

npc



The National Postgraduate
Committee
Ordinary General Meeting
Saturday 16th June 2007

Hosted by:



University of Birmingham Guild of Students



University of Birmingham

Ordinary General Meeting of the National Postgraduate Committee
16 June 2007, University of Birmingham Guild of Students

- 1.0 Sederunt and Apologies [List of those present and those sending apologies]
- 2.0 Chair's address
- 3.0 Minutes
 - 3.1 Minutes of the NPC Ordinary General Meeting: University of London Union — 27th January 2007
- 4.0 Matters arising [Are there matters noted in the minutes of the previous meeting that you wish to discuss]
- 5.0 Motions
 - 5.1 Motion on Campaign for the availability of DSA for disabled international students.
- 6.0 Financial Report
- 7.0 Reports
 - 7.1 General Secretary — Simon Felton
 - 7.2 NPC Scotland (Chairperson) — Jim Ewing
 - 7.3 Conference Secretary — David Thurkettle
 - 7.4 Communications Officer — Vacant
 - 7.5 Equal Opportunities Officer — Armineh Soorenian
 - 7.6 Project Officers
 - 7.6.1 Chandan Singh — None received
 - 7.6.2 Rhys Kearney
 - 7.6.3 Dan Snowdon
 - 7.6.4 Alex Higgins — None received
 - 7.7 Journal of Graduate Education — Dr Martin Gough
 - 7.8 Any other reports
 - 7.8.1 Report on the 7th Annual conference of the European Council of doctoral candidates and young researchers — London 2007.

Please note: the Chairperson, Minutes Secretary, and ordinary Executive Officers are not required to give reports, though they may wish to do so.

- 8.0 Election of Officers
 - 8.1 Ordinary Executive Officer
 - 8.2. Communications Officer
- 9.0 Consultations
 - 9.1 QAA Consultation on Code of Practice Section 5: Academic Appeals and student complaints on academic matters
 - 9.2 QAA Consultation on Doctoral Programmes

3.0 Minutes

Minutes of the NPC Ordinary General Meeting held in University of London Union on Saturday 27th January 2007.

The OGM started at 11.25 with a two minutes silence for Holocaust Memorial Day. Simon Felton volunteered to take minutes in the absence of a Minutes Secretary. Following the two minutes silence, Ama Uzowuru from the National Union of Students led a workshop on Bullying with a short film and breakout into groups to discuss bullying.

1.0 Sederunt

Delegate Members:

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Chris Whittaker | Southampton University |
| Jen Winter | The University of York |
| Tim Roll-Pickering | University of London Union |
| Margaret Davine | Mature Students Union (from item 4.0) |
| Ian Dublon | Keele University |
| Lee Kane | St Andrews University |
| Cleo Longworth | Warwick University |
| Rhys Kearney | University of Salford |
| Choules Abdul Wohul | London School of Economics |

Associate Members:

| | |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| Simon Felton | NPC General Secretary |
| Jim Ewing | Chairperson NPC Scotland |
| Dan Snowdon | NPC Project Officer |

Honorary Life Members:

| | |
|----------------|---------------------------------|
| Peter Campbell | NPC Constitutional Subcommittee |
|----------------|---------------------------------|

Apologies

| | |
|----------------|---------------------------------|
| Chandan Singh | Staffordshire University |
| James Groves | NPC Constitutional Subcommittee |
| Duncan Connors | NPC Constitutional Subcommittee |
| Peter Mason | University of Birmingham |
| James Caspell | London School of Economics |

In attendance:

| | |
|--------------|----------------------------|
| Ama Uzowuru | National Union of Students |
| Erich Kofmel | University of Sussex |

Following Ama Uzowuru's presentation there was a break for lunch with the meeting resuming at 2.10pm.

2.0 Chairs Address

3.0 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the York OGM on the 11th and 12th November were read. Daniel Snowdon had sent apologies and these were not recorded in the minutes.

Jim Ewing noted that Oleg had raised a question about quorum. He clarified that the minutes should state that the Chair's professionalism should not have been questioned as it was clarified her conduct was fine.

4.0 Matters Arising

Jim Ewing noted on page 7 of the minutes Oleg Lisagor's comments on York's potential disaffiliation. Jim noted that the meeting discussed council tax exemption, immigration charging consultation level. These were issues that could be dealt with at national level. Jen Winter clarified that these were issues that were being dealt with locally and these matters could be discussed in another forum.

Erich Kofmel questioned the approval of project officer reports that would usually be approved at the November meeting. Jen Winter confirmed these would be approved at this meeting.

5.0 Motions

5.1 Postgraduate Visas.

Jen Winter read the resolves section of the Postgraduate Visa motion.

Erich Kofmel questioned whether the notes section referred to the Research Fortnight. He was not sure on the validity of some of the areas of the article. Simon Felton clarified the question and the relevance of the proposals to foreign policy moves and anti-terrorism policies of the UK.

The motion was voted upon: for 7, against 0, abstain 1. The motion passed.

6.0 Financial Report

Tim Roll-Pickering briefly summarised the report and asked for comments.

Dan Snowdon questioned the debtors on both columns. Tim Roll-Pickering explained this was a document error and the figures should all be in one column. Dan Snowdon also questioned Ismail Malik's expenses. Tim clarified that Mr Malik had not claimed this and Simon Felton's cheque had not cleared yet.

Ian Dublon queried how affiliation formula calculated. Tim explained that it was calculated on a student number basis from HESA figures. Part time divided by 2 to get Full Time Equivalent.

Ian Dublon questioned if the HESA figures were incorrect would we be able to refund. Tim clarified that in examples such as Open it would be amended.

The financial report was put to a vote and was accepted unanimously

7.0 Officer Reports

7.1 General Secretary: Simon Felton noted the main thing to report on which he wanted to note was the Office of the Independent Adjudicator and the time delay in responding to appeals.

7.2 NPC Scotland Chairperson: Jim Ewing explained that he had not had meeting and was hoping to organise one. Jim said was using the online forum but that requires participation.

The big issue for NPC Scotland was the forthcoming Scottish Parliament Election. There was however nothing of any significance noted of Postgraduate Education in manifestos.

Jim Ewing also noted collaboration to be undertaken with the National Union of Students on Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs).

Lee Kane noted that there is concern that the NPC Scotland has not met up previously as it had agreed it would meet before the Scottish elections. Lee noted it was upto the NPC to make sure postgraduates are put into the agenda before the election.

Lee Kane also raised the issue of closer working with NUS and that several Scottish universities are not affiliated to NUS. Lee would like to see a meeting within a month to bring together Scottish universities together in preparation for the Scottish election.

7.3 Conference Secretary: Simon asked for suggestions on themes as it was important to tailor conference to needs of those attended.

Dan Snowdon suggested training for sabbatical officers dealing with postgraduates. Cleo Longworth seconded the proposal and said it would be great for new officers coming in, specifically her successor, to understand postgraduate issues.

Lee Kane raised issue of how devolution is affecting postgraduate education and representation.

Rhys Kearney also suggested a colleague who is mapping postgraduate education.

7.4 Communications Officer: Chris Whittaker noted that from the minutes of the last OGM our affiliates question what we do. As part of the role of communications officer he is supposed to tell people what we do. Chris is unaware of what we do as he has not received any information from the Management Subcommittee.

Chris explained that he does not have enough material to communicate to affiliates and the press and that as he has not received any materials he has not done anything.

Rhys Kearney asked for what Chris would like for Pn. Chris replied that he and Simon had discussed what key issues the pn should cover.

Jen Winter and Dan Snowdon raised issue of receiving MSC emails.

Simon Felton said it was disappointing for Chris, and the committee that Chris was unable to highlight the work of the NPC and our duties of representation.

7.5 Equal Opps Report: This was supplied separately in the addendum papers.

7.6.1 Chandan Singh — Simon Felton explained that Chandan was engaged in union activities and will return to his project on accommodation and postgraduate students in the next month.

7.6.2 Rhys Kearney clarified that he had amended his brief from the one he had been elected on. He admitted that the idea was slightly ambitious and that there was a substantial amount of information on the NPC already.

Rhys was not sure if affiliate members knew about the NPC, let alone none members and idea was to create a pamphlet leaflet on introducing the NPC and areas where to support postgraduates such as issues regarding supervision, international students etc. This leaflet would link to the website and all the resources available.

Ian Dublon suggested the leaflet be produced as a pdf.

Margaret Davine suggested a little booklet, similar to Mature Students Union booklet and also looking at the NPC leaflet that was distributed at the NUS Annual Conference.

7.6.3 Dan Snowdon had distributed his report and report on The State of Postgraduate Education within the University of London. There would be an accompanying Postgraduate Roadshow which would be over five dates in February.

Ian Dublon noted the report is interesting with reference to details of casework undertaken.

Dan Snowdon noted the nationality was interesting with Jen Winter and Ian Dublon confirming the large number of internationally students who were being dealt with.

7.6.4 Alex Higgins had passed on details concerning personal circumstances affecting his project and his question over whether the project would reach a conclusion.

7.7 Journal of Graduate Education.

Martin Gough noted he had been subscription manager for Journal which had been in production for 10 years. The final edition 3.4 has not appeared yet. The final editing took place in June 2006. The official publication will be dated Autumn 2006.

A new journal was being produced which will be named the International Journal of Graduate Education in which the journal of education will continue. This journal is being created by Alistor McCulloch from Edge Hill University. First issue scheduled for February 2007 with three issues being expected for 2007.

Martin explained that one of the issues for the NPC was representation for the NPC on the board. The other issue is financial. The NPC has budget for the journal but this has not been spent for three years. The new journal will involve financial costs. Alistair McCulloch would allow NPC to get journal at cost price.

The cost of journal for 2 copies per year for 50 affiliates would be equivalent to the budget set aside for Journal in budget. Ian Dublon asked if this journal can be produced electronically. This would seem sensible.

Martin responded that Edge Hill would be responsible for the Journal and controls budgets for the journal. Alistair had looked around for publisher but it would seem Edge Hill were publishing.

