



**crus.ch**

Rektorenkonferenz der Schweizer Universitäten  
Conférence des Recteurs des Universités Suisses  
Conferenza dei Rettori delle Università Svizzere  
Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities

Secretariat of the Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities CRUS

## **Recruitment and selection of students from abroad for the doctorate**

**Experiences of selected countries**

„Doctorate“-team of the CRUS-Secretariat

Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities (CRUS)  
Postfach 607  
3000 Bern 9

Tel: +41 31 306 60 36

Fax: +41 31 306 60 50

[www.crus.ch](http://www.crus.ch)

Berne, January 2011

## Table of contents

Introduction .....	4
The doctorate in the selected countries.....	5
1. Access to the doctorate .....	6
2. Doctoral candidates from abroad .....	7
3. Admission to the doctorate .....	9
4. Admission to the doctorate for students from abroad.....	10
5. Recognition of the diploma .....	11
6. What happens after candidates have been selected (welcome)? .....	12
7. Traditional doctorate and graduate / research schools .....	13
8. Examples.....	13
Conclusion .....	15
Respondents .....	17
Materials .....	17
Abbreviations.....	19
Annex I: Recruitment and selection of students from abroad for the doctorate – Example of Switzerland .....	20

## **Recruitment and selection of students from abroad for the doctorate Experiences of selected countries**

### **Introduction**

The doctorate is a main priority at the Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities (CRUS). Among other activities concerning PhD studies, CRUS deals with the issue of recruitment and selection of students from abroad for the doctorate.

Swiss universities are in agreement about the requirements for the doctorate which "has been designed on the basis of university Master studies", as set down in the Joint Position Paper by the Swiss Universities on the Doctorate. At the same time, admission lies in the responsibility of the autonomous universities. As a consequence, the admission procedure may differ according to institution and discipline, but also according to whether the doctorate is organised within the framework of a structured programme or as a traditional programme.<sup>1</sup>

As internationalisation of studies increases, universities are faced with a pool of candidates for doctoral studies that has grown more and more diverse and, as a result, with the necessity of considering a variety of factors when selecting their students. Evaluating and comparing candidates for the doctorate is challenging, especially if students are not from partner institutions but from institutions that are unknown to the future host institution (see chapter 4 of the Joint Position Paper on the Doctorate).<sup>2</sup> At the same time, translating their declared international focus into a coherent recruitment strategy at the doctoral level may be difficult for higher education institutions in cases where recruitment and selection are organised traditionally, that is, based on personal contacts of the institutions' staff.

As an EUA workshop report (2007) reveals, these and similar questions do not only concern Swiss universities but institutions throughout Europe. The secretariat of the Swiss Rectors' Conference under the supervision of the CRUS Research Delegation conducted a survey among selected rectors' conferences in order to discover how the issues of access and admission are organised in other countries. The survey results were complemented by information available on the Internet.

The conferences of the following countries:

- Germany
- France
- the Netherlands
- the United Kingdom

were asked to reply to questions concerning:

---

<sup>1</sup> „The doctorate has been designed on the basis of university Master studies. In case of proven scientific qualifications, access is also possible with a Master's degree from other types of higher education institutions" (CRUS 2009).

<sup>2</sup> „Swiss universities endeavour to engage promising students from Switzerland and abroad for the doctorate. Future doctoral candidates are identified already at the Bachelor and Master's level and qualified students are at the same time recruited from other universities in Switzerland and abroad. Recruiting students from abroad remains a particularly challenging task. Appropriate marketing measures and admission requirements for the doctoral degree lie within the jurisdiction of the individual universities. Nonetheless, Swiss universities have a shared interest to enhance the visibility and appeal of Swiss institutes of higher learning and research (how can we acquire the best students?) and to guarantee the quality of recruiting methods (how do we evaluate and compare students, particularly when they are not from partner institutes?)" (CRUS 2009).

