

# Graduate trajectories: a view from researchers

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# What to expect from the workshop?

The workshop aims to contribute to research-based development of doctoral education by

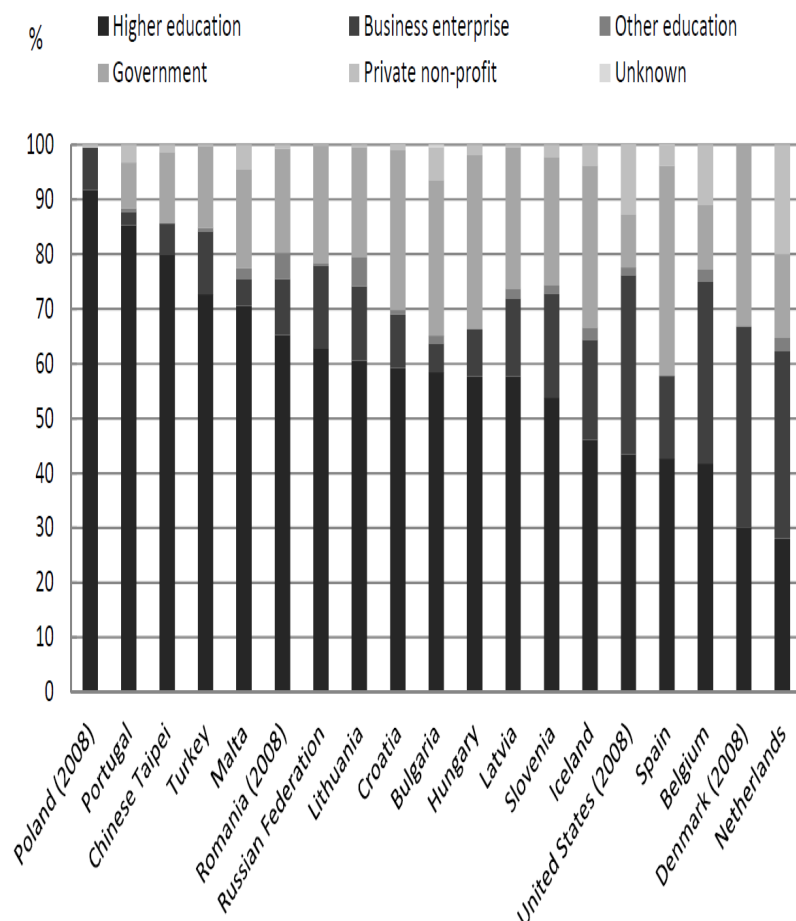
- I. Starting point:* small group discussions on career trajectories.
- II. Research perspective:* evidence that informs our understanding of Post-PhD trajectories
- III. Strategies for enhancing PhD trajectories:* small group discussions
- IV. Plenary*

# Starting point: Question 1

- What do you know about Post PhD career trajectories at your universities? **Time 7 min.**

# Post PhD Careers (OECD, 2013)

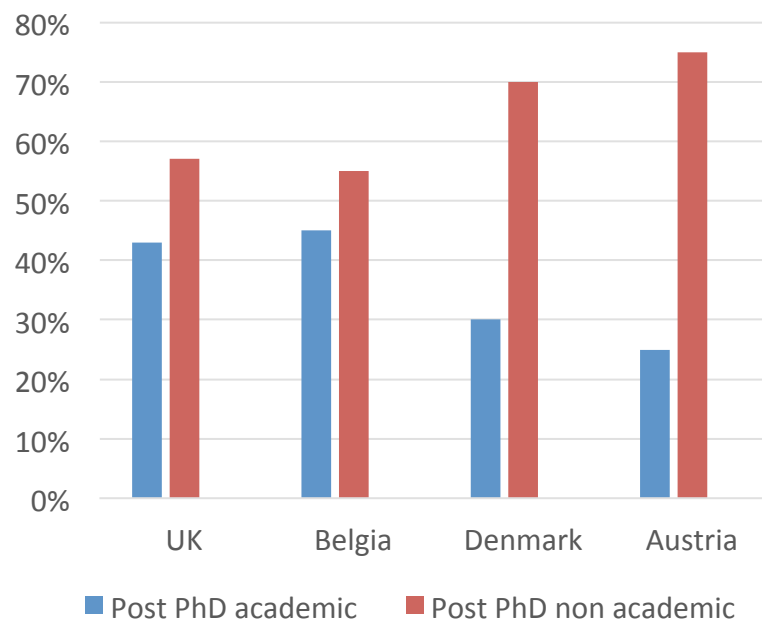
## PhD degree holders by the sector of employment



