Doctoral and post-doctoral research and training: a comparison of European and African graduate school models

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Overview

• A comparison:
  – The Humboldt Graduate School, Berlin, Germany
  – The Graduate School and African Doctoral Academy, Stellenbosch
• Graduate schools: models and purposes
• Higher education under stress
• New modes of doctoral education & training
Humboldt Graduate School (HGS)

- Established in 2006, in response to -
- DFG Excellence Initiativ requires doctoral programmes to be accredited in Graduate School
- HGS purpose: Institution-wide coordination, QA, gender equity, support (soft skills), spacial accommodation
- HGS requirements for accreditation of PhD programmes: International, interdisciplinary, excellence, structured training (includes workshops in theory, methods), multiple supervision to enhance transparency & throughput for production of PhDs (human capital)
- Only third party funded programmes need apply
- Cut-off entry age: 28
HGS (cont’d)

• Around 600 FT PhDs enrolled in sixty ‘International PhD programmes’; Typically a three-year programme.
• Total no of PhDs enrolled: 5300; thus the majority still in traditional mode of training.
• HGS evaluated positively after five years; first full-time director appointed in 2011.
• Housed in renovated building
Graduate School and African Doctoral Academy @ SU (FASS)

- Established in 2009 in FASS, in response to -
- Hope Project CFP to enhance excellence and relevance in Africa – to promote next generation of academics through world-class doctoral programmes
- Three entities managed as integrated project:
  - Graduate School coordinates full-time, partly structured, doctoral study programmes in eight multi-disciplinary research themes, provides scholarships, monitors progress and QA. Scholarships and themes funded by Hope project seed funding
  - ADA is the main enabler providing support through generic methodological and ‘soft skills’ short course training; first to ‘own’ FT PhDs, then to other faculties (institution wide) and then on partner campuses in Africa (i.e. portable and exportable)
  - PANGeA shares in student selection, supervision and working towards joint projects and joint degrees
- Cut-off entry age: 40
Three interlocking structural components

African Doctoral Academy
Main enabler through -
- Generic & elective modular training
- Supervisor training
- Research on the doctorate in Africa

Graduate School
Umbrella body coordinating
- Doctoral support framework
- Multi-disciplinary research themes & Lecture series
- Scholarship support & monitoring of progress

PANGeA
Partners sharing -
- Sponsored research & staff exchanges
- Student recruitment & supervision
- Joint degrees
A going concern - current numbers

- Implementation started academic year 2010
- Two intakes enrolling 31 (2010) and 25 (2011); current enrolment: 56 full-time PhD-students (out of more than 250 overall in faculty)
- New intake: 20 scholarships offered for 2012
- From 15 Sub-Saharan African countries
- In 8 research themes involving 15 departments
- A commitment of more than R27 million in scholarship-funding alone
- Plus (on a 70:30 basis) a further R11,6 million in programme support.
2011-cohort’s reception
Graduate schools: purpose & types

Graduate schools are created to focus on a particular “aspect” of higher education provision, usually at the higher or highest programme levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline/ discipline group</th>
<th>Any / all disciplines</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examples:</td>
<td>Example:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate School of Business</td>
<td>Humboldt Graduate School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities Graduate School</td>
<td>UFS Graduate School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(single faculty)</td>
<td>(across faculties)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Graduate schools: weak to strong

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Strong</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordination &amp; Quality Assurance</td>
<td>Academy staff appointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>UFS Graduate School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programmes accredited</td>
<td>Humanities Graduate School</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Humboldt Graduate School</td>
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<td>Graduate School of Business</td>
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Higher education under stress

• Massification
  – Elite to mass participation; Students’ academic preparedness, ability to pay; Graduate employability
  – Shrinking support, increased accountability
  – financial burden shifting onto students and society

• Commodification (The knowledge economy)
  – Contracts and corporate sector involvement
  – Increased demand for high-level, application-oriented research output

• Inadequate academic staff replacement
  – World-wide shortage of human capital
# Changing structure of doctoral education

## Traditional

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alone</th>
<th>Integration</th>
<th>Teamwork</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part-time, irregular</td>
<td>Schedule</td>
<td>Full-time, regularised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Coordinated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-driven</td>
<td>Initiative</td>
<td>Supervisor-driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermittent</td>
<td>Contact</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal regulation</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Paced, monitored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vague</td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Shared standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unstructured</td>
<td>Skills acquisition</td>
<td>Structured</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Cohort

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<tr>
<th>Low</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
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Some conclusions

• European GS model strength is concentrated in its member programmes; where expertise attracts the funding and where GS can concentrate on QA

• African Doctoral Academy responds to the perceived need for enhancement of individual and institutional capacity to participate in advanced research
Thank you

More:

www.thehopeproject.co.za
www.sun.ac.za/graduateschool
www.sun.ac.za/lectureseries
www.sun.ac.za/ada
www.pangeaonline.org