

The Doctorate in the IDEA League

Our understanding of the third cycle in the Bologna process

Research is the most predominant and essential component of the doctorate.

The doctorate emphasises self-motivated and self-managed learning: it is primarily a research degree and differs fundamentally from 'teaching' degrees such as bachelors and masters. The doctorate is aimed at providing research training for careers inside and outside academia, the latter including industry, public services, finance, public health and others.

Providing skills and new knowledge for research & development and innovation in commerce or industry is an important topic, also with respect to the current European concern.

In a doctorate, students need to develop practical and intellectual skills that relate to conducting research, to the writing, presentation and submission of a doctoral thesis culminating in its successful defence. In addition, doctoral students are trained in

- research skills and techniques,
- research environment,
- research management,
- personal effectiveness,
- communication skills,
- networking and team working,
- career management.

It is required that the topic of a doctoral thesis is well founded and conclusive and shows that the chosen lead questions and planned methods are appropriate. For this the necessary expertise needs to be available, mainly represented by the supervisor(s), whose expertise is particularly important in the context of the research. In addition to the formal supervisor(s), other members of the research department or faculty, and scientists from outside academia, are involved in skills training and assistance.

The IDEA League strives to educate independent and autonomous scientists following the tradition of the European doctorates.

In order to achieve these goals, the IDEA League universities offer a 'graduate -school' environment:

- providing access to resources (and expertise) essential to conduct high-quality research,
- giving students flexibility/choice of learning and research conditions within a negotiated structure,
- ensuring adequate training for intellectual leadership and administrative matters, and guidance on the ethical pursuit of research and the avoidance of research misconduct,
- ensuring students engage with practicing researchers and are in conversation with a community of peers/experts/others,
- providing participation in colloquia and (international) conferences,
- encouraging interdisciplinarity and an international environment.

Research and teaching at IDEA universities are regularly reviewed and evaluated and there are quality assurance systems in place including general regulations and procedures at institutional level. In general, doctoral education at the IDEA League universities is considered to be steered on a conceptual level avoiding a bureaucratisation of the doctorate. Keeping the idea of an 'independent, autonomous scholar' will enable diversity and originality.

The IDEA League's understanding of the 3rd, doctoral, cycle of the Bologna Process is in accordance with the EUA recommendations (Bologna Seminar on Doctoral Programmes, Nice, 2006; www.eua.be)

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