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Manchester, 23 -24 June 2022

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# Content

How can **professionals** support candidates, supervisors and school leaders in achieving a timely completion.

- *What do we recognize as critical?*
- *What do we know about delays?*
- *Are we starting with the right assumptions?*
- *Some examples of support measures*

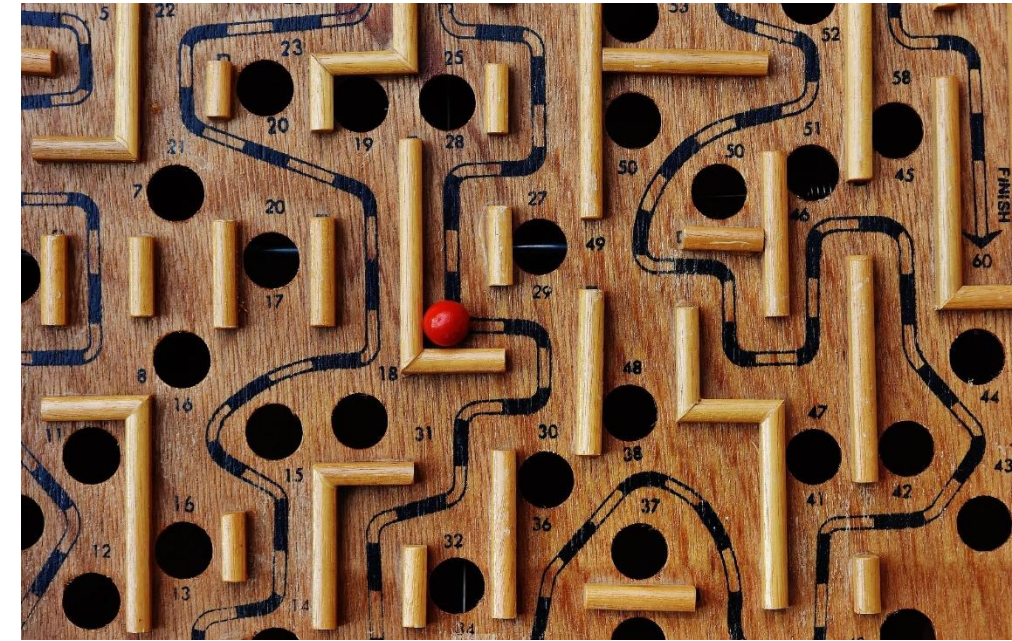


image by Alexas\_Fotos from Pixabay.jpg



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# How get professionals prepared for their job

**own PhD experience**  
**special workshops**  
**Work** exchanging good practices **scholarly literature**  
**experience**  
attending conferences  
team work **additional training**  
**networking with peers**

based on a survey undertaken during the last PRIDE Annual Conference 2022



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# Whom are professionals supporting

external stakeholder  
research manager  
policy maker  
university management  
PIs  
Postdocs  
Supervisors  
admin staff  
heads of schools  
PhD candidates  
programme coordinators

based on a survey undertaken during the last PRIDE Annual Conference 2022



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# What consider professionals as critical



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# Why do PhD candidates not complete in time or complete at all?

- ***Institutional or environmental factors***, e.g. departmental research climate or facilities available to the project;
- ***The nature and quality of supervision***, e.g. entailing both the frequency of meetings, intensity of guidance;
- ***The nature of the PhD project***, e.g. too large or too risky, combined with lack of planning skills;
- ***Characteristics of the PhD candidate***, e.g. age, having children or other obligations, funding, ...plus certain personality traits such as patience, a willingness to work hard, motivation and self-confidence.



