

2025 EUA-CDE THEMATIC PEER GROUP “DOCTORAL SCHOOLS: BUILDING BRIDGES BEYOND ACADEMIA”

Call for participation

Deadline for application: 10 September 2024

Introduction

Thematic Peer Groups (TPGs) organised by the EUA Council for Doctoral Education (EUA-CDE) provide participating members with opportunities for mutual learning on selected topics. They contribute to a common knowledge base on doctoral education structures, policies and practices in Europe. EUA-CDE is launching a call for participation for the 2025 TPG ‘Doctoral schools: building bridges beyond academia’.

Objectives

The main objectives of TPGs are:

- Mutual learning: discussion and exploration of success factors and areas for improvement in doctoral education structures, policies and practices in Europe;
- Common knowledge base: contribution to a common knowledge base on doctoral education in Europe by identifying key lessons learnt on the selected topic.

Theme and expected outcomes

In recent decades, the role of universities has changed. In turn, this has led to collaboration with non-academic sectors becoming increasingly important, including at doctoral level.

Several studies have investigated this topic, exploring why strategic collaboration between the academic and non-academic world provides numerous benefits. Engaging with stakeholders across various sectors (government, business, social and cultural sector, non-profit, etc.) plays a pivotal role in each party's ability to disseminate scientific knowledge and to translate scientific results into practical applications for society. These mutual collaborations are also recognised as drivers for innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity. Moreover, collaborative efforts with non-academic organisations significantly contribute to broadening career opportunities for doctoral candidates given the growing demand for doctorate holders in knowledge-intensive sectors of the economy and other domains.

Notwithstanding the significant role that these partnerships play in doctoral education, academic bodies and non-academic partners often have different missions and divergent perspectives that can influence how they interact.

In addition, in some European countries, doctoral schools/programmes are progressively increasing interaction with non-academic sectors by means of elaborated, well-established schemes and approaches, while in other parts of the continent this interaction is still in its early stage with doctoral schools trying to initiate dialogue.

This complex and diverse landscape, combined with the associated challenges, raises the need to explore the various approaches and forms of collaboration implemented across Europe and to exchange good practices and new initiatives related to this topic.

To contribute to the ongoing debate concerning doctoral schools' interaction with stakeholders beyond academia, the 2025 EUA-CDE Thematic Peer Group will provide insight into the state of play of these collaborative efforts, reflect on the nature of the challenges inherent in partnering with the non-academic sectors and the strategies to mitigate these obstacles. This TPG will take stock of the many forms of interaction with non-academic sectors, exploring the existing types of and most common collaborative approaches for doctoral schools. As there is always room for improvement when it comes to forging partnerships with non-academic organisations, attention will also be devoted to the formulation of recommendations on how to optimise these partnerships. Lastly, the members of this working group will have the opportunity to share good practices, lessons learnt and institutional experiences, drawing upon their expertise on the topic.

The TPG will reflect on the following aspects:

1. What does collaboration with non-academic sectors actually mean?
2. What are the drivers and main factors for collaboration when partnering with non-academic sectors?
3. Are there preferred non-academic sectors and/or types of organisation for doctoral schools to develop collaborations with?
4. What are the key issues/barriers faced by doctoral schools in these interactions and how can they reduce and address these?
5. Are there forms of partnerships that work better than others? What sets them apart?
6. How can universities best interact with non-academic sectors in the area of doctoral education without losing sight of core values?
7. Does intersectoral mobility with non-academic stakeholders influence doctorate holders' future employability?
8. How can university structures, strategies and practices be further improved to ensure fruitful collaborative partnerships with non-academic organisations ?

Based on mutual learning and exchange during the meetings, the TPG is expected to result in a report outlining the main takeaways.

Activities and timeline

The first TPG meeting will take place in late autumn 2024. Participants will meet approximately three times over the course of one year for full-day meetings. They are *requested* to participate in all of these activities.

The work of the TPG will be chaired by one representative of a participating university and coordinated by the EUA-CDE Secretariat.

Eligibility

EUA-CDE TPGs are open only to [EUA-CDE members](#). Each university should be represented by a Vice-Rector, Head of doctoral school or other person in a senior position with responsibilities or expertise in doctoral education. Universities are strongly encouraged to engage doctoral candidates or to consult them internally between meetings.

Selection criteria

The selection of participants will be primarily based on motivation and experience relevant to the proposed topic, as demonstrated by their application.

Participants will also be selected based on criteria including diversity of institutional and geographical backgrounds. Priority will also be given to applications coming from universities that have not yet participated in previous TPG editions, if needed.

Terms and conditions for participation

EUA-CDE members participate on a self-funded basis and are responsible for organising and covering their own travel and accommodation for the group's meetings. Catering (lunches, coffee breaks) during the meetings will be covered by EUA-CDE.

Universities interested in participating in the TPG are invited to fill-in the submission form below and send it to Ana-Maria Peneoasu at ana.maria.peneoasu@eua.eu by 10 September 2024 at the latest.

[2025 EUA-CDE Thematic Peer Group – submission form](#)

About EUA-CDE

EUA-CDE was launched in 2008 at the initiative of the European University Association, responding to a growing interest in doctoral education and research training in Europe. We are now the largest European network in this field, covering 39 countries and bringing together a community of academic leaders and professionals from over 280 universities awarding doctoral degrees and related institutions. For more information about EUA-CDE, please visit our website at <https://eua-cde.org>.