## Post PhD employment academic versus non academic posts

Around 60% in many countries are Post-PhD employed doing research

Unemployment rates are generally low 2,2%<



# Changes in the PhD over 20 years

## Previous perspective

Purpose:  
prepare  
'faculty'

- Limited # of students
- Worked relatively independently
- Time to develop academic profile
- Got position quickly
- Little government/institutional oversight

## Present perspective

Purposes:  
prepare  
researchers/  
non-  
researchers  
for society

- More & varied student body
- More formal training
- Less time overall & to develop academic profile
- Difficult to get 'faculty' position
- Know little of where students go/what they do
- Government/institutional oversight
- Changing doctoral structures

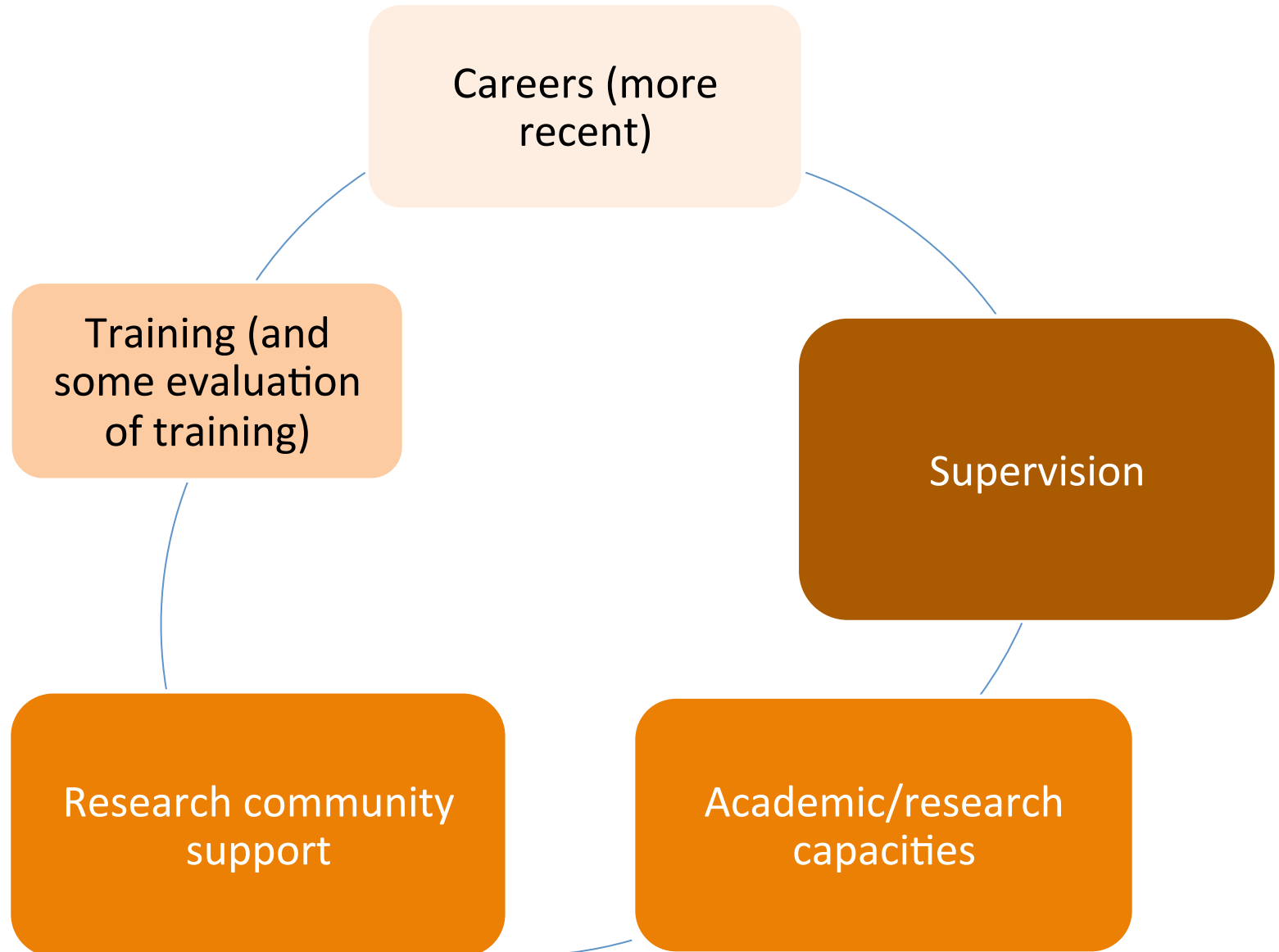
# Doing more (often with less)...

