

Doctoral training from a national policy perspective: Czech Republic

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Overview of the content

- Context of policy development
 - national context
 - European context
- Current status
- National policy: Perspectives and issues

Context: national

- A quarter century of system transition
 - Institutional transformation in research and higher education
 - Transformation of degree structure and career schemes
 - Developments of quality assurance system

Institutional transformation

- Transformation of the Academy of Sciences (1992 law)
- Growing research capacity at universities
- Governance in research and higher education: strong academic stakeholders, weak political leadership
 - Higher Education Institutions Law(s) 1990, 1998
 - Academy of Sciences Law 1992
 - Law on State Support of Research 2003
- Introduction (1990s) and growing importance of grant schemes in funding of research

Transformation of degree structure

- From elite to universal higher education system (Trow 1974) within 25 years
- A „proto-Bologna“ structure from 1992 already
- In search of a format for the doctorate:
 - Research training (*aspirantura*, CSc.) at Academy and/or universities (until 1998)
 - Doctorate (at universities, 1990-1998 in parallel with *aspirantura*, from 1999 exclusively)
 - „PhD“ title introduced for graduates of all kinds of doctoral programmes except theology (1999)
 - Distinct titles of theology doctoral programmes graduates abolished (2016)

Quality assurance system

- Currently one of the most overwhelming accreditation systems in Europe
- Since 1992: introduced first in respect of doctoral cycle mainly
- 1999 – 2016: accreditation of any kind of degree programme (+habilitation and professorial appointment procedure rights) at any kind of institute (public/private)
- 2016 -: new quality assurance scheme, towards institutional accreditation

Context: European / Bologna Process

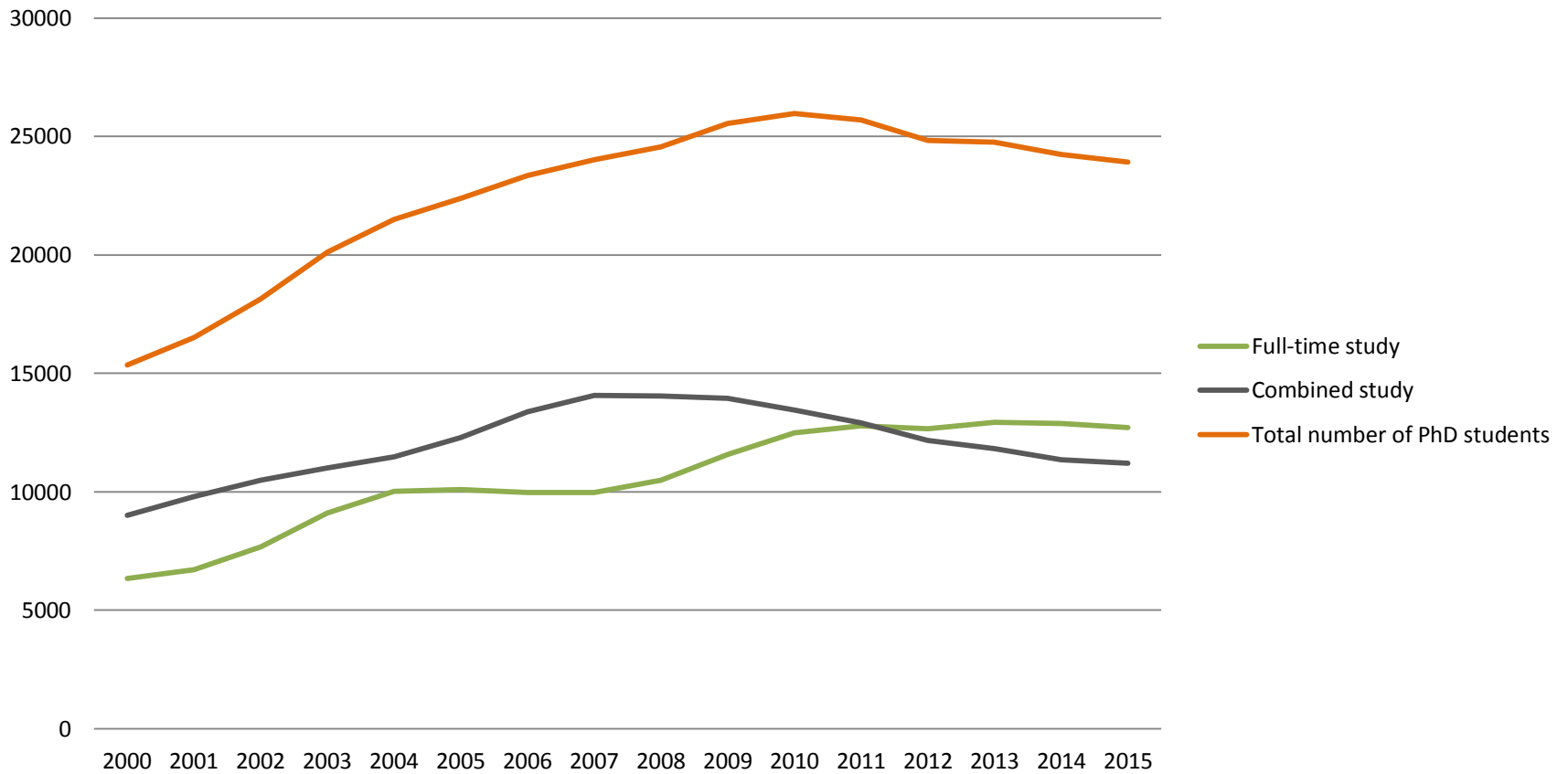
- Doctoral training as a cycle of higher education (Dublin Descriptors 2004, QF EHEA 2005)
 - *Making it more a study than academic „apprenticeship“?*
- Tendency to diversity?
 - PhD x professional/industrial doctorates (pre-service/in-service)
 - PHE project (EURASHE, 2012-2014)
- Principles of Innovative Doctoral Training (Commission 2011)
- Postdoctorate and academic job market: a future „fourth cycle“?

