

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATION

# PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES FOR INTERNATIONAL DOCTORAL EDUCATION



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# PRINCIPLES FOR INTERNATIONAL DOCTORAL EDUCATION

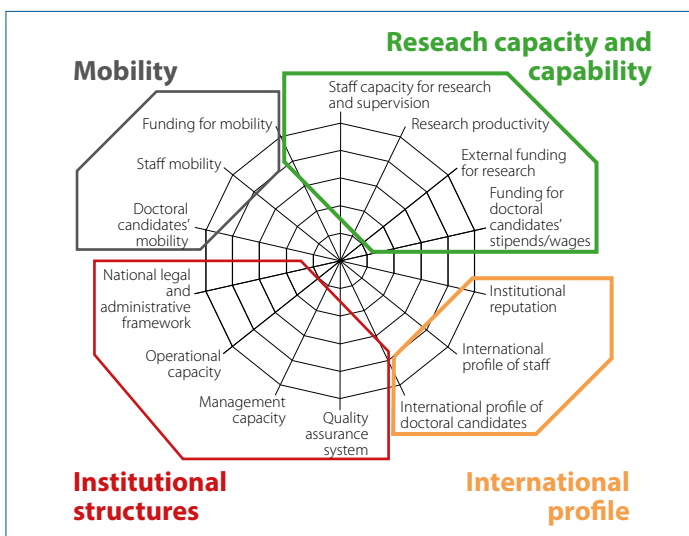
Internationalisation is of central importance to doctoral education, and should be a key priority for universities. As defined in the Salzburg Recommendations, internationalisation is a significant component of developing the quality of research and of doctoral education within universities. At the same time, international experiences are critical to the professional development of many doctoral candidates regardless of their discipline and subsequent career paths. Universities should therefore approach the internationalisation of doctoral education in a coherent, strategic manner. The FRINDOC project has aimed to facilitate institutional development in the internationalisation of doctoral education. It provides a framework for universities to define and implement strategies as well as an online tool<sup>1</sup> for self-evaluation ([frindoctool.eua.be](http://frindoctool.eua.be)).

**The principles for international doctoral education are:**

1. Universities must provide **access to good research environments with appropriate supervision and resources**.
2. Universities must be engaged in **international activities** at the institutional level, through the work of both supervisors and doctoral candidates.
3. Universities must have **sufficient institutional structures** to manage, administer and develop the internationalisation of doctoral education.
4. Universities must **facilitate mobility** for both doctoral candidates and staff.<sup>2</sup>

Following these principles, good practices in international doctoral education can be seen in four dimensions:

- 1) **RESEARCH CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY,**
- 2) **INTERNATIONAL PROFILE,**
- 3) **INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES,** and
- 4) **MOBILITY.**



<sup>1</sup> The online FRINDOC tool is customisable. The source code is available at <https://github.com/EuropeanUniversityAssociation/FRINDOC> under the GNU license.

<sup>2</sup> These principles recognise that doctoral candidates can have status as students as well as research staff, but for the sake of simplicity, the two categories are separated in this document.

# DIMENSION 1:

## RESEARCH CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY

As stated in the Salzburg Principles and Recommendations, **research is the basis of doctoral education**, and the internationalisation of doctoral education relies on the research capacity of institutions and the capability of supervisors to train early stage researchers.

**SUPERVISION:** Doctoral education is dependent on active researchers to supervise doctoral candidates and bring them into excellent and inclusive research environments. Supervisors need to have **research experience** in order to guide the doctoral candidates. They must have the **time** to meet doctoral candidates and give sufficient and timely feedback on the progress of their research. Supervisors need to have the **dedication** to deliver good supervision. They also need **training** to be able to perform their duties, and recognise and react to challenges in the interaction with doctoral candidates in a timely fashion.

**FUNDING:** Universities need **sustainable funding** and the **appropriate infrastructure** to perform research. This includes the capacity to attract and retain external funding over longer periods and the ability to **diversify funding streams**. Good doctoral education requires **sufficient funding for doctoral candidates to allow them to dedicate their time to research**.

**RESEARCH OUTPUT:** **Research results must be widely disseminated and have impact**. This can happen within the research community, furthering the common knowledge about our world, as well as in other parts of society, to the general public or in terms of application to non-academic challenges. These outputs should be understood in a broad sense, and are **neither limited to nor dominated by bibliometric indicators**.

# DIMENSION 2: INTERNATIONAL PROFILE

In order to develop international doctoral education, universities must consider their international profile. This includes the extent to which they are engaged internationally and the international activities of their research staff and doctoral candidates.

**INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY:** Universities must be engaged in international activities as institutions in order to give doctoral candidates the full benefits of international experiences. Such activities could take the form of institutionalised collaborations with chosen partner institutions, joint programmes, or participation in university networks.

**INTERNATIONAL PROFILE OF STAFF:** Supervisors must be active in international research environments and debates. Institutions should support individual researchers to allow them to develop international activities as well as being able to attract and integrate international staff in the research and supervision of the university.

**INTERNATIONAL PROFILE OF DOCTORAL CANDIDATES:** Doctoral candidates should be able to take part in international research activities. For this purpose, they must have support from the institution as well as from their supervisors in order to have access to international research environments. Such support can be language training, training in intercultural communication skills and intercultural research practice. Institutions should also have policies for the recruitment and admission of international doctoral candidates.

# DIMENSION 3:

## INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES

Universities must have the necessary institutional structures to support international doctoral education, including the **strategic capacity** to set priorities for the institution, procedures to ensure and enhance quality, as well as administrative support.

**QUALITY ASSURANCE:** Universities must have procedures that allow them to evaluate their performance and enable them to **identify weaknesses as well as opportunities to develop further**. Quality assurance frameworks should **accommodate the possibility of establishing international joint programmes**.

**MANAGEMENT CAPACITY:** International doctoral education should be managed in a **unified and coherent** way including an adequate allocation of resources based on institutional strategies and needs as well as **supporting bottom-up initiatives**. The university management should also ensure that there is **administrative staff with the right competences** to handle day-to-day issues such as visas or housing.

**NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORKS:** **Obstacles for international doctoral education should be minimised or removed**, for example restrictive immigration policies, cumbersome visa procedures, recognition of foreign degrees and programme accreditation.

# DIMENSION 4: MOBILITY

Mobility is an important element of internationalisation. Direct exposure to different research environments and cultures nurtures an **open and investigative research mindset**. Intercultural experiences add to the professional development of doctoral candidates. Mobility of staff contributes to developing the international profile of the university as a whole.

**FUNDING:** Universities must ensure **sustainable funding for international activities** of both supervisors and doctoral candidates. This should include financing for a range of activities such as travel, summer schools, conference participation and longer-term internships. In order to provide this funding, universities should look to **diversify their income** for example through collaboration with private companies or public bodies.

**STAFF MOBILITY:** **University staff at all levels should be able to engage in mobility.** This could be done through staff exchanges and the possibility for researchers to visit other institutions on long- or short-term stays. Such initiatives could be facilitated through strengthening international institutional partnerships, and should be supported through flexible workload allocations and the possibility for support for families.

**MOBILITY OF DOCTORAL CANDIDATES:** **Doctoral candidates must have the opportunity to be mobile** for long or short periods of their research. Universities should actively support this for example through institutional partnerships, and they should develop clear and transparent guidance on the possibilities for doctoral candidates to have experiences abroad.

# THE FRINDOC PROJECT PARTNERSHIP

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