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Collaborative Doctoral Education – a Way Towards Enhanced Employability and Career Perspectives

Collaborative doctoral projects were defined as doctoral theses carried out essentially with interaction between a university, a company and a doctoral candidate. A distinctive characteristic is that industry experts take part in the supervisory committee, officially or informally. Industry can play several roles, but being in the supervisory committee is what effectively reflects the specific nature of the collaborative doctoral project. The study on which this definition was based, DOC-CAREERS project¹, involved more than thirty European Universities, thirty companies and eighteen other stakeholders. This concept is currently being validated by continued dialogue with universities and their external partners through a new project called DOC-CAREERS II².

Clear common patterns are emerging concerning the setting up of collaborative doctoral projects/programmes and issues related to the skills of doctoral holders valued in academic and non-academic doctoral careers. The evidence provided by the case studies submitted within DOC-CAREERS demonstrated that, despite the frequency with which some concerns are expressed, the concerns can all be overcome in an efficient manner with appropriate management processes and attitudes by all parties.

The presentation will outline i) essential components and success factors for collaborative doctoral programmes ii) different formulae of collaborative doctoral programmes, iii) how dialogue between university and industry on collaborative research is reaching a level of maturity in Europe that provides opportunities for effective action to promote durable relations between the academic and business worlds.

¹ "Collaborative Doctoral Education: University-Industry Partnerships for Enhancing Knowledge Exchange", DOC-CAREERS Project (funded by FP6), European University Association (2009);

<http://www.eua.be/eua-work-and-policy-area/research-and-innovation/doctoral-education/doc-careers/>

² DOC-CAREERS II Project (funded by FP7);

<http://www.eua.be/eua-work-and-policy-area/research-and-innovation/doctoral-education/doc-careers-ii/>