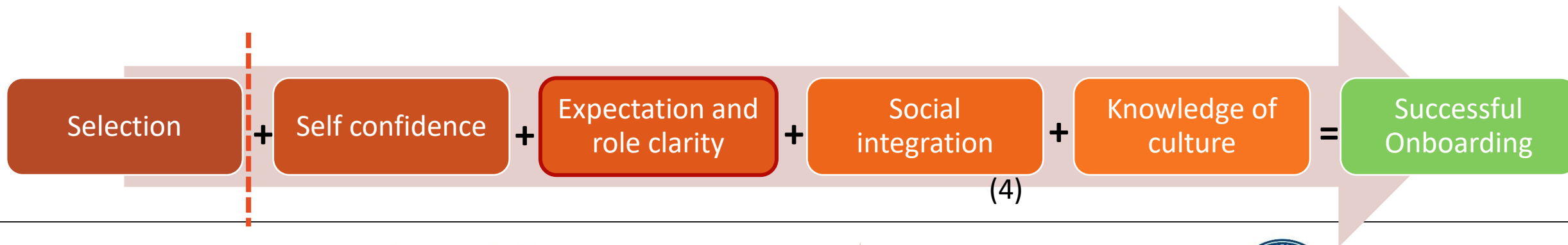
# Do we have the right assumptions?

- *PhD candidates are familiar with the nature of research.*
- *PhD candidates are well prepared to develop a (reasonable) PhD proposal.*
- *PhD candidates know how to plan and manage a complex project and beyond.*
- *PhD candidates are familiar with the local academic culture.*

# What can we do better: improve onboarding

## Organizing a full range onboarding process

- **Compliance**
- **Clarification**
- **Culture**
- **Connection**



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# What can we do better: improve onboarding

## Organizing a full range onboarding process

### Examples of good practices

- **Step-by-step manuals** (KU Leuven): explaining all milestones & to do's for the PhD ([https://gbiomed.kuleuven.be/english/phd/PhD\\_Researchers/manuals.html](https://gbiomed.kuleuven.be/english/phd/PhD_Researchers/manuals.html))
- **Mandatory PhD Start-up course** (TU Delft Graduate School, shared by Linda van Klink, Manager of the University Graduate School ): explaining the roles and responsibilities as early stage researcher plus creating networking opportunity
- **Welcome days or introductory events** (U Vienna): a kind of crash course into the doctorate. e.g. <https://forschung.univie.ac.at/en/services/events-trainings/doctoral-candidates/welcome-days-for-phds/>

**Collaboration between centralized and decentralized units and an holistic strategy are key!**

# What can we do better: support the research proposal writing process

## Helping candidates with their dissertation proposal

Hans Sonneveld developed the **PhD Proposal Lab** format which covers:

- the development of a solid research design;
- individual research skills;
- the formulation of a research proposal;
- an introduction to research strategies and methods of data collection);
- teaching the participants how to manage themselves and the (potential) supervisor;
- teaching the participants to critically reflect on their own work and to assess the scientific quality of scholarly publications.

*“Learning to plan a proposal and subsequent thesis research will change their life.” (H.S.).*

# What can we do better: institutional research and data monitoring

## Increasing our organisational intelligence

Maresi Nerad emphasizes the importance of a “**campus-wide graduate division**” functioning as an **institutional research unit on doctoral matters**, i.e.

- to collect and analyze data such as admission figures, graduation figures, drop-out, possibly career trajectories, and
- to collect qualitative data, e.g. through exit surveys or satisfaction analyses;
- to increase overall understanding of the PhD population
- to support data-supported/evidence-based interventions.



# What can we do better: support the writing process

## Overcoming isolation in the writing process

- *Dissertation Writing Groups* as peer-to-peer exchange format on the research and writing process .  
<https://doktorat.univie.ac.at/en/phd-process/exchange-with-peers/dissertation-writing-groups/>
- *Dissertation Writing Camps or Retreats* provide fora for intensive, focused writing time in a calm and supportive environment. This includes peer exchange and support from professional writing coaches.

