

ASIIN-FIGURE-EASPA GLOBAL CONFERENCE 2021

# *What are the issues doctoral education is facing in Europe?*

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## Introducing EUA-CDE



- **Membership service** of the European University Association (EUA)
- **The largest** European Doctoral Education Network (doc & postdoc) bringing together academic leaders and professionals from 256 European universities
- **Drives** doctoral education policies and promotes cooperation and exchange of good practices on issues of common interest
- **Identifies** and monitors the trends in doctoral education
- **Organises** regularly events, addressing fundamental and emerging topics of doctoral education and publishes surveys and policy paper

### Recent themes

- Research integrity
- Research assessment
- Open science and the digital transformation
- Inter-institutional collaboration in doctoral education
- Career development and tracking
- Doctoral candidates' wellbeing/mental health
- Societal dimension of doctoral education (incl. SDG)

## Doctoral education in Europe

- The doctorate plays a central role in the history of European Universities
- Salzburg Principles 2005 – Salzburg II 2010 – Salzburg III 2016
- Increased importance for the European Research Area
  - Innovation Union 2010
  - Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training 2011
- National legislation
- Much of this is connected to the discourse regarding the knowledge society as a driver for growth
- Importance of early stage researchers to address main challenges

## Institutional contexts

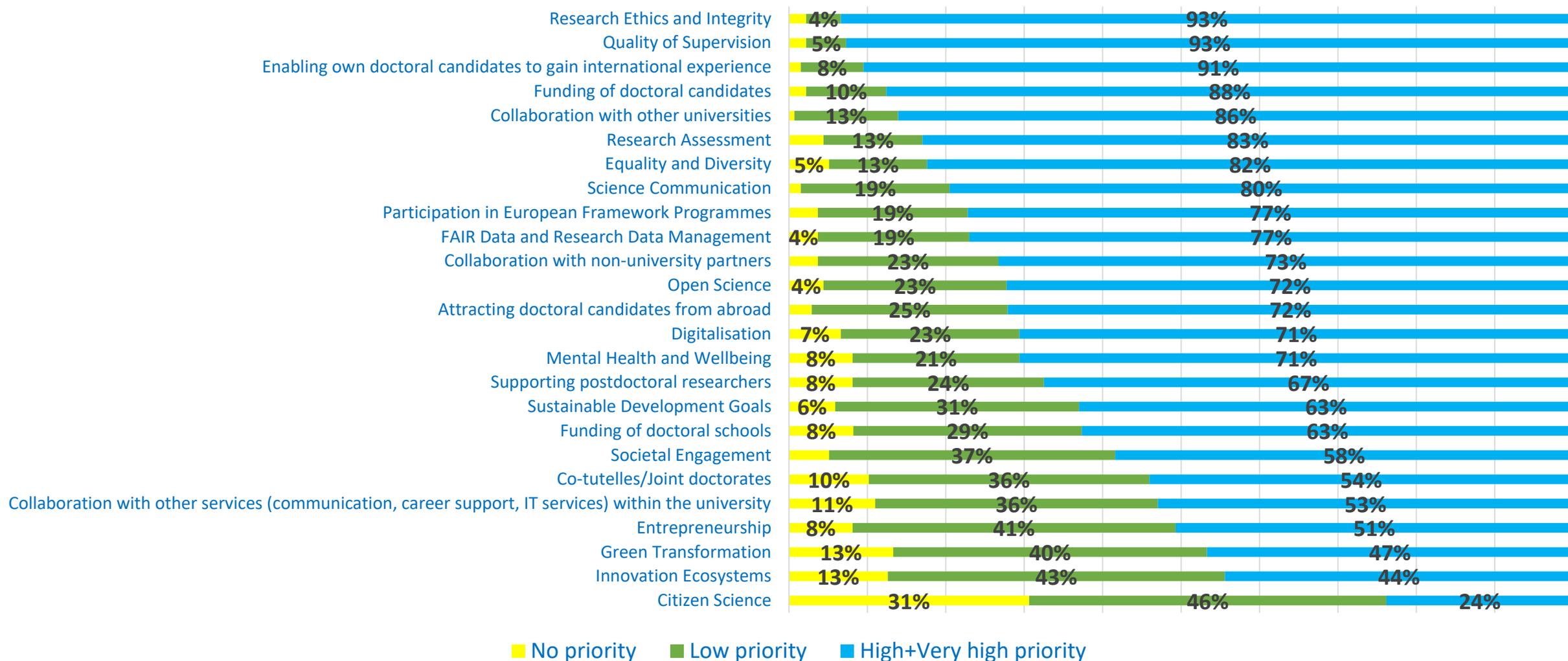
ANTON STANKOWSKI, AUFGEKLAPPT AUF WEISS, 1989, ACRYL  
AUF LEINWAND, 90 X 65 CM, MUSEUM FÜR KONKRETE KUNST,  
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## Institutional contexts

- Around 95 percent of European Universities have some kind of structured doctoral education.
- There is a significant diversity of doctoral education in Europe. This includes the level of organisation (faculty/discipline level doctoral programme/school vs. Institutional structure), duration, credits, level of flexibility, funding, status of doctoral candidates, etc.)
- However, we can find also an agreement that «the core component of doctoral training is the advancement of knowledge through original research” and that there is a need to prepare doctoral candidates also for employment beyond academia (Salzburg I)
- As a consequence and independently from questions of legal status of the doctoral candidates, doctoral education differs significantly from other fields of studies.