7.8.1 Jen noted the report of James Caspell, the NPC representation in the Eurodoc group attending the Nice Conference. The Nice conference was a precursor for the London Ministerial Conference in May 2007.

The meeting moved to consider the minutes of the AGM which were distributed by Margaret while having a 15 minute break. The meeting recommenced at 3.40pm

Due to Margaret Davine's later arrival, it was agreed to interrupt the order of the paper to proceed with 2.2 Minutes of the Annual General Meeting.

3.1 Minutes of the AGM

On page seven, Tim Roll-Pickering clarified that technically the discussion did not re-open nominations; as RON had previously outpolled Duncan this had to return to previous count.

On page eleven NPC had expressed interest in organising Eurodoc 2007 in February. It was agreed to Remove AND from sentence.

On page ten section (7.11) Duncan Connors was elected in the reopened nominations for the third position on Constitutional Subcommittee.

There was a lack of definite recording for the close of the meeting. This would be reclarified before resubmitting the finalised minutes.

Following the agreement on alterations to the Annual General Meeting minutes, the meeting returned to the original order paper.

8.0 Election of Minutes Secretary: Lee Kane nominated himself as Minutes Secretary and was elected unopposed unanimously.

10.0 Elections to Conferences:

10.1 Eurodoc Annual Conference.

Simon Felton explained the forthcoming Eurodoc Annual Conference taking place in London. Simon noted that the new National Postdoctoral Committee may take one of the places. If this happened then we could lose a voting member with just one NPC delegate able to vote.

Rhys and Jen nominated themselves to be Delegates and were elected unopposed.

10.0 Consultations.

Simon noted the consultations. These were submitted but if people were unhappy they could note their unhappiness and consider areas for future policy amendments.

11.0 AOB

Chris Whittaker noted he is tendering his resignation. He felt that he would need more time to pester people in his capacity. He apologised. Jen Winter thanked Chris for all his help.

The meeting closed at 4.00 pm

Following the close of meeting, a workshop/discussion took place on the question about What is a Doctorate. This followed a paper that had been written by Professor Chris Park that was an open discussion paper for the Higher Education Sector.

What is a PhD

What is a PhD, should a masters be a prerequisite, should it include research skills training etc.

- A. Should Doctoral Candidates remain students, or should they be employees?
- Current policy says that we want to be students because benefits outweigh the benefits of being an employee
 - In Europe, easy distinctions between undergrad and postgrad, whereas masters muddies the waters here
 - Nationalised healthcare/ pensions/ etc increase the benefits of studentship here
 - Some legal protection for employees which also makes universities liable
 - Funding a requirement if PhD candidates are employees
 - Does student status adversely affect your rights as an employee?
 - Fear of reduction in number of places, for fear of getting 'stuck' with people who aren't up to scratch
 - Losing contractual rights as a customer/students
 - Part-time students/ mature students, can these be employees
 - Autonomy of the direction of your research because you are effectively paying for the right
 - Intellectual property ownership
 - International student visas become work visas
 - Desire to look at other countries models (given similar social safety net structures)
 - International and self-funding students

B How are part-time and distance students affected by the current and new systems?

- Are distance students really 'registered' now? (ULU?)
- Current professionals with other jobs
- Anticipate particularly adverse effect
- Council tax is already a problem for part-time students
- Moonlighting rules
- MRes? Would these be employees too?
- Link between masters and PhD—does this exempt you from research training, etc?

C. What is a Doctorate about? The Product or the Process?

- Sciences: not always practical, about learning to deal with the problems, and defend your work
- Research Skills not always practical to someone who plans to be a researcher
- British degrees don't include teaching—received or as experiential learning by teaching others as a rule
- It's about the process—it takes a lifetime to become an expert, the PhD is about learning how to become an expert
- Knowledge is too narrow and too deep—not about employability
- Value of part time work alongside the degree
- Why does it have to be standardised?

D. International Experience?

- Length of the degree—is it about outcomes or just how long it takes?
- Degree length rolling into 4 years, is this acceptable.

4.0 Matters Arising [Are there matters noted in the minutes of the previous meeting that you wish to discuss]

5.0 Motions

5.1 Motion on Campaign for the availability of DSA for disabled international students

NPC Believes:

1. That disabled international students do not receive DSA while studying in the UK universities.
2. That this could be a barrier in many disabled international students' educational life and exclude many more from participating in the UK universities.

NPC Further Believes:

1. That a large number of disabled international students require impairment related support while studying in the UK.
2. That given adequate support, disabled international students can study as affectively and independently as their disabled home counter-parts.

The Equal Opportunity Officer Resolves:

1. That each university should have funding in place for its disabled international students before accepting them on a course.
2. for the universities to assess individual students' needs in detail and allocate funding accordingly.
- 3 That universities should not discriminate against disabled international students based on their nationality

Proposed by: Armineh Soorenian

Seconded by: Simon Felton

6.0 Financial Report

Supplied seperately

7.0 Reports

7.1 General Secretary — Simon Felton

Weekly Diary:

Week Commencing 8th January continued:

Wednesday 10th and Thursday 11th I attended the Roberts Policy Forum in Manchester. This forum was a review of progress of the first three years of Roberts Funding and Roberts skills agenda and to contextualise skills development within the wider UK challenges of developing

a knowledge economy. The forum also reviews progress and on the 'Rugby Team' projects exploring how the skills agenda is impacting on research degree programmes, research staff support and employability. The meeting also was given an early report on the QAA Special Review of (England and Wales) research degree programmes in advance of publication.

As a member of the Rugby Team, the 'Sector working group on the evaluation of skills development of early career researchers' which my predecessor was a member I was invited to attend the forum and it was useful to see whether our work was valued and useful for the sector.

Week Commencing 22nd January

Tuesday 23rd was the meeting of the Higher Education Quality Steering Group at the National Union of Students. The National Postgraduate Committee was invited to be a member of this group that is made up of the QAA, NUS and AMSU to look at Quality Takes Time events in embedding the quality agenda in student unions. It was an opportunity to review the October QTT event at which the NPC presented on involving postgraduates in the student written submission. The comments from the event were good and preparations were made for the next event with a traffic light checklist theme on preparing for an audit.

Saturday 27th was the Ordinary General Meeting held at the University of London Union. This was attended by 9 voting delegates and other observers including Ama Uzowuru from the National Union of Students. Ama began the meeting with a workshop on bullying. This was extremely useful in supporting Ama's campaign as there is often little recognition of bullying at postgraduate level. Lee Kane was elected to position of Minutes Secretary and Chris Whittaker resigned from the office of Communications Officer. The meeting was closed with a discussion on Chris Park's paper — What is a Doctorate? This produced some interesting views and allowed the NPC to feed views into the wider debate taking place linked to Bologna and internationalisation.

Week Commencing 29th January

Tuesday 30th January I attended the QAA roundtable consultation event on the Code of Practice for Academic Appeals and Student Complaints on academic matters. I was attending in the capacity as a member of the advisory group reviewing the code of practice and encourage discussion on the code. This was very productive and I was able to explain the thinking behind several of the points with a view to protecting students. There were contrasting views, especially between types of institutions and about 'rights' for students.

Week Commencing 5th February 2007

Tuesday 6th February I went to Kingston University in London to attend the Higher Education Academy (HEA) Widening Participation research steering group. This was a meeting to explore the research and preparations for a Dialectic conference later in the year. The NPC would invite members to attend the conference.

Wednesday 7th February I attended a Foundation for Science and Technology Board dinner and presentation. This was a great opportunity to network and discuss the theme: Can the career path for young researchers be improved? Speakers included Professor Wendy Hall CBE FREng, Professor of Computer Science, University of Southampton and Chair, Sub-group on 'research endeavour', Council for Science and Technology, DTI; Sir Graeme Davies FRSE FREng, Vice-Chancellor, University of London; and Dr John Bothwell, National Research Staff Association and Marine Biological Association. I was fortunate to sit on the top table where I was able to discuss with the chair Lord Jenkin of Roding and other speakers the theme and ways in which career paths could be improved.

Week Commencing 12th February 2007

Tuesday 13th I attended the UKCGE Winter Conference with chair Jen Winter. This was well attended and provided for opportunities to network and hear the outcomes of the QAA Special Review of Research Programmes firsthand from QAA Chief Executive Peter Williams. There were several workshops with one exploring research councils being useful on considering the benefits and organisation for students.

Friday 16th I was at the QAA Code of Practice Working Group in London examining the outcomes of the Roundtable in Manchester and amendments to the code of practice on complaints and appeals based on views of those attending the roundtable. There continued to be an interesting mix of views on the 'rights' to students and also wording to avoid encompassing all complaints within the remit of the code.

Week Commencing 19th February 2007

Monday 19th I attended a meeting at Birmingham's Guild of Students between NUS and BUGS about NUS's demand led policy. This was useful for ideas for the National Postgraduate Committee on ways to engage organisational priorities from student activism and to share ideas.

Tuesday 20th I attended a meeting in Gloucester with NUS and AMSU to discuss the forthcoming presentation to the QAA Board of Directors on student engagement and leadership in the QAA. This took place with Peter Williams the Chief Executive and officers engaged with students in the QAA. The QAA were exploring their student engagement and the presentation would be pushing at an open door with desire to engage actively with students.

Week Commencing 5th March 2007

Wednesday 7th I attended the NEC meeting at University of London Union as an observer. One of the most productive discussions raised was the engagement of web2.0 and the redevelopment of the website, especially the use of social networking for campaigns and awareness.

There was substantial discussion on the question of honorariums, childcare and other contract matters.

Motions included: No to Trident Replacement, Bullying, Engagement in FE, Defending Freedom of Religion, Sweatshop week of action, Sex Trafficking, Sudan Divestment, Support Anti-Fascism fortnight.

There was concern raised at a number of disaffiliation referendums being held in Scotland and Wales.

Week Commencing 12th March 2007

Wednesday 14th I attended the QAA Board presentation with Wes Streeting from NUS, Sofija Opacic and Douglas Blackstock from NUS. Wes presented a view on the QAA engaging with students to lead the quality agenda before we were all asked questions. I was able to add pertinent points regarding student involvement and postgraduates and being in solidarity with the NUS in involving students and engaging the QAA.

