

PRIDE - Professionals in Doctoral Education



The PRIDE Journey

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First things first

To Božica Bartolac, Carlos Belmonte, Dolores Belmonte, Anna Bessler, Alexandra Bitusikova, Elsa Caetano, Kris Dejonckheere, Caridad Garcia, Consuelo Garcia, Hannelore De Grande, Jan Den Haese, Bianca Lindorfer, Melita Kovacevic, Slaven Mihaljevic, Anna Fräßdorf, Brigitte Lehmann, Silvia Marchionne, Allison O'Reilly, Paola Romano, Marcello Scalisi, Karen François, Dušan Meško, Katarina Murceková, Joana Marques, Katrin Niglas, Catarina Silva Pinto, Patricia Rosado Pinto, Lisette Schmidt, Kadri Sirg, Carmen Torres Gomez de Villar, Marta Wasowska, Michael Wimmer, and Jane Verlinden, EU Brussels and far more than 300 other contributors: **Thank you**

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Structure

1. Why did we start the journey?
2. What did we experience and find?
3. Where should we move from here?

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Context

External and internal conditions in higher education have changed dramatically in the last two decades, resulting in pressures within universities:

- rapid growth in the number of students
- knowledge is increasing and so the expected impact for society
- less state and more institutional autonomy, but also: more accountability, more monitoring, more competition
- an explosive growth in „auditing“ and an increasing threat for academic freedom
- type and distribution of work changed in universities

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Academics experience...

- Weakening of their collegial decision-making power (e.g. abolishment of senates in some countries)
→ losing power
- Continuous monitoring and controlling of their work in terms of quality and output
→ losing trust and freedom
- New internal structures, guidelines and processes (de-privatisation of their areas of activities) → losing control
- More bureaucracy, delegation of task → losing time
- Example: Changes related to the reform in doctoral training

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Context

We observe professionalization on at least 3 level

- Leadership: acquisition of strategic decision-making capacity and professionalized management in line with new governance structures
- Teaching and Research Support: e-learning, didactics, research management
- Staff: growth in number of highly qualified professionals to support these processes of change.

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Context: Does this apply to Doctoral Education?

Yes , we observe changes on at least 3 level

- Leadership: doctoral education become flagship initiative, on top of the agenda, doctoral schools are established with new roles and duties and governance structure
- Teaching and Research Support: Supervisors' training becomes a top priority (or at least top on the wish list)
- Staff supporting doctoral education in various ways

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We reached a common understanding

Need to “overcome the prevailing simple dichotomy of administrative versus academic staff” (Rhoades 1998)

Accepting that “higher education institutions have become multi-professional organisations” (Henkel 2005).

→ The organisational change and the accompanying functional differentiation of university personnel have led to a **mutation of the dichotomy into a trias.**

Henkel, M. (2005): Academic Identity and Autonomy in a Changing Policy. *Higher Education*, 49(1-2), 155-176.

8 Rhoades, G. (1998). *Managed Professionals: Unionized Faculty and Restructuring Academic Labor*. Albany: State University Press.

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Professionalization of staff in doctoral education?

Gornitzka and Larsen (2004) linked professionalisation of staff in higher education to:

- the rise in formal status,
- the increase in formal educational requirements for appointment,
- the emergence of a common cognitive basis, and
- the growth and formalization of networks among individuals.

Gornitzka, A. and Larsen, I. M. (2004) 'Towards professionalisation?: Restructuring of administrative work force in universities', *Higher Education*, vol. 47, no. 4, pp. 455–471.

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The PRIDE project's objectives

Objective 1: **collect and analyze needs and good practice** focusing on roles and responsibilities

Objective 2: **the handbook**: a source of information for and encouragement for staff development

Objective 3: **design and run a training course**: responding to the needs of professionals, share knowledge and support community building

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Where are they?

- Sometimes in an academic unit, sometimes in a central office: umbrella units, graduate schools, Rector's offices, career service units, third party funded projects...
- Safe space in which to be creative and experiment *but also* lack of organisational safety nets
- A cause of tension and uncertainty

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Who are they?

- People who could have gone ‘either way’, but made a positive career choice towards ‘administration’.
- Many have previous job experience within the higher education environment, often with specific expert knowledge and academic training.
- They share strong commitment to and interest in HE.
- They want to contribute and move things forward.
- They prefer team working.
- They are/became research inactive/preferred applied orientation, but enjoy the academic aura.

