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Creating a community of practice for the delivery of doctoral education

Some experiences from the department of
business studies, Uppsala University

NPhD workshop: Structuring a community of Practice for
Doctoral Education

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A few important basic principles (my personal view)

Research training should

- Teach students the craft of doing research
- Encourage and train students to be independent researchers
- Introduce students to a national and international research community

Important means

- A good and lively home base
- Do not specialize too narrowly
- International networks and specialized courses
- Opening up for future research possibilities

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The basis

- A formal structure of the doctoral education
- Clear rules
- Financial support
- A creative and allowing environment

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The formal set up in Uppsala

Supervision

- A candidate has one main and up to two associate supervisors
- Training of supervisors is mandatory by statute → practice not there yet
- A board of main supervisors in the department meets regularly and also functions as admissions board
- The final defence is public, often with an "opponent" or external examiner from abroad.

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The formal set up in Uppsala Professionalization

- The curriculum comprises 240 ECTS credits, which corresponds to four years of full-time study where each year is represented by 60 ECTS credits. Out of the total, 105 ECTS credits refer to courses, and 135 ECTS are represented by the Ph. D. thesis.
- Introductory term jointly with *Stockholm School of Economics*
- Research schools (MIT and NORD-IB)
- Participation in international networks
- Students are encouraged to participate in international networks and courses
- Candidates are seen as faculty in most respects
- Doctoral studies is often combined with (20%) teaching
- All candidates can participate in teacher training course.
- Candidates are encouraged to participate in international conferences, basic funding is provided for two conferences
- Candidates are encouraged to participate in large research projects.

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The formal set up in Uppsala The Doctoral Contract

- UU works with a mandatory study plan which is annually reviewed.
- The director of studies functions as a conflict resolver
- Students are represented on the Department board
- Students have an association that fills both social and representational functions.
- Regular meetings with the director of studies

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A few challenges

- Language: internationalization & anglicization vs. diversity of the European tradition
- Career opportunities: low mobility of PhDs and limited tenure opportunities in Sweden vs. A possible European labor market.
- Demands of throughput vs. keeping up quality
- Training for independence and introducing candidates to a national and international network
- Creating a creative research environment at home and providing the doctoral students with possibilities to take courses and spend substantial time abroad

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An international community a lively doctoral network that can be combined with strong local research groups

- A structured supply of doctoral courses and tutorials
 - Not too specialized
 - Concentrated in time
 - Structured as modules to be combined in different ways
- Doctoral exchange programmes
- Informal visits and exchanges
- PhD pre-workshops
- Post docs and post doc workshops

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