



Annual Event 2007

Meeting minutes (by Leo Nagelkerke & Peter Bossier)

WP2: PhD Curriculum Development and Assessment

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Present WP2 core members

NAME	INSTITUTION	COUNTRY
Antanas Kontautas	Klaipeda University	Lithuania
Arnaldo Marin	University of Murcia	Spain
Bianca Maria Poli	University of Florence	Italy
Ionnis Karakkassis	University of Crete	Greece
Leo Nagelkerke	Wageningen University	The Netherlands
Peter Bossier	University of Gent	Belgium
Suheyyla Karatas	Istanbul University	Turkey
Theodore Abatzopoulos	Aristotle University of Thessaloniki	Greece
Trevor Telfer	University of Stirling	UK
Yngvar Olsen	Norwegian University of Science and Technology	Norway

Thursday June 14th

1. Short introduction of the core members of WP2
2. Summary of the outcomes of the institutional and student questionnaires. Some outcomes were discussed further:
 - a. There is a strong development from a pure 'apprenticeship model' of PhD education toward **more structured PhD programmes**, including a taught phase of PhD courses.
 - b. Some PhD students formulate their project proposals themselves, others are given a worked-out proposal. This often depends on the funding agency's requirements for applications. All WP2 core members agree that the skill of writing a project proposal is very important. At a more general level the question is: **Which competences/skills do we want our PhD students to acquire?**
 - c. How should the supervision be organised? How is the progress of student projects monitored? This is very diverse and often related to national rules/regulations and therefore difficult to change. We agreed that we should focus on the **minimum standards for a PhD training**, not on the exact structures/mechanisms.
3. Valuation session.

The take-home messages from this session can be summarised as:

- a. There should be a **code of good practice** for the PhD courses. There is a request from the research institutes that their representatives are involved in such courses as advisers / lecturers.
- b. Industry representatives want to be consulted about their needs concerning **skills/competences of PhD** education. To our view this can be gained from the postdoc questionnaire which is being developed, because postdocs that have been working in industry for some time can be seen as representatives of their respective industry, especially if they have been working there for a prolonged time.
- c. It is of great importance that students are aware of the **wider context of their research**.

Friday June 15th

1. **Postdoc questionnaire**: Peter will draft a postdoc questionnaire that will be distributed to the core members of WP2 who will annotate before 22 June 2007.
2. Core members will distribute the **PhD questionnaire** further.
3. Peter, Leo and Trevor will contribute to the remaining **deliverables**: 1) document on the analysis and the need for change of the PhD third cycle in the AquaTNet domain in view of the Lisbon objective for integrating the ERA and EHEA and 2) document on the need (content and organisational structure) of new PhD courses in the AquaTNet domain.
4. Discussion points (see next section)

Discussion points

1. **What is the need of the industry / research institutes for post-docs in the AquaTNet domain?**

- a. The students claim rather straightforward opportunities (see questionnaire)
- b. Is it currently easy for post-doc to find a job in the AquaTNet domain

It is very difficult to quantify: we will depend on the results of the postdoc questionnaire.

2. What about a European PhD in the AquaTNet domain?

No need for a European PhD. It would decrease the diversity, which is a strong point in itself. Moreover, the practical problems are huge. However, there is a move towards a more structured PhD programme, often organised in PhD schools, which have mandatory PhD training programmes. In that light European PhD courses could play a very relevant role in this.

3. How can we stimulate PhD exchange through Leonardo?

Money is available, it is the trick to mobilise it!

4. PhD training programme is preferred by students:

- a. Should this become part of the mobility?

Preferably yes

- b. Is there money available to organise this?

Apparently yes, but not always easy to mobilise

- c. Do we need tuning on PhD training course (ECTS) to increase transparency and mutual recognition?

Yes, both the use of the ECTS system, and a recommended minimum size of 3 ECTS for a course. Tuning will be increasingly important to be able to make use of the European development of stimulating PhD training programmes

- d. What could be the elements of a minimum standard for a PhD at the “European level”?:

i. At least 1 publication in a peer-reviewed international journal (competence: to be able to communicate with the international scientific community + quality assurance: peer review)

ii. International jury (quality assurance: external evaluation)

iii. Thesis (partly) written in English (competence: to be able to communicate with the international scientific community)

iv. Thesis defended in English (competence: to be able to communicate with the international scientific community)

- e. PhD course issues

i. European courses are a good idea

ii. It would need some scheduling (can't be given at any time). Maybe organised as summer schools (e.g. through AquaTT).

iii. Peter will find out if there are alternative money sources for organising such summer schools

- iv. *There will always be a possibility for PhD students to follow MSc courses to fill in knowledge gaps. WP2 will focus of true post-master PhD courses, outside the MSc programme.*
- v. *All members will make an inventory of available PhD modules that are available in their institutions and if they are 'tuned' enough.*
- vi. *All members will make an inventory of courses that they think are needed for PhD training, such as:*
 - (1) *Generic skills trainings (communication, writing skills, socio-economic context of the research etc.)*
 - (2) *Technical generic courses, with a focus/ applications to the AquaTNet domain (e.g. statistics with a focus on fisheries analysis / aquaculture experimental setups; chain analysis from production to consumer; interdisciplinary approaches to the use of marine resources etc.)*
 - (3) *Specialised technical courses, provided by the partner institutes that can be of interest to students from other partner institutes (the 'core business', such as a course in recirculation systems).*
- f. Deliverables still to go:
 - i. Document on the analysis and the need for **change of the PhD third cycle in the AquaTNet domain** in view of the Lisbon objective for integrating the ERA and EHEA
 - ii. Document on the **need (content and organisational structure) of new PhD courses in the AquaTNet domain**
- g. The **PhD portal website** should be activated as soon as possible.