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What characterises Professionals...

- satisfying the growing need of university management for systematic knowledge about the university;
- releasing academic and administrative staff from a variety of functions and tasks;
- high affinity and commitment to the areas of teaching and research;
- experts in the field of higher education and have a “high degree of familiarity with the core functions of higher education institutions”;

“[It is essential to have a] holistic understanding of the different aspects that affect and have bearing and relevance on doctoral education, involvement in both recruitment and pastoral sides. Clued into wider national and international developments concerning doctoral provision.” (Quotation from survey results)

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What characterises Professionals...

- the commitment and ability to further development: they are life long learner;
- areas of responsibilities and type of work, and recognition as expert by the institution.
- They believe in the necessity
 - to gain informal knowledge about the functioning of the university,
 - to know about internal university regulations,
 - to inform oneself about global trends and international recommendations.

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What characterises Professionals...

- Be able to work on a conceptual level, to be creative and translate it to strategic thought and planning;
- Transform 'information' into 'knowledge': interpret trends and/or data, put them in context with local situations, and communicate necessary changes/potential impact/etc.
- Be able communicate and cooperate with different stakeholders (e.g. consulting, training and mentoring of researchers);

“Formulating strategies and policies, restructuring the office to align with the university’s new strategic vision.”

(Quotation from survey results)

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What characterises Professionals...

- Be aware of how recent changes affect the values, attitudes and professional practices of academics;
- Give specific attention to the relationships between academic staff, administrative personnel and higher education professionals
- Be multi-lingual and also be able to understand disciplinary dialects

“It’s an intimate partnership between an academic leadership and strong professional leadership”.

Focus group participant - Academic Directors



PROFESSIONALS IN DOCTORAL EDUCATION

There is no doubt, that the last decade has been marked by changes in Higher Education. These changes have in some areas been accompanied by an ascent of Higher Education Professionals. But although the area of doctoral education has especially been affected by structural changes the roles of the strongly developing supporting staff in this area so far has been neglected.

We believe it is time to put Professionals in Doctoral Education under the spotlight. Who are they, what do they do, why are they so important?

This handbook intends to provide hands-on and practical information on the roles and activities of doctoral education professionals. The proposed target audience are administrators in doctoral education, HR managers and academic leaders in higher education institutions. Modern doctoral education needs professional staff and this handbook aims at helping to reach this goal.

„In my view this book ties up loose ends in the discussion about the importance of professionals in doctoral education. Thank you very much for this support!“

Christiane Willner, Managing Director, RUB Research School

„An outcome of the PRIDE project constitutes a welcome practical guide to the specific reality and role of the new professionals of doctoral education. Its wide range of reflection, information and CPD material promises to be of much use to the new professional community.“

Prof. Dorothy Kelly, Chair of the Executive Board, Coimbra Group

„The PRIDE project gave an important contribution by providing very useful tools and guidelines and designing a training programme for the professionalization of the supporting administrating staff in doctoral education.“

Luclano Saso, President of the UNICA Network of the Universities from the Capitals of Europe

„For all university staff seeking to foster the best education for the doctoral candidates, and support the best research-trained professionals for tomorrow's society at large, this book might be seen as a new « Guide for the Perplexed » (Maimonides). A must-read for every professional in doctoral education.“

Denis Billotte, Secrétaire général, Conférence Universitaire de Suisse Occidentale

Edited by Lucas Zinner



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PRIDE training course & 7th UNICA PhD MASTER CLASS: Professionalisation in Practice: Practicing Professionalism

Hosted by the Centre for Advanced Academic Studies
University of Zagreb in Dubrovnik

Sunday 28 August-Wednesday 31 August 2016



Target audience: Administrators and academics working
in the area of doctoral education

Doctoral education underwent a major transformation in the last decade in Europe. The changes were supported by new structures, such as doctoral schools, as well as strategic investments in the quality of scientific supervision and the personal & professional development of PhDs. However, the **roles and needs of professional administrative staff** working in the area received less attention although they facilitate the interrelation between the academic and the administrative world at universities, they support the training for PhD candidates and the work of supervisors, act as science communicators, project managers, observers of the labour market or as liaisons with external stakeholders. To ensure high quality contributions to the university's diverse missions, professionals in doctoral education have to adapt to working often in **cross-institutional teams**, pairing academics and non-academics across hierarchical structures.