### Q11. Which of the following topics are a priority in the area of doctoral education at your institution?



## Current priorities in doctoral education

- **Supervision**
- The doctoral reforms of the last two decades lead to an understanding of doctoral education as a **shared responsibility between supervisor, institution and doctoral candidates**. This has not diminished the importance of the doctoral supervisor.
- Supervision is **increasingly regulated**. Most these regulations are connected with reporting and conflict-solving mechanisms, but not with the content of supervision itself (EUA-CDE 2018/2019 report)
- At the same time, co-supervision is becoming an important part of doctoral education. About 40% of universities **report supervision in teams** happening in most of their doctoral programmes (EUA-CDE 2018/2019 report)
- In an increasingly complex research environment, there is a need **prepare and train supervisors** for their duty.

## Current priorities in doctoral education

- **Digitalisation**
- The pandemic provided the opportunity to **explore and collect practical experiences** about the use of digital tools. 97 % increased online training, 93% digital/virtual mobility, 90% online supervision (EUA-Survey 2021, published end 2021)
- Integration of digital technologies in L&T (63%) and Research (58%) (EUA innovation survey, forthcoming) . Providing new opportunities for qualification but also additional training needs for doctoral candidates.
- There is increased **focus on data in research**. As a consequence about half of the universities plan to include **research data training** in most and all doctoral schools/programmes and three quarter of universities consider **FAIR data and research data management a high and very high priority** (EUA-CDE 2021 Survey, to be published)
- Effects on researchers careers: Replacement even of high-skills labours by AI – adaption of researchers careers.
- Interconnection between the ethical and technical challenges.

- **Internationalisation and geopolitical context**
- Europa: Up to 50% of all doctoral candidates in some countries come from abroad. USA: 30.4% of graduate students were from abroad. Higher number in STEM: Mathematics and computer sciences: 63.2% temporary residents. (Plus shorter research stays, for example in a specific archive or laboratory, as well as participation in workshops and seminars.)
- Mobility at risks due to ecological and geopolitical considerations. Has the globalisation has come to a stop?
- “Zoomification” of doctoral training. Increased role of virtual mobility and disconnection from a specific institution (Bungartz 2019)
- Global access to research infrastructures.
- Increased popularity of international collaborative schemes including co-tutelles

## The role of doctoral education in the knowledge society

- Doctoral candidates as motor for regional innovation Ecosystems.
- Increasing the number of doctorate holders is considered an important goal to increase R&D and innovation capacities (specific goals for instance in Romania, South Africa, etc.)
- «societal turn». Doctoral candidates are **increasingly involved in science communication**: F.i. «My thesis in 3 minutes», blogs, etc.
- An important mean to connect doctoral education with entrepreneurial and innovation activities are collaborative doctoral programmes between universities and non-universities actors, especially industry.

## The role of doctoral education in the knowledge society. Open challenges.

- Decreasing number of doctoral candidates in some European countries incl. France.
- Regional innovation as mean to avoid brain-drain, but als threatened by.
- Job offers do not always match with the aim to increase the doctoral education capacity
- How to increase the understanding of employers concerning the added value doctoral graduates can bring to the table?
- Universities increasingly competing with the private sector for the «brigthest mind»
- Risk of losing independent and fundamental research as the key characteristic of the doctorate due to the «skillification» of the doctorate?

## Additional Challenges of quality doctoral education

- **Interdisciplinarity** While the doctoral degree itself remains discipline-specific in the vast majority of cases, trans- and interdisciplinarity plays an increasing role in doctoral education. How can we guarantee that STEM and SSH meet on an equal footing and SSH not only seen as an add on?
- **Research Assessment** There is a growing understanding that a sole focus on publication-based indicators like the JIF for the assessment of scientific careers is neither in the interest of the academy nor of society. Reforming academic assessment, however, this involves reforming academic culture and academic careers itself.
- **Mental Health and Career-Precarity** Ensuring mental health of doctoral candidates and addressing precarity of researchers has become an important issue in the area of doctoral education. There is still the need to build a reliable evidence base and indentify good practices to tackle this issue.

**EUA-CDE 2022  
Annual Meeting:  
«Time and Timing  
in doctoral  
education»**



**Manchester, UK, 22-24 June 2022**

# Thank you for your attention

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