In the evening I attended the 10 years of the QAA event with guest speaker Lord Dearing and Peter Williams of the QAA championing the history and future of the QAA.

Thursday 15th I attended the Neil Stewarts 5th Annual Postgraduate Conference where I led a workshop on 'Ensuring Student Satisfaction'. Aside from some administrators who wanted an 'easy answer' solution the workshop was successful and I spoke with a representative of the British Library and the Oxford Mediation centre.

Thursday 15th to Saturday 17th was the 7th Annual Eurodoc Conference which the NPC hosted. This had consumed most of my time in the preceding months in preparation. Apart from minor practical problems the conference ran successfully with speakers including Gill Clarke from the QAA, Iain Cameron from Research Councils UK, Janet Metcalfe from UKGRAD, Mr Cornelis-Mario Vis from DG Research at the European Commission and Teresa Rees from Cardiff University. Workshops included the implementation of the charter and code of conduct for the recruitment of researchers, the Eurodoc survey of Doctoral candidates, gender and evaluation in academia and research, entrepreneurship and technology transfer. Rhys Kearney, one of the UK's two delegates was elected Treasurer and Koen VanDam from the Netherland was elected as new President of Eurodoc.

Week Commencing 19th March 2007

Wednesday 21st I attended the handover between Rugby Team 06 and 07. This was an opportunity for new faces to be involved on the group and to look at where the Rugby Team was going. Looking at the outcomes of the Roberts Policy Forum in Manchester in January highlighted lots of projects that the group could seek to tackle. Several projects were discussed with invitations to join projects. I volunteered to continue working with Pam Denicolo from Reading on the supervisor survey and also to work with Ellen Pearce from UKGRAD on developing a template for case studies involving skills development and career progression.

Week Commencing 26th March 2007

Tuesday 27th to Thursday 29th Tim Roll-Pickering and myself went to Blackpool for the NUS Annual Conference. Having recovered from the Eurodoc Annual Conference I had spent the preceding week working on materials for the conference stall. The conference was varied with the politics of the NUS on display and competing allegiances. In the key elections, Wes Streeting retained his VP Education role alongside Gemma Tumelty who was re-elected National President. In the hotly contested VP Welfare fight, Ama Uzowuru beat off competition from Richard Angell. It was difficult watching both fight for the position as both had worked with the NPC on postgraduate campaigns and issues. On Wednesday evening I spoke at Ama Uzowuru's Fringe Meeting on bullying where I was able to discuss with Reading about reaffiliation and what the NPC was doing.

There was also a motion which noted unregulated postgraduate fees across the UK and the availability of bank loans and Career Development Loans which challenge those from lower socio-economic groups and the up-front nature of postgraduate programme costs. The motion proposed by Leicester, Reading, Liverpool, Liverpool John Moore and Teeside students' unions was passed and adds to existing NUS policy for the National Union of Students to work with NPC and in this case on the issue of unregulated fees.

Week Commencing 16th April 2007

Tuesday 17th April I went to Cardiff to appear as a witness in an industrial tribunal between a university and a supervisor. This was my first 'trial-like' experience and the university mounted a thorough defence. I noted the case and the concern on the institutions guidelines on relationships between supervisors and students. The presiding officer seemed to acknowledge some of the guidelines were a little too comprehensive.

Week Commencing 30th April 2007

Friday 4th May I was a workshop facilitator at the UKCGE event 'What is a PhD' at Reading University. This was another in a series of events to discuss the future of the doctorate and the impact of internationalization, industry and Europe on the doctorate. In the workshop I helped lead we discussed the impact upon students and I shared some of the views aired at the Ordinary General Meeting in January. After lengthy discussion it was acknowledged by

those present that student status was better than employee but that students should be treated professionally. There seemed to be moves towards that at some institutions but these on reflection were special library privileges and not much else; there seems a long way to go in supporting postgraduates in some institutions.

Week Commencing 7th April 2007

Tuesday 8th was the QAA Liaison Conference in London. The theme of the conference was student involvement in quality assurance and presentations were delivered by David Owen from UWE amongst QAA staff. Postgraduate students were a recurrent theme in issues about student involvement in quality assurance. The discussions were interesting and different institutions were able to share practice and learn ideas from the NPC that should enhance the student engagement in quality assurance.

Wednesday 9th I met with Dan Snowdon at University of London Union to discuss a Postgraduate Network meeting for London before I met Fran Taylor at the British Library to discuss engaging postgraduates in the British Library. Ms Taylor was a HE liaison contact and we discussed the use of the library by students and ways to engage the NPC and British Library with postgraduates. The British Library has no problems in attracting undergraduates or taught postgraduates but does have problems 'selling' its resources to research postgraduates. Some of the British Libraries developments were an IP (intellectual property) centre where researchers could find out about how to deal with intellectual property.

Thursday 10th Dan Snowdon and myself attended the Dialectic conference on the HEA Widening Participation Project. I have been involved with the HEA research on Widening Participation and continuing to Postgraduate Education being an advisory group member on the project. This is an important project for postgraduate education and the national postgraduate committee as it explores barrier to continuing to postgraduate education. It is one of the first pieces of research in this field and is important in shaping discussions on the future of postgraduate education and who we want to be able to study at postgraduate level and what future researchers will be like in social background.

Some of the outcomes are below:

Our research shows clearly that there is not a significant relationship between class and going on to postgraduate study. However a real indicator is prior family experience of HE. In particular where fathers have a degree their children are significantly more likely to go on to study at postgraduate level. This is interesting and may mean that aspiration increases generationally, but it is also curious as there is naturally a relationship between parental class and their experience of HE. We think we can understand it in terms of generationally it is still the case that many middle class professionals may not have done a degree in order to get into their profession, professions which now do require a degree. It may take another generation before this is evened out.

In terms of the focus on widening participation in the project then it seems what we have found is:

Class background is not a barrier to continuing on to PG study

Debt is not a barrier to postgraduate study but worry about debt is a barrier

Gender does not seem to be a barrier to postgraduate study but women are slightly more inclined to go on

Students continue to postgraduate study because they want to improve their employment prospects – those who have done applied subject are much less likely to go on to postgraduate study because they think they can get a job with their undergraduate degree

If students parents did not get a degree they are much less likely to go on to postgraduate study, but if their parents did, (in particular their fathers) they are more likely to carry on

International students are more likely to go on to postgraduate study

Minority ethnic British students were considerably more likely to go on to postgraduate study than white British students

If students had children, the age of the children had a significant impact on intentions to go on to postgraduate study with the older the children making it more likely to go on to further study, which can be easily understood.

The more prevalent reason for not going on to further study was wanting a break from study, and in the qualitative interviews it was quite clear that students who had continued with their studies at postgraduate level were doing so because they enjoyed studying as well as believing it would improve their employment prospects. Another important point that came out of the qualitative interviews may through some light on why class is not a barrier to postgraduate study in that those who were from lower socio-economic backgrounds who did go on had really enjoyed their undergraduate studies. One postgraduate law student said that he had been worried that his peers in his undergraduate course ‘would all be from Oxbridge families’ but they were not and were ‘ordinary new people’. Another interviewee, a mature student from a working class background, talked about how one of her tutors had introduced her to children’s literature and that was the spark that made her continue on to postgraduate study.

The qualitative interviews with those who did not go on to PG study confirmed and provided more detail on why students had not gone on. For example several

interviewees said they were tired of studying and others said they felt they needed to get out into the job market because they were worried about their debts. Of those who went on to PG study, several had higher debts than those who said they didn't go on because they were worried about their debt, confirming the quantitative data that suggests that debt worry, not actual debt is the barrier.
<http://kublogs.kingston.ac.uk/sites/heapprblog/default.aspx>

Week Commencing 14th May 2007

Saturday 19th May went to Keele University to meet conference secretary David Thurkettle with Jen Winter and Tim Roll-Pickering. After looking at facilities we were able to masterplan the conference with a theme and speaker proposals.

Week Commencing 21st May 2007

Monday 21st May I went to the London Postgraduate Network that Project Officer Dan Snowdon had called. This attracted postgraduate reps and officers dealing with postgraduates from several colleges and we were able to discuss activities in London and the national perspective. I presented the continuing campaign on council tax exemption and raised some topics for discussion.

Friday 25th May I attended the Aldwych Group (student unions of the Russell group) meeting in Glasgow. This was perhaps one of the strangest but also most promising meetings I had attended where the identity and purpose of the group was discussed. It was proposed to change the name with a tentative name proposed of "Russell Students". The next meeting in Bristol would consider fully the aims and purpose of the group.

The moves reflect the continuing moves of the Russell Group to consolidate as a group and lobby government on education policy. It was heartening to learn that one of the institutions students unions considered us as having more credibility to lobby Russell Group institutions due to the large number of postgraduates than the current Aldwych Group. The proposed redefined group should allow a greater collaboration with the NPC in postgraduate policy so I wish them success and look forward to working with a revitalised group.

Week Commencing 6th June 2007

Wednesday 6th was the next meeting of the Rugby Team. It seems change is in the air too and the meeting raised the prospect of aims and direction and then onto the wider issue of renaming and rebranding. It was felt that the term Rugby Team is not well known or publicised and that we could 'badge' better like UKGRAD and other organisations. In an interactive session we discussed a draft impact framework to consolidate the groups work and to give direction in our outputs to various stakeholders.

General Secretary Report

This has been one of the busiest periods in the year so far with the Eurodoc Annual Conference followed by the National Union of Students Annual Conference and the ordinary responsibilities of supporting postgraduate students and representing postgraduate opinion to various forums.

The Bologna Ministerial meeting in London to which NPC, UUK, Eurodoc, NUS and other organisations had been prepared for resulted in no significant changes for students. Professional Doctorates remain an anomaly to the rest of Europe but the value of diversity rather than conformity has continued. There will be future challenges but Eurodoc has now

achieved observer status to the process and this should allow the NPC to share its views more readily in Europe and Brussels.