Current status

- Systemic incentive for institutions to have doctoral programmes (a must in order to keep university status)
- No formal diversity, high *de facto* diversity, of doctoral programmes
- Narrow fields of doctoral programmes (due to accreditation system)
- Low institutional funding, dependence on grants
- Tendency to inbreeding

Current status

Number of PhD students in CZ, 2000-2015



Current status (as viewed by CZ accreditation authority)

- Report of CZ accreditation authority on doctoral education (2014):
 - Unclear concept and formalism
 - Narrow fields of doctoral programmes (and low connectivity between doctoral training and grant schemes)
 - The issue of supervisors (sometimes only formally appointed, as they need to have state-conferred professorships or habilitation, supplemented by really-on-the-spot „consultants“)
 - Doctoral programmes have become too much a „study“
 - Low internationalization and mobility of doctoral candidates

National policy

- Changing intensity of focus on doctoral training:
 - key issue in 1990s
 - Important issue as part of focus on strengthening research role of HE institutions (around 2000 - 2010)
 - Integrative approach to educational policy (since 2013) and disappearance of explicit state policy on doctoral training as (unintended?) consequence
- But growing importance
 - needs of enlarged research capacities at universities and research institutes
 - job market in general

Perspectives

- Legislative change towards institutional accreditation (2016)
 - Enabling individual institutions to repair the flaws of the current programme accreditation
 - Possibly broader fields for doctoral training
 - New basis for improved collaboration university – Academy of Sciences institutes
- Prime research infrastructures built 2009 – 2015
 - Genuine need for top doctoral graduates, and for internationalization

Perspectives

- Changes of funding
 - On the verge of change of institutional funding of research: to be based more on a peer review model
 - Financial stimulus into human resources a focus of EU funds intervention 2014 - 2020
- Growing research in higher education and science policy
 - Future national and institutional policies are likely to be better informed

Concluding remarks

- Future of doctoral training is likely to be increasingly shaped by diversity
 - Diversity of doctorate models
 - Diversity of motivation
- Need for clarity and transparency, but also permeability of life and career tracks

THANK YOU!

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