path forward the validation and accreditation of quality of the programmes** as a reference for **international recognition** and attractiveness.

The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)

2015 revision (http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/ESG_2015.pdf)

- The ESG apply to all higher education offered in the EHEA.
- **Quality assurance**: all activities within the continuous improvement cycle (i.e. **assurance and enhancement activities**), as well as **accountability**. Taken together, these create **trust in the higher education institution's performance**.
- The focus of the ESG is on **quality assurance related to learning and teaching in higher education**, including the learning environment and relevant links to research and innovation.

ESG: Internal Quality Assurance

1.2 (Design and approval of programmes)

Institutions should have **processes for the design and approval of their programmes**. The programmes should meet their **objectives** and intended **learning outcomes**. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to national qualifications and, consequently, to the QF-EHEA.

1.9 (On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes)

Institutions should **monitor and periodically review their programmes** to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to **continuous improvement** of the programme. Any action planned/taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.

1.10 (Cyclical external quality assurance)

Institutions should undergo **external QA** in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.

Legal context in Spain

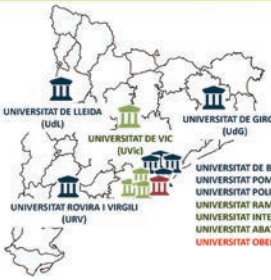
Main approaches at European level for the quality assurance of degrees

- **Evaluation** of existing **Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS)** of the institutions, aiming at ensuring the quality of the degrees.
- **Individual evaluation of degrees**: in Spain (and in Catalonia), degrees are evaluated.

Royal Decree 99/2011, 28 January

- It concerns the **regulation of doctorate degrees**: it establishes a new regulatory framework that sets a structure for doctoral programmes based on the ESG of the European Higher Education Area and the recommendations of different European and international forums.
- In Catalonia, AQU Catalunya takes responsibility for the overall assessment framework of doctorate degrees.

Catalan universitary system (I)



497 Bachelor degrees
570 Master degrees
195 Doctorate programmes

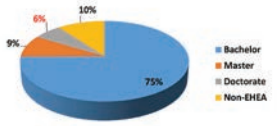
Catalan universitary system (II)

Students enroled in official degrees (data from 13-14)

		Total	Bachelor	Master	Non-EHEA studies	Doctorate	Number of PhD theses
UB	Public	57155	44660	4700	2745	5050	740
UAB	Public	41710	30940	2380	4610	3780	620
UPC	Public	32800	22200	2500	6070	2030	340
UPF	Public	15940	12390	2140	180	1230	180
UdG	Public	15030	13050	600	580	800	100
UdL	Public	9600	7800	830	600	370	70
URV	Public	13990	10880	990	1030	1090	180
URL	Private	14610	11040	2060	1110	400	N.A.
UVic	Private	5780	4760	510	380	130	7
UIC	Private	3800	3180	240	50	330	9
UAO	Private	1660	1040	100	430	90	8
UOC	e-learning	40860	27540	4960	8200	160	5
	Total	252935	189480	22010	25985	15460	2259

Catalan universitary system (III)

Students enroled in official degrees (data from 13-14)



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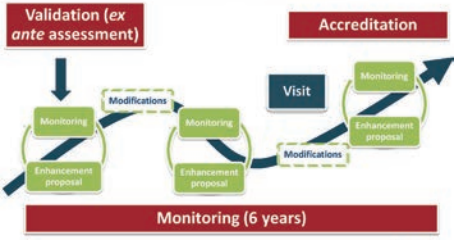
Internal/external quality assurance framework



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Initial requirements before validation of Doctorate Programmes

Universities must define their priorities and strategies concerning research and doctoral studies

- **Mission and vision** of the university within the **research** context.
- **Consolidated research fields** and prioritized research lines: **map of potential doctorate programmes** (as well as related Master degrees).
- **Relationship with other R+D+i institutions** of the university environment.
- **University capacity of monitoring research groups** implied with the doctorate programmes.
- **Management units**: **doctorate schools**; existence of **IQAS**; **academic commission and coordinator** (with at least 12 years of recognized research activity); ...
- **Human and material resources.**
- Other: **normative**; **relationship with business companies** and labour market.