The views of postgraduate students have continued to be represented and this is particularly pertinent in the sector musings on the future of the doctorate. Internationalisation, industrial links, the Bologna Process and the skills agenda have all impacted on the doctorate and the UK is not alone in questioning where we go from here; countries such as Canada, the US and Australia are all grappling with these questions. The impact extends to other postgraduates and the value of their degree as passport into a doctorate.

Supervision again is a problem that persists throughout and I was pleased the NPC could support a supervisor's industrial tribunal against an institution which sought to proscribe the personal aspects of the supervisor-student relationship — seemingly without commonsense. I am therefore extremely disappointed that the case was ruled against the supervisor on other areas of the case. It is heartening that the presiding chair did recognise some of the over-burdensome regulations that applied to the supervisor student relationship but the NPC must continue to challenge supervision and encourage supervisor training and other schemes to alleviate what can often be the biggest obstacle to successful completion and encourage successful supervision for the student and supervisor.

There are future challenges ahead and I hope the NPC and its members are ready as we see completion rates published later this year and a HEFCE debate on the value of part-time study. A lot of success in changing attitudes and moving agendas has come through interaction between the NPC and other organisations. I hope this continues and that we can use the connections the NPC and its affiliates share together with the leadership in areas such as widening participation to seek to ensure we enhance the postgraduate experience and give opportunity for all. Some of the areas the NPC has led on have been raised again with the recent UCU vote to discuss a boycott of Israeli academics and universities. It is integral to postgraduate students and the wider higher education sector that we do not remove academic freedom but use academia as a tool to fight the injustices of the world be they in the middle east or the wider world.

The NPC has been noted in the media, attracting quotes in the Times Higher Education Supplement and also on postgraduate finance in the Sunday Telegraph. More importantly our affiliates have recognised the voice we provide and I enclose an email I received from Lancaster University Students Union following the press release on the UCU boycott vote.

Dear Simon,

On behalf of Lancaster University Students' Union, and by resolution of the Union Council, we are writing to you to expressing our continued support of the NPC policy in opposition to Academic Boycotts, and to thanking NPC for taking a stand on behalf our and other member unions' students.

NPC's leadership on this matter from the 2005 AUT boycott to today has shown that students can take a stand on important issues and can influence the debate nationally and internationally. We believe academic boycotts such as those being supported by the UCU policy would be an affront to the principle of academic freedom, and to the rights of our students and staff to work with whomever they wish. We also believe that the wording of the motion which says "neutrality is unacceptable" goes against the rights of students who are entitled to impartiality from

academics regardless of their nationality.

We hope NPC will continue to take a leadership role in this matter, and again thank the NPC for the work they have done representing students on this important issue.

Yours,

*Sooz Palmer
President,
On behalf of and by resolution of the Union Council of Lancaster
University Students Union.*

*Sooz Palmer
LUSU President
Slaidburn House
Lancaster University
Lancaster
LA1 4YA*

*01524 5(92206)
supres@lancaster.ac.uk
www.lusu.co.uk*

'United for Free Education'

7.2 NPC Scotland (Chairperson) — Jim Ewing

Verbal Report to be given.

7.3 Conference Secretary — David Thurkettle

Verbal Report to be given.

7.4 Communications Officer — Post Vacant

7.5 Equal Opportunities Officer — Armineh Soorenian

Since the last report and also upon passing my transfer to a Ph.D level, I have started the call for participants for my research and have advertised it very widely on a number of institutions' and universities' websites; the call for participants still continues. However, I have already started my field-study, including individual semi-structured student interviews and focus groups, in order to learn about disabled international students' difficulties in the UK universities and to be able to recommend policies to make universities more inclusive for all. The findings obtained thus far, show very interesting trends. Following from this, I have submitted a motion for the OGM in order to improve disabled international students' quality of academic life and also to recognize diverse students' needs and rights. I am preparing a work-shop to deliver in the OGM on Saturday the 16th June 2007. I also submitted a brief article on the same topic for NPC's newsletter.

In addition, I have commented on NPC's website's accessibility from a visually impaired user's point of view. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the 'Widening Participation' seminar on 10th May due to a difficult train route from Leeds to Kingston University

7.6 Project Officers

7.6.1 Chandan Singh — None received

7.6.2 Rhys Kearney — to be presented verbally

7.6.3 Dan Snowdon

Update on what I have done so far

The Postgraduate Students' Charter at ULU has evolved and as a result I organised a Postgraduate Roadshow across the University of London to promote the Postgraduate Academic Advice Service and the charter itself. The event went really well and I got in contact with many postgraduates whether they be research or taught based.

I ran the first London-wide Postgraduate Network which was aimed at getting feedback from Postgraduate students to help students' unions to recognise specific issues that affect them.

The Postgraduate Advice Service at ULU has really taken off with students' contacting us directly regarding their issues. .

"The State of Postgraduate Education within the University of London" document has been well received amongst the heads of colleges and amongst postgraduates in London. I hope that this can go up on the NPC website. In addition it might be worth conducting a similar report for other Universities across the country.

My Proposal — As a reminder

For my project I want to raise awareness on the issues that arise through supervision. This would include the following:

- Lobbying Universities (who do not currently enforce the QAA recommendations for supervision) to comply.
- Highlight the disparities of the levels of supervision that PhD students experience by formulating an online questionnaire about the student experience regarding supervision. This would be put on the NPC website with links from ULU and other students' unions websites.
- To finally write a detailed report of recommendations to be submitted to the QAA and the Department for Education and Skills outlining the problems students face with supervision.
- I will propose at the NPC Conference that the NPC adopt this as an ongoing piece of work so that the next stage can be fulfilled — to ensure that they take our recommendations seriously.

7.6.4 Alex Higgins — None received

7.7 Any other reports

7.7.1 Report on the 7th Annual conference of the European Council of doctoral candidates and young researchers

EURODOC General Assembly 2007, London, 16-17.03.2007.

General Assembly part 1/3 (Board/Presidential/Financial report and Admission of the new member countries) 16.3.2007.

The Ordinary General Meeting (OGM) of EURODOC is opened on Friday March 16 2007, at 17:00 hr.

Number of member countries in 2006: 26

Number of countries absent for the whole GA: 4 (Armenia, Denmark, Ireland and Moldova)

Delegated votes (exceptional circumstances): Countries which delegates transferred their votes to another national delegate:

Croatia and Russia.

Quorum for a valid GA: 50% of member countries represented, i.e. 13 countries must be represented.

Sederunt:

Number of countries not represented: 4

Number of countries represented: 22

Total number of countries: 26

The GA is quorate (22/26)

There are 42 votes in the audience.

Member delegates:

No Country Name of Delegate Votes (present)

1 Armenia Country not attending -

2 Austria Anja Brunner 1

Austria Andreas Fritsch 1

3 Belgium-FR Mario Meessen 1

Belgium-NL Joeri Minnen 1

4 Croatia Dalibor Doležal 2

5 Czech Republic Alena Petrikova 1

Czech Republic Petr L. Jedelsky 1

6 Denmark Country not attending -

7 Estonia Ursula Toomri 1

Estonia Dmitri Teperik 1

8 France Helene Storez 1

France Olivier Florent 1

9 Germany Cornelia Dahmer 1

Germany Maria Winter 1

10 Greece Evangelia Ntougia 1

Greece Sotiris Pavleas 1

11 Hungary Robert Marciniak 1

Hungary Judit Fináncz 1

12 Ireland Country not attending -

13 Italy Sarah Cruso 1

Italy Armando Carlone 1

14 Latvia Inese Sviestina 1

Latvia Dmitrijs Krukovs 1

15 Lithuania Vilma Petrikaite 1

Lithuania Brigita Serafinaviciute 1

16 Moldova Country not attending -

17 Netherlands Koen van Dam 1

Netherlands Erik-Jan Smits 1

18 Norway Per Anders Eidem 1

Norway Jon Kristian Nilsen 1
19 Portugal Raquel Santos 1
Portugal Francisco Teixeira 1
20 Russia Popov Vasily 2
21 Slovakia Gabriela Elexyova 1
Slovakia Peter Cernek 1
22 Slovenia Alen Šarlah 1
Slovenia - -
23 Spain Joaquín Morís 1
Spain - -
24 Sweden Mattias Wiggberg 1
Sweden Sam Edgecombe 1
25 Switzerland Corine Wirth 1
Switzerland Odilo Huber 1
26 United Kingdom Jen Winter 1
United Kingdom Rhys Kearney 1
TOTAL VOTES 42

Board:

President (P): Raffaella Crinelli (Sweden), present.

Vice president (VP): Tine Ejdrup (Denmark), excused.

Treasurer (T): Harpreet Singh (United Kingdom), excused; Francis Vella (France) acts as interim treasurer.

Secretary (S): Dunja Potonik (Croatia), present.

General Board Member (GBM): Dejan Cagli (Slovenia), present

General Board Member (GBM): Ingrid Chanefo (France), excused.

General Board Member (GBM): Raquel Santos (Portugal), present.

Local Organising Committee:

Simon P. Felton (UK)

Tim Roll Pickering (UK)

Extra members:

Stephen Kürz (Austria)

Sergei Mikhailov (Estonia)

Renzo Rubele (Italy)

Yibrah Beyene (Norway)

Eddy Rijntjes (The Netherlands)

Erich Kofmel (UK)

Tim Brown (UK)

Observers:

Patrycja Purga (Poland)

Rafal Ruzik (Poland)

John Bothwell (UK)

Guests:

Marcin Jdrzejczak (Poland)

Thomas Torounidis (Sweden)

Kate Travis (UK, media)

Dejan Cagli was appointed as an election coordinator.

1. Board report (Raffaella Crinelli)

EURODOC is the European Council of doctoral candidates and young researchers. It takes the form of a federation of national associations of Ph.D. candidates and young researchers.

EURODOC's objectives are:

- To represent doctoral candidates and junior researchers at the European level in matters of education, research, and professional development of their careers.
- To advance the quality of doctoral programmes and the standards of research activity in Europe.
- To promote the circulation of information on issues regarding young researchers; organize events, take part in debates and assist in the elaboration of policies about Higher Education and Research in Europe.
- To establish and promote co-operation between national associations representing doctoral candidates and junior researchers within Europe.