# Invitation to the PRIDE Master Class

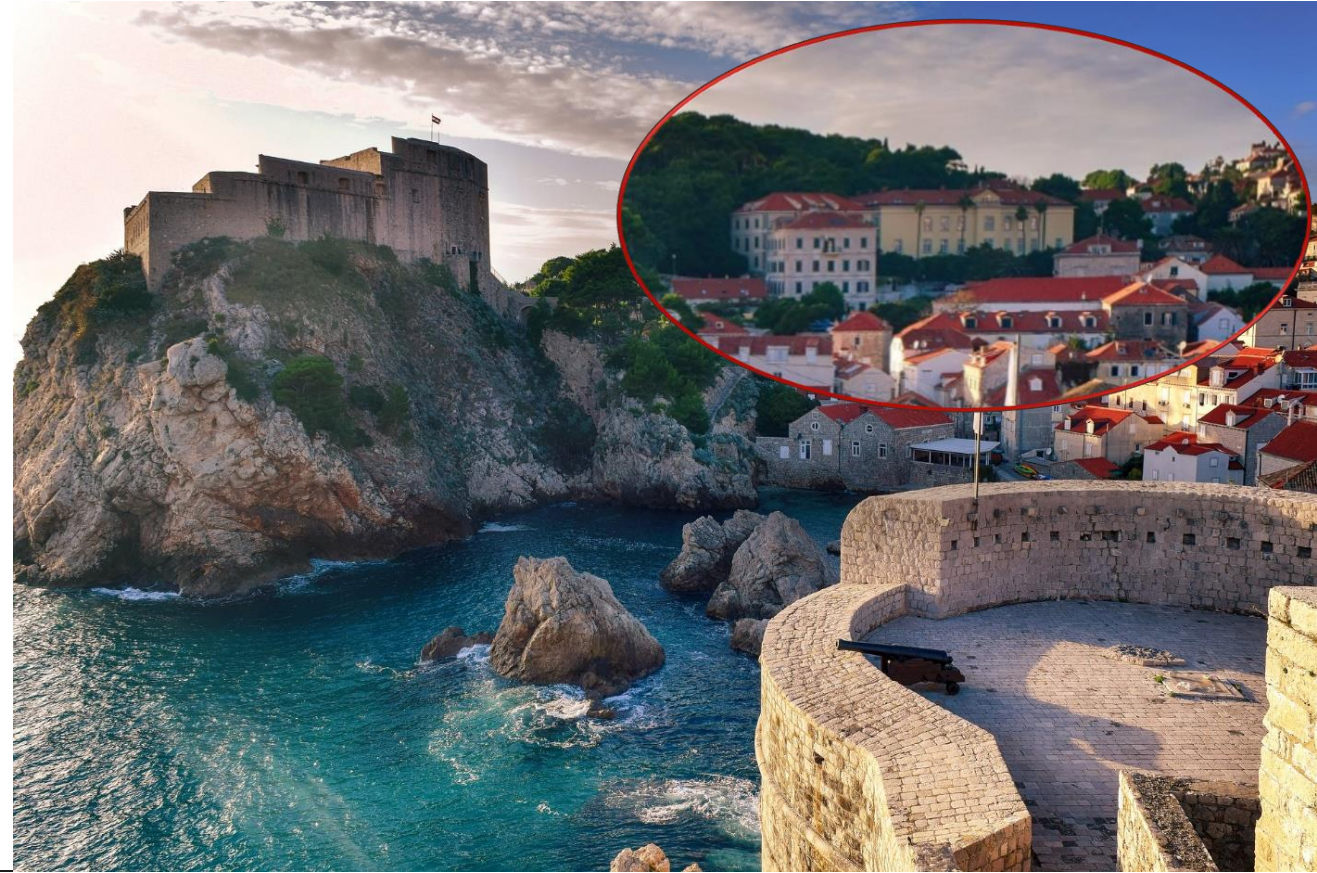
September 4 – 7, 2022  
in Dubrovnik, hosted by CAAS / University of Zagreb

"The first 100 days of the PhD journey"

