

Scandinavian Models for Graduate Schools and Research Schools

Gry Kibsgaard, MA, PhD Coordinator, University of Bergen

The organization of doctoral education in Scandinavia has gone through radical changes since the 1990s, moving towards a more structured education and changing the degree-structure from the old doctoral degrees dr. art, dr. scient, etc and to a PhD-degree system. At the same time the number of PhD-candidates has tripled. Doctoral education in Scandinavia has been organized in programmes for several decades. But the organization of doctoral education within the structure of research schools and graduate schools had its strongest development the last decade. Research schools in Scandinavia are organized additionally to the doctoral education system in general and as a structure and tool within doctoral education and research. Research schools in Scandinavia are not as much organized as administrative structures for disciplinary doctoral programmes, but are organized in close relation to research and the organization of research clusters within thematic or disciplinary research fields. Many different models exist. A research school could be a strong addition to a thematic interdisciplinary research environment based in one institution, as a model of a flagship research school.

However, the most common type of research schools we see in Scandinavia today are the network model research schools, which strengthen dispersed research environments on a national basis or Scandinavian basis. Nordic financial support for this is given by the Nordic Council of Ministers on an extremely competitive basis. National policies more and more support the organization of national research schools, and through different funding schemes influences strongly the trend of establishing network research schools. The presentation will offer a short introduction of doctoral education and the concepts of research/graduates schools and present different models of research schools through case presentations from Scandinavia.