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Status quo

The project was timely: We are working in an area which is still ,under construction‘.

- Many organisations are still young and unstable
- Many things are in progress, new initiatives, new challenges

But: We have a much better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of professionals in doctoral education.

- The community gained visibility and recognition.
- We received positive feedback from this community
- A need for further networking and exchange

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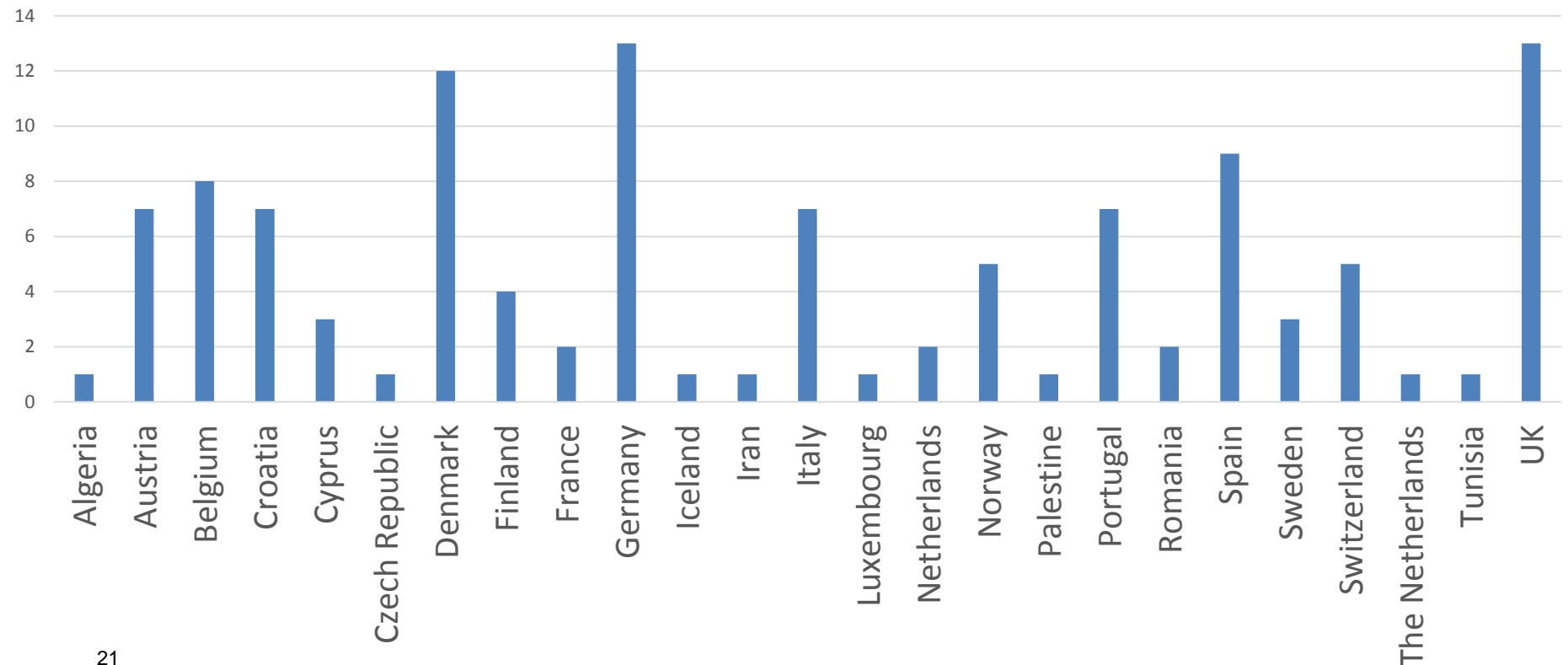
What next?

Gornitzka and Larsen (2004) linked professionalisation of staff in higher education to:

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Should we start a network?



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Should we start a network? benefits/interests



Thanks for joining the journey

Sources:

Handbook: <https://phaidra.univie.ac.at/view/o:454303>

Short stories: <https://phaidra.univie.ac.at/view/o:454076>