Eurodoc activities

Board meetings:

Following the general Assembly of Bologna 2006, 3 Board Meetings were held in Austria (Vienna in June) and France (Montpellier October and Nice in December).

Policies (available on the website):

Eurodoc adopted a Document on Descriptors on Assessment, Expectations and Outcomes of Doctoral programmes in Europe.

This is a statement that positions Eurodoc with regards to the Dublin descriptors.

EURODOC representation at international organisations and bodies:

Eurodoc joined SINAPSE — European Commission Repository of Policy Support Organisations.

Tim Brown (UK) joined the Steering Committee for DOC-CAREERS EUA Project.

Renzo Rubele (Italy) is a member of the expert group on the European Institute of Technology at the European Commission (DG Education and Culture).

Toni Gabaldon (Spain) is a member of the External Advisory Expert Group on Mobility of the European Commission.

Events relevant to EURODOC in 2006-2007:

March 2006: Renzo Rubele (Italy) took part in the consultation regarding the European Institute of Technology (WE NEED TO BE MORE SPECIFIC).

March 2006: Tim Brown (UK), Christophe Vande Velde (Belgium), Tine Ejdrup (Denmark), Michael Gronenberg (Switzerland) and Marcin F. Jedrzejczak (Poland) represented Eurodoc at EUA BFUG Conference in Brussels.

April 2006: Daniel Mietchen (Germany) took part at Polish PhD conference in Warsaw.

May 2006: Francis Vella (France) gave a video message as a contribution to the Youth Forum in (Tomsk, Russia).

June 2006: Raffaella Crinelli (Sweden) and Raquel Santos (Portugal) represented Eurodoc as invited speakers at the Vienna Presidency conference on the European Charter for Researchers and a Code of Conduct for their Recruitment.

June 2006: Paulo Jorge Silva (Portugal) joined an event on FP7 promoted by ERA-Link, in Washington DC.

June 2006: at the European Science Open Forum (ESOF 2006) Max Reinhardt (Germany) and Dunja Potonik (Croatia) presented Eurodoc survey on doctoral candidates in Europe and Dunja Potonik took part at the ISE (Initiative for Science in Europe) meeting.

- July 2006: Tine Ejdrup (Denmark) represented Eurodoc at the UKCGE summer conference in Florence, Italy.
- August 2006: Raffaella Crinelli (Sweden) took part at the Helsinki Steering Committee meeting under the responsibility of the Bologna follow-up group.
- August 2006: Raffaella Crinelli (Sweden) participated at the EUA workshop in Brussels.
- September 2006: Raffaella Crinelli (Sweden) participated at UK Grad Annual Conference in London, UK.
- September 2006: Wolfgang Eppenschwandtner (Austria) participated at the "Conference of Rectors and Presidents of European Universities of Technology" at Vienna Technical University.
- September 2006: Ingrid Chanefo (France) took part at the EUA-CGS transatlantic meeting in Salzburg, Austria.
- October 2006: Wolfgang Eppenschwandtner (Austria) participated at the EUA workshop on doctoral programmes in Brussels.
- October 2006: Francis Vella (France) participated at a workshop on ECTS in Brno, Czech Republic.
- October 2006: Tim Brown (UK) represented Eurodoc at the EUA DOC-CAREERS Steering Committee meeting in Brussels.
- November 2006: Raffaella Crinelli (Sweden) and Raquel Santos (Portugal) represented Eurodoc at National Association of Graduate-Professional Students 20th Annual National Conference, Seattle, USA.
- November 2006: Raffaella Crinelli (Sweden) participated in the UNESCO-CEPES workshop in Frankfurt, Germany.
- January 2007: Renzo Rubele (Italy) took part at Fourth Meeting with the Stakeholders on the EIT

□ **Partnerships:**

- EC (European Commission): Eurodoc has continued its close collaboration with DG research and DG education and culture.
- EUA (European University Association): the EUA is our other major partner at the policy level, especially at the level of the EUA's doctoral programmes. We are regularly consulted, informed of their activities and invited to their conferences.
- CIE (Careers in Europe): we have furthered our 2005 partnership with CIE, a recruitment forum gathering highly educated job seekers and prospective employers.
- EMBO (European Molecular Biology Organization): EMBO was one of the Eurodoc 2006 Bologna conference sponsors and Eurodoc continued cooperation with EMBO.
- ESF (European Science Foundation): ESF is one of the partners Eurodoc would like to improve cooperation with.
- UPMC (Université Pierre et Marie Curie): UPMC organized a meeting of French doctoral candidates and sponsored Eurodoc's board meeting.

□ **Projects:**

- TEMPUS project/RUSSIA: Eurodoc was a partner to its Russian member Young Researchers of Russia in a Tempus application bid to define training modules for PhD candidates in Russia. The project submitted in February 2006 was not successful.

- TEMPUS project/UKRAINE: On a similar project in Ukraine, Eurodoc has been successfully partnering with the Academy of Khyiv Mohyla in a Tempus bid to define doctoral programmes in Ukraine.
- Eurodoc's European Survey: Eurodoc finished a pretest phase of the European survey on doctoral candidates.
- Nice seminar on Doctoral Programmes in Europe: following the successful bid for support by the Socrates programme of the European Commission, Eurodoc contributed to organising the EUA Nice seminar on Doctoral Programmes in Europe in December 2006 with well over 30 Eurodoc participants. Raffaella Crinelli and Tine Ejdrup delivered speeches.
- "Project on pedagogy of supervision": Raffaella Crinelli joined a steering committee coordinated by experts from King's College in London.

2. EURODOC Presidential report (Raffaella Crinelli)

Being the President of Eurodoc has been a challenging task. During the year I have faced many difficult moments but each of them has learned me something and I want to believe that each of them has made Eurodoc grow stronger. My tasks as the President of Eurodoc have mainly been to lead the work of the Board, to represent Eurodoc officially in conferences/seminars/workshops and to maintain contacts with our partners. During the year the Board has had 3 board meetings, whose details you can read in the \$board minutes, and continuously mail contacts.

My work as an official Eurodoc representative during my mandate year has been as follow:

June 2006: invited speaker at the Austrian Presidency Conference in Vienna "A researchers' labour market: Europe-a pole of attraction?" Austria

August 2006: Helsinki Steering Committee meeting under the responsibility of the Bologna follow-up group, Finland

September 2006: invited speaker at the UK Grad Annual Conference in London, UK

October 2006: invited speaker at the EUA workshop in Brussels, Belgium

November 2006: invited participant at the UNESCO-CEPES workshop "Comparing doctoral training in Europe and North America" in Frankfurt, Germany

November 2006: invited speaker at the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students 20th Annual National Conference in Seattle, USA

December 2006: invited speaker at the EUA/French Ministry Bologna Seminar: Doctoral Programmes in Europe in Nice, France

February 2006: invited speaker at "Università Italiana, Università Europea. La convergenza dei percorsi formativi da Bologna 1999 a Londra 2007" in Camerino, Italy

February 2006: invited speaker at the FinBioNet meeting in Helsinki, Finland

March 2006: invited speaker at Bologna promotor meeting "Bolognaprocessen-forskarutbildning och anställningsbarhet" in Västerås, Sweden

Besides those I have already agreed to participate at the Germany Presidency Conference in May.

I have continuously kept in contact with our partners, the European Commission, the European University Association and Careers in Europe.

Moreover I have been asked to write two articles. One article is concerning PhD education in general and it is right now under review at the Journal of Graduate Education. The other article is planned to be printed in May and is concerning the perception and attitude of PhD candidates and young researchers towards rankings of universities and other higher education institutions.

The article is coming in IAU Horizons, World Higher Education News, and the IAU quarterly newsletter.

Finally I would like to say that it has been a pleasure and a privilege to be the President of Eurodoc and I don't think I would have accomplished my task in a proper manner without the effectiveness, strength and commitment of Eurodoc board.

I have had the most amazing people to work with and I will be forever grateful to them for all their support.

Financial report for 2006 presented by Francis Vella

EURODOC Bank Account

- Registered in Belgium
- Dexia Bank, Belgium with Internet Banking Facilities

Eurodoc 2006 financial report is available at:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/eurodoc-org/files>

under Files > 0000 Eurodoc Conference > 2007 Eurodoc Conference > Agenda

FinancialReport_Table3_BreakdownAllProjects.xls

After presentation of the 2006 the GA started with the voting process. The GA agreed that if a report is not accepted, a new version has to be produced and voted about online.

| Report | Yes | No | Abstain/Not Valid |
|--------------|-----|----|-------------------|
| Annual | 27 | 6 | 9 |
| Presidential | 34 | 4 | 4 |
| Financial | 16 | 16 | 10 |

The Annual and the Presidential report are accepted by the GA. Financial report is not accepted and needs further clarification.

Italian delegates, Sarah Cruso and Armando Carlone present Bologna conference budget.

Presentation is available at:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/eurodoc-org/files/>

under Files > 0000 Eurodoc Conference > 2007 Eurodoc Conference > Agenda

Bologna_Budget_2006_final.ppt

The GA continues with the admission of the new member associations. Country presentations of the new prospective members and observer are available at:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/eurodoc-org/files/> under:

Files > 0000 Eurodoc Conference > 2007 Conference > Enlargement

For the vote, 42 votes are present in the audience. Thus, the General Assembly is quorate and able to vote legally on the membership issue. The GA agrees that if the acceptance is to be by simple majority. The vote was taken anonymously and in writing, and the votes were counted by two members of the board. The vote on the observer status of the NRSKA was not taken;

NRSKA was granted the observer position. The results of the vote for members are the following:

| Country | Yes | No | Abstain |
|----------|-----|----|---------|
| Bulgaria | 41 | 0 | 1 |
| Poland | 39 | 2 | 1 |

Are admitted as members: Bulgaria and Poland.

Admitted as observer: UK (NRSKA).

The first session of the General Assembly is closed on Friday March 16 2007, at 19:00 hr.

General Assembly part 2/3 (Policy decisions/Votes) 17.3.2007.