- As senior administrators, developers and program managers, difficulty of changing policies and actual practices; challenged to
  - Create policies that will have the potential to change practices
  - Find/train human resources to support coherent practice and policies
  - Create rewards for supporting change

## Starting point: Question 2

- What is happening *during the degree* that is influencing Post-PhD career trajectories at your universities? **Time 7 min.**
- Summary of main group ideas and plenary discussion

# Themes of research



# What affects careers and trajectories: Supervision

## Promote

- Frequent supervision
- Shared expectations (goals, relationship, resources, etc.)
- Constructive feedback and support
- More than one supervisor



- Lower attrition risk
- Timely completion
- Satisfaction with studies and supervision
- Research engagement
- Reduced burnout
- Research productivity

## Hinder

- Lack of supervision
- Problems in supervisory relationship
- Lack of support in academic writing



- Attrition
- Prolonged studies
- Reduced satisfaction
- Reduced interest in research
- Increased risk of burnout
- Reduced productivity

# What affects careers and trajectories: Research community support

## Promote

- Sense of belonging
- Integration into the researcher groups/communities
- Having extensive networks
- Social support from researcher community



- International experience
- immediate employment
- Research engagement
- Timely completion
- Reduced risk of burnout and attrition
- Research productivity
- More frequent supervision
- Satisfaction with doctoral experience
- Ethical code of conduct

## Hinder

- Being outsider (International at risk )
- Lack of networks and social support
- Not understanding value of networks or developing them
- Frictions in research community
- Values and ethical discrepancy



- Increased risk of burnout
- Reduced satisfaction and engagement
- Attrition
- Prolonged studies
- Reduced research productivity
- Lack of interest
- Ethical misconduct

# What affects careers and trajectories: What we know about careers

Promote	Hinder
Departments can make a difference in students career thinking Teacher preparation, besides being beneficial for research, makes students more competitive for future careers	Students put off career thinking and lack knowledge Students consistently report career preparation lacking
PhD skills have relevance in the non-academic arena	Students may not want academic careers Supervisors encourage faculty positions, not non-academic careers
Students on external internships find them productive and see new non-academic career options	Students unable to assess the fit between PhD skills and non-academic positions

# Group work (20 minutes)

- Choose one theme and think what should or might be done at the two levels:
  - Training
  - Policy: Institutional (country) rules, practices and guidelines
- Each group will report one recommendation (please choose a reporter)

# What we would do

- Change process
  - Create robust career tracking and use to develop formal and informal career planning opportunities
  - Consult, consult program/ departmental use and progress on new policies/ practices
  - Disseminate results and ‘reward’ robust practices
- Changes in doctoral programs: is your program “fit for purpose”?
  - Tweak admissions processes to engage applicants to consider career opportunities
  - Introduce external internship of some kind
  - Rethink role of theses and publication to ensure students have opportunities to become active agents of their future communities (academic and non-academic)
  - Rethink the value of single supervision and expand it (institutionally, disciplinary, etc.)
- Evidence-based decision-making
  - Consider whether empirical evidence can inform the process
  - Try to connect with researchers in the field in order to link policy and practice to research
  - When possible consider the use of more research-driven instruments

# Thank you!

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Joint project:  
<http://www.fins-riess.com>