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Dimensions of the Doctorate programme (I)

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Dimensions of the Doctorate programme (II)

Definition and structure | Competences and learning outcomes

Which is the purpose of the programme and why is it being proposed?

- The definition of the program needs to be established, regarding the aspects that identify the proposal in administrative terms and **justify interest and the need for the programme**, together with the **intended learning outcomes (competences profile).**
- **Public information of the programme should be complete and updated.**

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Dimensions of the Doctorate programme (III)

Access and admission of students | Training activities | Supervision and monitoring

How is this achieved? (I)

- Achievement of the programme's learning outcomes requires to set up an **IQAS**, which ensures the quality of the following processes:
  - Definition of the **access profile** of the doctorate candidates.
  - Design of an **individualized research plan**, including aims, methodology, resources and temporality.
  - Planning of programme content to ensure that the competence profile is achieved, including a **register of the training activities** followed.
  - **Supervision and monitoring of doctoral candidates** that ensure that students acquire the intended learning outcomes.
  - **Evaluation:** an academic commission should evaluate annually the progress of the research plan and the training activities of the candidate.

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Dimensions of the Doctorate programme (IV)

Human resources | Material and support resources

How is this achieved? (II)

- The institution must evidence that has the **necessary human, material and support resources** for the intended learning outcomes to be achieved.
- The **teaching staff should evidence that is currently active in research**, which should be **internationally relevant**. A set of **indicators**, with pre-established target values, should be set up (e.g., number of recognized research periods; international publications (in peer-reviewed journals listed in Journal Citation Report or similar lists); supervised theses; on-going competitive projects; collaboration with foreign research groups).

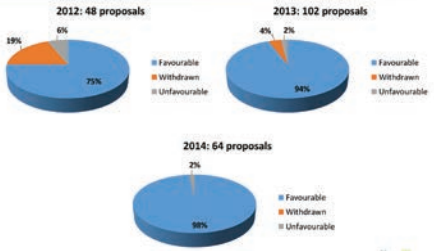
Dimensions of the Doctorate programme (V)

Results, revision and enhancement

What are the anticipated outcomes and in what way are these guaranteed?

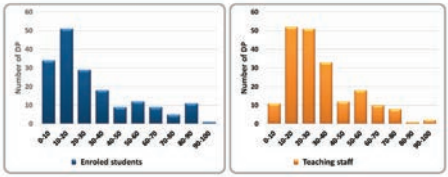
- The institution should **anticipate the outcomes (target values)** of the doctorate programme (e.g., number of students enroled; number of theses finished; quality of the teaching staff; internationalization evidences;...) and how its IQAS would permit their quantification.
- Outcomes should be expressed as **quantitative values of indicators** clearly defined.
- **IQAS processes** must allow the institution to the **monitor, review and improve** the doctoral programme, and to derive an **enhancement plan** if required.

Results of the validation stage (I)



Results of the validation stage (II)

195 doctorate degrees in Catalan universities



Monitoring the Doctorate programme

The validated programme must be monitored before its accreditation

- **Monitoring of the programme consists in internal and external actions.**
- **Internal process** (annual internal assessment), in which **the results** (values of the indicators) **of the programme are analyzed** and **enhancement plans** are derived.
- **External process (every 3 years),** in which a **quality agency examines a monitoring report**, that includes analyses of the:
  - **Development of the programme**: number and profile of accepted students; suitable supervision process; relevance of training activities; enhancement plans
  - Degree of **implementation of the IQAS**
  - **Quality of public information**
  - **Suitability of the teaching staff**
  - Degree of **achievement of target values of the indicators**

Monitoring the Doctorate programme: indicators (I)

Access and enrolment

- Number of places offered
- Number of applications received
- Number of new students
- Overall number of students
- Percentage of foreign students
- Percentage of students at part time
- Percentage of students with fellowships

Teaching staff

- Number of faculty members who have supervised PhD theses
- Percentage of faculty members with recognized research

Mobility

- Percentage of students with stays at other (foreign) institutions
- Percentage of students of other programmes with stays at the institution