Sederunt:

Number of countries not represented: 5 (Armenia, Bulgaria, Denmark, Ireland, and Moldova)

Delegated votes (exceptional circumstances): Countries which delegates transferred their votes to another national delegate:

Belgium, Croatia, Lithuania and Russia.

Number of countries represented: 23

Total number of countries: 28

The GA is quorate (23/28)

There are 45 votes in the audience.

Member delegates:

No Country Name of Delegate Votes (present)

1 Armenia Country not attending -

2 Austria Anja Brunner 1

Austria Andreas Fritsch 1

3 Belgium-FR Mario Meessen 2

4 Bulgaria Nadia Koltcheva 1

Bulgaria Marina Encheva 1

5 Croatia Dalibor Doležal 2

6 Czech Republic Alena Petrikova 1

Czech Republic Petr L. Jedelsky 1

7 Denmark Country not attending -

8 Estonia Ursula Toomri 1

Estonia Dmitri Teperik 1

9 France Helene Storez 1

France Olivier Florent 1

10 Germany Cornelia Dahmer 1

Germany Maria Winter 1

11 Greece Evangelia Ntougia 1

Greece Sotiris Pavleas 1

12 Hungary Robert Marciniak 1

Hungary Judit Fináncz 1

13 Ireland Country not attending -

14 Italy Sarah Cruso 1

Italy Armando Carlone 1

15 Latvia Inese Sviestina 1

Latvia - -

16 Lithuania Vilma Petrikaite 2

17 Moldova Country not attending -

18 Netherlands Koen van Dam 1

Netherlands Eddy Rijntjes (vote transfer) 1

19 Norway Per Anders Eidem 1

Norway Jon Kristian Nilsen 1
20 Poland Patrycja Purga 1
Poland Rafal Ruzik 1
21 Portugal Raquel Santos 1
Portugal Francisco Teixeira 1
22 Russia Popov Vasily 2
23 Slovakia Gabriela Elexyova 1
Slovakia Peter Cernek 1
24 Slovenia Alen Šarlah 1
Slovenia Tomaž Langerholc 1
25 Spain Joaquín Morís 1
Spain Yolanda Calle 1
26 Sweden Mattias Wiggberg 1
Sweden Sam Edgecombe 1
27 Switzerland Corine Wirth 1
Switzerland Odilo Huber 1
28 United Kingdom Jen Winter 1
United Kingdom Rhys Kearney 1
TOTAL VOTES 45

Board:

President (P): Raffaella Crinelli (Sweden), present.

Vice president (VP): Tine Ejdrup (Denmark), excused.

Treasurer (T): Harpreet Singh (United Kingdom), excused; Francis Vella (France) acts as interim treasurer.

Secretary (S): Dunja Potonik (Croatia), present.

General Board Member (GBM): Dejan Cagli (Slovenia), present

General Board Member (GBM): Ingrid Chanefo (France), excused.

General Board Member (GBM): Raquel Santos (Portugal), present.

Local Organising Committee:

Simon P. Felton (UK)

Tim Roll Pickering (UK)

Extra members:

Stephen Kürz (Austria)

Sergei Mikhailov (Estonia)

Renzo Rubele (Italy)

Yibrah Beyene (Norway)

Eddy Rijntjes (The Netherlands)

Erich Kofmel (UK)

Tim Brown (UK)

Observers:

John Bothwell (UK)

Guests:

Marcin Jędrzejczak (Poland)

Thomas Torounidis (Sweden)

Kate Travis (UK, media)

New members' delegates now have the power to vote. There are 45 votes in the audience.

□ **The meeting continues with a proposal on internal regulations**, which are available at:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/eurodoc-org/files/> under:

Files > 0000 Eurodoc Conference > 2007 Conference > Agenda
(InternalRegulations_v.0.16.pdf)

The GA decided to take specific parts out and certain changes were suggested. Due to time constraints some parts of the document are skipped, and it was decided to vote on the Internal Regulations online, removing part on the elections, which are to be regulated and adopted later on. The second session of the General Assembly is closed on Friday March 17 2007, at 17:00 hr.

General Assembly part 3/3 (Board election) 17.03.2006.

Sederunt:

Number of countries not represented: 5 (Armenia, Bulgaria, Denmark, Ireland, and Moldova)

Delegated votes (exceptional circumstances): Countries which delegates transferred their votes to another national delegate:

Belgium, Croatia, France, Germany, Lithuania and Russia.

Number of countries represented: 23

Total number of countries: 28

The GA is quorate (23/28)

There are 46 votes in the audience.

Member delegates:

No Country Name of Delegate Votes (present)

1 Armenia Country not attending -

2 Austria Anja Brunner 1

Austria Andreas Fritsch 1

3 Belgium-FR Mario Meessen 2

4 Bulgaria Country not attending -

5 Croatia Dalibor Doležal 2

6 Czech Republic Alena Petrikova 1

Czech Republic Petr L. Jedelsky 1

7 Denmark Country not attending -

8 Estonia Ursula Toomri 1

Estonia Dmitri Teperik 1

France Olivier Florent 2

Germany Maria Winter 2

11 Greece Evangelia Ntougia 1

Greece Sotiris Pavleas 1

12 Hungary Robert Marciniak 1

Hungary Judit Fináncz 1

13 Ireland Country not attending -

14 Italy Sarah Cruso 1

Italy Armando Carlone 1

15 Latvia Inese Sviestina 1

Latvia Dmitrijs Krukovs 1

16 Lithuania Vilma Petrikaite 2

17 Moldova Country not attending -

18 Netherlands Koen van Dam 1

Netherlands Eddy Rijntjes (vote transfer) 1

19 Norway Per Anders Eidem 1

Norway Jon Kristian Nilsen 1

20 Poland Patrycja Purga 1

Poland Rafal Ruzik 1

21 Portugal Raquel Santos 1

Portugal Francisco Teixeira 1

22 Russia Popov Vasily 2

23 Slovakia Gabriela Elexyova 1

Slovakia Peter Cernek 1

24 Slovenia Alen Šarlah 1
Slovenia Tomaž Langerholc 1
25 Spain Joaquín Morís 1
Spain Yolanda Calle 1
26 Sweden Mattias Wiggberg 1
Sweden Sam Edgecombe 1
27 Switzerland Corine Wirth 1
Switzerland Odilo Huber 1
28 United Kingdom Jen Winter 1
United Kingdom Rhys Kearney 1
TOTAL VOTES 46

Board:

President (P): Raffaella Crinelli (Sweden), present.

Vice president (VP): Tine Ejdrup (Denmark), excused.

Treasurer (T): Harpreet Singh (United Kingdom), excused; Francis Vella (France) acts as interim treasurer.

Secretary (S): Dunja Potonik (Croatia), present.

General Board Member (GBM): Dejan Cagli (Slovenia), present

General Board Member (GBM): Ingrid Chanefo (France), excused.

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Extra members:

Stephen Kürz (Austria)

Sergei Mikhailov (Estonia)

Renzo Rubele (Italy)

Yibrah Beyene (Norway)

Eddy Rijntjes (The Netherlands)

Erich Kofmel (UK)

Tim Brown (UK)

Observers:

John Bothwell (UK)

Guests:

Marcin Jędrzejczak (Poland)

Thomas Torounidis (Sweden)

Kate Travis (UK, media)

Tim Brown proposes "Transferable Vote System" for a board election. The presentation is available at:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/eurodoc-conference/files/> under z_and_g_election.ppt

Dejan Cagli as a voting officer proposes voting procedure adopted at the 2006 GA:

- o Prior to the vote, candidates for the contested positions are called one by one, and a list is compiled per position in clear view to the General Assembly.

- o The candidates are called to the front of the hall prior to the start of the vote on the position they wish to candidates for, to introduce themselves quickly (3 min) and to answer questions the General Assembly may pose to them (5 min).

- o The voting takes place in the following way:

The list of candidates will be compiled by the delegates in the General Assembly on the ballot provided to them, in the order they appear on the list.

The vote consist of indicating behind each name, either YES, No, or ABSTAIN. Any other markings on the ballot will be counted as ABSTAIN.

This process is repeated on the same ballot for each person in the list candidating for the position.

o Example ballot:

Person A. ABSTAIN

Person B. NO

Person C. YES

Person D. I AGREE » ABSTAIN

o The count will be done as follows:

The number of YES votes is counted for each of the candidates. The candidate with

a) the number of YES votes larger than the number of NO votes, and

b) the LARGEST number of YES votes of the names in the list

is elected to the position under contest.

o In case the number of NO votes equals or exceeds the number of YES votes for ALL candidates, the vote needs to be called again. Candidates can then be added to or removed from the list.

o In case the number of YES votes tie for two or more of the candidates, the candidate with the lowest number of NO votes will be preferred for the position.

o In case the YES AND NO votes tie for the forerunning candidates, the vote needs to be called again.

This procedure will be repeated for all of the positions under contest, with the exception of the General Board Members, in which election the

THREE candidates with the largest number of YES votes behind their names, and a number of YES votes which exceeds the number of NO votes by

at least one, are elected. In case the number of votes for the third and fourth candidate ties, the number of NO votes is taken into account. If these

tie as well, a new vote is called, incorporating ONLY these two candidates.

GA votes in favour of the system proposed by voting officer and a vote is called for the election of the president.

Koen van Dam is the only candidate. He presents himself and his presidential strategy and answers the following questions:

1. Can you explain why you have been silent in the career WG after having shown interest to become coordinator for this WG after Bologna?

A: Indeed in Bologna I signed up for the career WG after having been very motivated by being at the conference. Back home I said I was interested to become the coordinator and got support from the WG. Unfortunately I was disappointed when my attempts to start the transfer of background information and responsibilities failed and I gave priority to my activities for the national association (PNN) again. The group stayed inactive.

2. Do you have any project management experience?

A: Yes, I have been involved in the organisation of a large national symposium in the Netherlands, for example, and I was the main organiser of several projects at TU Delft.

3. How will you motivate people after the conference when you only have e-mail?

A: By communicating well and writing clear reports that show what is done and what needs to be done. Also a well-managed organisation makes it more attractive for people to become active and I think implementing the outcomes of the "Future of Eurodoc" workshop will help.

