

## **Quality assurance of the doctoral education at the University of Bergen**

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My speech focuses on the structure of doctoral studies in Norway and at the University of Bergen (UiB). It includes the institutional policy of UiB and the status and evaluation of our doctoral education. Further, some performance indicators are presented. These are completion rates, time to degree and drop out rates, which are also compared with indicators from other countries. Challenges and status of the doctoral education at UiB are covered, as also are aspects of the plan that was developed to improve the doctoral education in Bergen.

Norway has offered structural doctoral education since around 1990; first in mathematics and natural sciences, but more recently this has become the national standard in all disciplines. Providing structure that involves funding, training and supervision means that a doctoral degree in Norway now has become more a start of a career, and less a life project that ends up with a degree late in life - although social sciences and humanities still appear to keep more of the life-project approach.

In Norway there are National regulations. At all universities the doctoral programmes are organised at the faculty (school) levels. The PhD-students are funded for 3 years, or 4 years for university fellowships including 25% duties as teaching assistants. The length of a doctoral study consists of 2.5 years of original research work and 0.5 years of course work. The quality assurance of entrance is through open competition for PhD-fellowships (salary and research expenses), followed by evaluation of applicants based on the quality of their two-year research master degree and other academic qualifications.

The University of Bergen aims at developing strong research environments to meet society's demand for highly qualified employees. UiB as a research university depends on a high quality doctoral education and an international profile. UiB has institutional regulations, but the faculties are the organising units. PhD-students are members of active research groups and/or research schools providing international academic networks. PhD-students are offered one main supervisor and co-supervisor(s). Most of our PhD-programmes are disciplinary, but UiB provides also interdisciplinary and transferrable skills training. The thesis is quality assured by peer-reviewed papers which are submitted to international journals during the study (typical in natural sciences and health sciences), or by reviewed monographs which are written at the end of the study (such as in humanities and social sciences). The evaluation committee for the defence includes member(s) from abroad allowing evaluation according to international standards. The committee provides a written report and its members also act as opponents at the defence which is in public.