A 4 days intensive workshop

*How to best support PhD candidates in the starting phase of their journey.*

**Target Group:** Professionals in Doctoral Education from PRIDE and non-PRIDE institutions, Vice-Rectors/Heads as well as Managers of Doctoral Schools/Programmes, Supervisors, HR Managers



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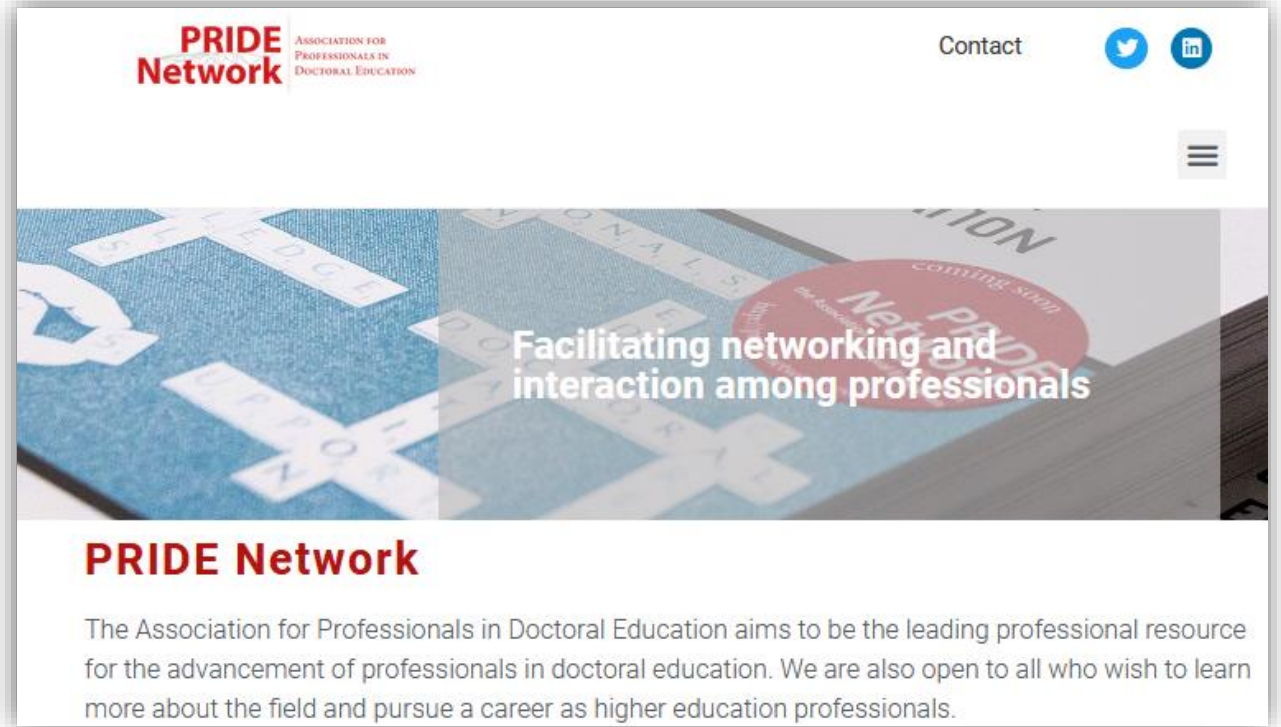
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<https://pride-network.eu/>



# Some useful references

- (1) van de Schoot R, Yerkes MA, Mouw JM, Sonneveld H (2013) What Took Them So Long? Explaining PhD Delays among Doctoral Candidates. PLoS ONE 8(7): e68839. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0068839>
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- (5) Sonneveld H (2022). *The Art of Writing a PhD Proposal*. Open University Press (will be published Sept. 2022)
- (6) Nerad, M., & Bai, Z. (2021). Is it time for a central campus office to ensure quality in doctoral education in the 21st century?. *The Future of Doctoral Research: Challenges and Opportunities*, 40-51.