4. What do you think about cooperation with the American association?

A: I have never really thought about it. And it is not up to the president to decide such things, so I'm happy to hear what you all think about this and then that will be the opinion I'll communicate to the outside.

5. What are your three priorities for the next year?

A: Again, it is not up to the president to decide, but if you ask for my personal view the priorities would be 1) implementing the outcomes of the 'future of Eurodoc's workshop 2) executing the survey 3) campaign for the Charter & Code.

6. Will you have enough time if you are also active in the Dutch national association and the local association of your university?

A: After joining the board of the national association I stopped being an active member of the organisation at my university. If I will be elected in the board of Eurodoc I will stop with PNN, as I have already discussed with the rest of the board of PNN. I will be able to fully concentrate on Eurodoc then.

PRESIDENT CANDIDATE Koen van Dam (the Netherlands)

| Yes | No | Abstain |
|-----|----|---------|
| 25 | 15 | 6 |

Koen van Dam is elected as a president of Eurodoc.

Raquel Santos, the candidate for the vice-president position, presents herself and answers the following questions:

1. Which are the motivations which support your decision to stand for a vice-president position?

A: My availability and will to continue to contribute to Eurodoc development and strengthening.

2. How do you expect to act as a Vice-President? Which are the main differences between your previous functions (as a board member) and the potential new ones?

A: I make no distinctions between the board positions. My function is to work on a daily basis, and to contribute, to the extent on my knowledge and practice, to the reinforcement and sustainability of Eurodoc.

VICE PRESIDENT CANDIDATE Raquel Santos (Portugal)

| Yes | No | Abstain |
|-----|----|---------|
| 46 | 0 | 0 |

Raquel Santos is elected as a vice president of Eurodoc.

Dunja Potočnik, the candidate for the secretary position, presents herself and answers the following questions:

1. Can you describe the duties and responsibilities of the secretary?

A: Dunja divided the secretary tasks on two parts: administrative and political/policy issues and gave some examples of her duties in 2006.

2. What is your motivation for re-running for the position of the secretary?

A: Dunja explained she sees Eurodoc as an excellent tool of raising her knowledge and skills, especially in regard to her future duties as project leader.

SECRETARY CANDIDATE Dunja Potonik (Croatia)

| Yes | No | Abstain |
|-----|----|---------|
| 46 | 0 | 0 |

Dunja Potočnik is elected as a secretary of Eurodoc.

Rhys Keraney, the candidate for the treasurer position, presents himself and answers the following questions:

1. How long you had left of your PhD?

A: 18 months.

2. Do you believe you can cope with all demanding tasks in Eurodoc finances?

A: I do not know the situation but I am willing to learn and to do my best.

TREASURER CANDIDATE Rhys Kearney (The UK)

| Yes | No | Abstain |
|-----|----|---------|
| 38 | 2 | 6 |

Rhys Kearney is elected as a treasurer of Eurodoc.

Candidates for the general board members present themselves: Dmitri Teperik (Estonia), Armando Carlone (Italy), Judit Financz (Hungary). There was not any questions to the candidates for the general board members.

GENERAL BOARD MEMBERS CANDIDATES: Yes No Abstain

| | Yes | No | Abstain |
|-----------------|-----|----|---------|
| Dmitri Teperik | 40 | 5 | 1 |
| Armando Carlone | 32 | 11 | 3 |
| Judit Financz | 37 | 5 | 4 |

Elected general board members are: Dmitri Teperik (Estonia), Armando Carlone (Italy), Judit Financz (Hungary)

For 2008, Belgium, Poland and Switzerland expressed their interest to organise the conference. A closing address is made by the new president. 2006 president addresses last year's board to thank them for their service. The GA also expresses their thanks. 2007's EURODOC annual conference is closed by the president on Saturday March 17 at 20:00 hr, and the new board takes office.

8.0 Election of Officers

8.1 Ordinary Executive Officer

It is with regret that I announce that Marilyn Shanks has had to resign due to ill health. Due to her resignation, one of the positions of Ordinary Executive Officer is vacant.

Description of duties of Ordinary Executive Officer from By-laws.

2.11 Ordinary Executive Officers

2.11.1 The two Ordinary Executive Officers shall be without portfolio.

2.11.2 The Ordinary Executive Officers may not simultaneously hold office with any other position on the Management Sub-Committee. However, they may assist other officer-bearers with their work, and may simultaneously hold any other position on the Committee.

8.2 Communications Officer

Description of duties of Communications Officer from By-laws.

2.8 Communications Officer

There shall be a Communications Officer who shall:

- a) Develop the Committee's strategy for communicating with its members and subscribers.
- b) Co-ordinate the publications of the paper and electronic publications for the Committee.

9.0 Consultations

9.1 QAA Consultation on Code of Practice Section 5: Academic Appeals and student complaints on academic matters

See enclosed paper or online at:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeofpractice/section5/draft/>

9.2 QAA Consultation on Doctoral Programmes

Discussion paper about doctoral programmes

Introduction

1 During 2006, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) asked experienced practitioners in the sector about:

- the definition of a research degree in the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (the Code of practice), Section one: Postgraduate research programmes*
- master's degrees as entry qualifications for doctoral programmes
- the increasing diversity of United Kingdom (UK) doctoral degrees, including programme structures, periods of study and outcomes
- the attributes of doctoral graduates in relation to the doctoral qualification descriptor in *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)*¹, how these attributes are assessed and the related expectations of their supervisors, examiners and employers
- comparability of UK doctoral programmes and graduates with those in continental Europe.

2 The following sections summarise the information and opinions collected so far. QAA now seeks a broader view from the sector and wishes to consult widely on these topics.

3 Some questions are posed at relevant points in the paper. These are intended to focus and stimulate thinking, but responses need not be structured around answers to the questions. Please feel free to comment in whatever way best suits you and what you want to say.

Definition of a research degree in the *Code of practice, Section one: Postgraduate research programmes*

4 The revised version of the *Code of Practice, Section one: postgraduate research programmes* (September 2004), covers the following research qualifications: '... the PhD (including the New Route PhD and PhDs awarded on the basis of published work), all forms of taught or professional doctorate, and research master's degrees where the research component

(including a requirement to produce original work), is larger than the taught component when measured by student effort'.

5 Since 2004, QAA has become aware that some professional doctorates may not fit this definition. At the time of publication, the definition was drafted so as to exclude the majority of Master of Research (MRes) degrees; institutions have not so far informed QAA that this is inappropriate.

Q1: Is the *Code of practice* definition still appropriate? If not, how would you wish it to be amended?

Master's degrees as entry qualifications for doctorates

6 This section relates to work being undertaken by QAA in relation to the M level benchmarking project² and how it links to doctoral programmes.

7 The relevance of master's programmes in this document is mainly their use as entry qualifications for doctoral degrees. Points arising from the QAA M level benchmarking conference in February 2006, as well as from recent conversations with practitioners in the sector, include the following points.

i The requirement of some but not all research councils for either a '1+3' doctoral programme structure (which includes the equivalent of a one-year master's programme, including in some cases the MRes or professional training), or a stand-alone master's degree (taught or research) as an entry qualification for a doctorate.

ii In the UK, it is still common in some subjects for bachelor's graduates to be admitted to doctoral programmes (they may be nominally registered for a research master's degree in the first/second year). Any requirement to change this practice could affect institutions' ability to recruit to doctorates in these subjects.

iii At a European Universities Association (EUA) seminar held in Nice, 7-9 December 2006³ (in preparation for the May 2007 Bologna Ministerial meeting in London), the question of master's qualifications for entry to doctorates was discussed. The draft final conclusions from the seminar contain the following statement in relation to entry qualifications for doctoral programmes:

2.3 Ensuring access and admission

In a fast-changing environment, it is essential to maintain flexibility in admissions to doctoral programmes, and full institutional autonomy: diversity of institutional missions and context, and the growing importance of lifelong learning, mean that there are good reasons for different entry requirements in institutions and programmes provided fairness, transparency and objectivity is ensured;

The Bologna commitment that the second cycle gives access (= right to be considered for admission to the third cycle) should be maintained, but access to the third cycle should not be restricted to this route.

iv A concern that, with the political pressure for alignment with continental Europe, UK institutions' master's programmes will not be feasible in the future because most M level degrees in the rest of Europe last for more than one calendar year and up to two years. Although more recent Bologna developments recognise that qualifications are awarded for exit achievements and ability, the significant difference in volume between one and two years of study could affect the ability of UK master's graduates to be admitted to doctoral programmes in other European countries.

Q2: What are your views about master's degrees becoming necessary entry qualifications for doctoral degrees?

Q3: Do you have any comments about other specific issues raised in i to iv above?

The increasing diversity of UK doctoral degrees, including programme structures, periods of study and outcomes

8 **Diversity** of doctoral degrees is particularly relevant to the UK. In continental Europe, the PhD is the predominant research qualification, whereas in the UK, there has already been some diversification, particularly in professional doctorates but also in research master's qualifications. However, at the EUA seminar in Nice, referred to above, it was clear that other European countries are developing professional doctorates and that these are likely to become more widely available in future. The following is a relevant extract from the draft final conclusions of the seminar:

3.1 Diversifying doctoral programmes

A number of diverse routes to the doctorate have been developed in Europe in recent years. These recent developments include doctorates tailored towards specific professions (so-called 'professional' doctorates), joint doctorates and the European doctorate, and a variety of university-industry collaboration based doctorates.

All awards described as Doctorates should (no matter what their type or form) be based on a core of processes and outcomes. Original research has to remain the main component of all doctorates. There should be no doctorate without original research.

Core processes and outcomes should include the completion of an individual thesis (based upon an original contribution to knowledge or original application of knowledge) that passes evaluation by an expert university committee with external representation.

Professional doctorates

So-called 'professional' doctorates are doctorates that focus on embedding research in a reflective manner into another professional practice. They must meet the same core standards as 'traditional' doctorates in order to ensure the same high level of quality. It may be appropriate to consider using different titles to distinguish between this type of professional doctorates and PhDs.

In order to ensure a broad discussion on this topic it will be important to ensure the dissemination of information on the rapidly growing number of professional doctorates — particularly in the UK but also in other countries - across the entire European higher education sector.

9 **Periods of study and doctoral outcomes:** it has become the 'norm' for institutions to expect full-time doctoral candidates to complete their programmes within three to five years (or the equivalent for part-time students). Full-time research council-funded doctoral students normally receive funding for three to four years (four years for those on the '1+3' programmes mentioned in paragraph 7i above). There is pressure on doctoral candidates, not only to complete on time, but to show they have acquired a range of skills (research-specific and generic) through their doctoral programme.

10 Linked with paragraphs 11-21 below, it has been suggested that, across the range of disciplines, it is now unrealistic for universities to expect dissertations 'of publishable quality' or 'leading edge' research from doctoral candidates within the periods outlined above. This situation is alluded to in a discussion paper by Chris Park on behalf of the Higher Education Academy (HEA), *Redefining the Doctorate*⁴, in the section headed Fitness for purpose, where he mentions 'widely articulated tensions between product (producing a thesis of adequate quality) and process (developing the researcher), and between timely completion and high quality research'.

Q4: For those in an academic institution, how is your institution responding to the diversity of doctoral degrees? For example, how are the regulations for the PhD and professional doctorates similar and different?

Q5: Are entry qualifications and candidates' profiles for different doctorates the same or diverse? If they are different, please provide further information about the differences in relation to each type of doctorate.

Q6: Do you have any general comments about periods of study or outcomes of doctoral programmes?

Attributes of doctoral graduates in relation to the doctoral qualification descriptor included in the FHEQ, how these are assessed, and the related expectations of their supervisors, examiners and employers

11 Doctoral qualification descriptor: we now turn to the formal definition of the attributes that might be expected of doctoral graduates in the UK, as set out in the Doctoral qualification descriptor in the FHEQ. These are attached as an Annex to this paper.

12 The existing descriptor, published in 2001, contains generic, research-related attributes that can be applied to doctoral graduates in any subject. The descriptor also mentions transferable skills necessary for employment. It does not differentiate between different types of doctoral qualification.

13 In *Redefining the Doctorate*, Chris Park, touches on the expectations and requirements of employers (p.19). He argues that, although doctoral graduates 'usually do bring added value to an enterprise — including specialist knowledge, research and analytical skills, future potential maturity...' some research suggests they 'lack commercial awareness, are generally over-specialised, face difficulties in adapting to non-academic work cultures, and often have unrealistic expectations (McCarthy and Souter 2006)'.

14 Originality: as mentioned in section (i) of the doctoral qualification descriptor and also in the extract from the Nice final conclusions, a fundamental criterion for doctoral degrees is that they should include some form of 'original' research. For example, most institutions' regulations for doctoral degrees contain references to an expectation of original work, or contribution, and this is one of the criteria used to assess doctoral candidates.

15 However, there is no universally agreed definition of what 'originality' means when used as a criterion for making a doctoral award. Is it original thought? Carrying out new work? The application of existing knowledge to a new area? Some institutions have clear criteria for awarding doctoral degrees that include statements about making a significant contribution to learning, either through the discovery of new knowledge (which might also change existing views), developing a new theory, or applying existing knowledge in new situations.

Q7: In your view, do the attributes of doctoral graduates described in the FHEQ doctoral qualification descriptor still apply?

Q8: How would/do you/does your institution define 'originality' in the context of doctoral study?

Q9: Does the qualification descriptor remain appropriate for different types of doctoral graduate?

Q10: To what extent, if at all, should employers' views influence the doctoral qualification descriptor?

16 The assessment of doctoral candidates in the UK: this involves a 'closed' oral examination, involving a small number of people including the candidate, his/her examiners and, depending on the circumstances, possibly an independent chair of the examination and sometimes the candidate's supervisor (with the candidate's permission), or another observer. The assessment is of the candidate's doctoral thesis or dissertation and the way in which the candidate is able to explain and defend it. In subjects where the candidate's work also includes an artefact or other practical output, such as a musical composition, arrangements are made for the examination to include assessment of this.

17 In professional doctorates, taught modules are an integral part of the programme. Increasingly, PhD programmes include taught elements, such as research methods units, or other modules that enable the candidate to acquire skills that may be necessary to the successful completion of the doctoral degree and/or useful for the next stage in the candidate's career. It is becoming more usual for some subjects/institutions to accredit optional and/or compulsory taught elements successfully completed by PhD candidates during their research programme but this does not normally form part of the overall PhD assessment. In a small number of institutions taught elements need to be completed successfully before the thesis or dissertation can be submitted.

18 The PhD examination is not intended specifically to evaluate the skills acquired by the candidate, although it has been suggested that some skills, for example the ability to communicate orally and in writing, are an implicit part of the doctoral assessment.

19 Further detailed information about the UK doctoral examination process can be found in Tinkler and Jackson's *The Doctoral Examination Process*⁵.

20 The assessment process for doctoral candidates in continental Europe: this is different from the process described above and there are variations between continental countries. One of the most notable differences between the UK and the rest of Europe is that in the UK the oral examination is normally a relatively private experience involving only two or three examiners and the final outcome is not known in advance (although each examiner usually submits an independent report on the dissertation before the viva takes place); in some other countries the academic assessment of the candidate is quite separate from the oral defence of the thesis, which is sometimes a public event. For example, the written dissertation may need to have been approved as being of an adequate doctoral standard before permission is granted for a public 'defence' to take place. In some countries, the candidate may be invited to give one or more public lectures immediately before the (also public) defence of the thesis.

21 Credit at doctoral level: while some UK institutions accredit taught modules students take as part of their doctoral training (eg research methods or other skills based modules) and some attach credit to all levels of professional doctorates, there is no obvious rationale for accrediting the PhD. The framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area does not include any typical credit range for the third cycle and this is welcomed by the UK.

Q11: Are there different outcomes and assessment criteria for different doctorates? If yes, how do they differ?

Q12: Do you have any other comments about assessment criteria for doctoral qualifications and how they are applied in the examination process?

Q13: Does your institution accredit any part of doctoral qualifications, including PhD programmes? If yes, please provide further details, including the level and amount of credit awarded.

Other relevant (and explicit) questions are posed by in *Redefining the Doctorate*, under the heading 'Assessment', sections (a) to (e).

Q14: Do you think the UK can learn from continental/European assessment models for the doctorate?

Q15: Do you have experience of using independent chairs in oral examinations? If yes, please give further details.

Comparability of doctoral programmes and graduates with those in continental Europe

22 In addition to the point immediately above concerning the assessment of doctoral candidates in continental Europe, there are other differences in practice between the UK and wider Europe, some of which are mentioned below.

23 At a meeting in September 2006, hosted by the Universities UK's Europe Unit, participants contributed to revising a draft position paper for the UK HE sector on the Bologna process and doctoral level qualifications. A final version of the paper has since been published on the Europe Unit website⁶. The paper notes the following points:

i **Entry to doctoral programmes:** As mentioned in paragraphs 6-7 above, in continental Europe the majority of countries require a student to have completed a master's degree before he/she is eligible to register for a doctorate.

ii **Joint degrees:** the concept of a joint doctoral degree has at least three different interpretations:

- a qualification that involves registration by a student with two or more institutions, either consecutively or concurrently but which is awarded by only one of the institutions
- 'joint' degrees arising from subject level collaboration between two or more institutions where the award is made in the name of more than one institution. For example, the EUA has developed criteria for a 'European Doctorate', partly to enable degrees to be offered jointly by institutions in different European countries
- some European universities collaborate to provide 'co-tutelle' arrangements whereby a doctoral candidate can combine study in two countries towards one or more awards, ie after initial registration in his/her home country, a candidate may study for and be awarded a PhD in another European country, then return home and receive a further research award based on the same work.

24 All the above examples require co- or joint supervision which in itself can present challenges for student support, quality assurance and skills development.

Q16: Do you have any comments about the joint degrees described above? Are you aware of other types of joint doctoral degrees? If so, how are they different from / do they compare with the examples outlined?

Q17: What particular issues do you think institutions need to be aware of when developing joint doctoral degrees?

iii **The status of doctoral candidates:** in continental Europe doctoral students are awarded the status of a member of academic staff; in the UK they have student status, providing exemption from income tax and national insurance contributions but also ineligibility for pension rights. The distinction becomes blurred when members of staff in institutions are at the same time registered for research degrees.

Q18: What are your views about the status of doctoral candidates?

25 Finally, the House of Commons Education and Skills Select Committee has published a report on the Bologna Process⁷, which contains references to doctoral qualifications. This may be of interest in the context of the above points.

26 Please send your response to this paper to Gill Clarke (g.clarke@qaa.ac.uk) by **13 July 2007**.

Annex A: Descriptor for qualifications at Doctoral level: Doctoral degree

Doctorates are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- i
the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication
- ii
a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice
- iii
the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems
- iv
a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- a
make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- b
continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas, or approaches

and will have:

- c
the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.

1 The FHEQ is available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/FHEQ/EWNI/default.asp#annex1

2 See notes of conference: *Securing and maintaining academic standards: benchmarking M level programmes*, 17 February 2006, at: www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/masters/Mlevelbenchmarkingfeb06.pdf

3 Draft final conclusions — preparing final conclusions for the London communiqué, are at: www.eua.be/fileadmin/user_upload/files/Nice_doctorates_seminar/final_recommendations_in_EUAtemplate.pdf

4 Redefining the Doctorate, Chris Park, Higher Education Academy, January 2007, ISBN 978-1-905788-29-3, pp 6-7.

5 *The Doctoral Examination Process: A handbook for students, examiners and supervisors*, Penny Tinkler and Carolyn Jackson, Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press / McGraw-Hill Education, ISBN 0-335-21305-7, 2004.

6 UK higher education sector position paper on the Bologna Process and doctoral level qualifications, 23 October 2006, at: www.europeunit.ac.uk/resources/UK%20HE%20sector_positionpaper_doctoralissues%20.doc

7 House of Commons, Select Committee on Education and Skills — Fourth report, *The Bologna Process*, 17 April 2007: www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmeduski/205/20502.htm