- access to doctoral studies: regulations, requirements (Q1) as well as any additional requirements for candidates from abroad (Q2);
- admission to the doctorate: persons/organs responsible, instruments used to assess candidates' ability/potential (Q3) as well as differences, if any, between the admission of domestic students and students from abroad (Q4);
- recognition of the diploma qualifying its holder for doctoral studies: who and how (Q5);
- information on what happens after candidates have been selected (Q6);
- the role of the traditional doctorate and graduate/research schools with regard to international recruitment and assessment of candidates from abroad (Q7).

We also asked our respondents to give examples of institutions/schools that are internationally visible and attract foreign students for the doctorate (Q8) and invited them to include any further comments (Q9).

In the following report, our respondents' answers as well as complementary information gathered on the Internet are presented question by question. For a better understanding of these answers, we will start by briefly presenting some characteristics of PhD studies in the selected countries. Before doing so, however, we would like to thank our respondents for the time and care they dedicated to replying to our survey.

### **The doctorate in the selected countries<sup>3</sup>:**

Since the introduction of the relevant national regulation in 2006, doctoral education in **France** has been organised within doctoral schools, the so-called *écoles doctorales*. Each doctoral school is affiliated to one or several universities or institutions, including at least one public institution.

Similarly, PhD students in the **Netherlands** are part of a graduate school or research school. Whereas in research schools, multiple research universities and research institutes join forces and knowledge, graduate schools are organisations within universities.

The situation in **Germany** is different. The PhD, done within the framework of a research-based project, either constitutes an individual work (*Individualpromotion*) or is integrated in a so-called structured programme, for example in a *Graduiertenkolleg*. Our respondent from Germany observes that Germany explicitly refrains from organising the doctorate within the framework of a study programme.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> According to information from our respondents and/or information gathered on the Internet. See the appendix for a list of materials used.

<sup>4</sup> The situation is described as follows by our German respondent: „In Deutschland setzt eine Promotion einen eigenständigen Forschungsbeitrag voraus, der in einer Dissertation vorgelegt wird. Diese kann innerhalb oder außerhalb der Universität (z.B. in Instituten der großen Forschungsorganisationen) verfasst werden; das Promotionsrecht verbleibt indes stets bei der Universität. Um einer Isolierung der Doktoranden entgegen zu wirken, soll nach allgemeiner Überzeugung die Betreuung und Ausbildung der Doktoranden möglichst im Rahmen eines strukturierten Programms erfolgen, z.B. in einem Graduiertenkolleg oder einer Graduiertenschule. Die strukturierenden bzw. curricularen Elemente richten sich nach den Gepflogenheiten der Fachkulturen und liegen in der Autonomie der einzelnen Fakultäten bzw. Universitäten. Die HRK unterstützt die Entwicklung hin zu einem flächendeckenden Angebot strukturierter Promotionsprogramme, wodurch überdies die Anzahl der Doktoranden besser erfasst werden kann; denn bei der Individualpromotion – seien sie über Stipendien oder Stellen (häufig in den Ingenieurwissenschaften) finanziert – erfolgt die Anmeldung zur Promotion erst mit Abgabe der Dissertation. Die Doktorandenausbildung wird allgemein als erste Stufe der Forschungsausbildung gesehen, nicht als dritte Stufe des Studiums, und allgemein wird vor einer Verschulung der Doktorandenausbildung gewarnt. Gleichwohl sprechen einige Fakultäten von einem

Finally, in the **UK**, graduate schools are now the dominant model for the delivery of graduate education, with huge variations in resources, facilities and responsibilities in the institutions. Most institutions of higher education now have at least one graduate school, the institution-wide graduate school being the predominant model.<sup>5</sup>

### 1. Access to the doctorate:

- Are there regulations/recommendations at a national level for granting access to doctoral studies? Does admission lie in the responsibility of individual universities?
- What requirements apply?

Generally speaking, the main requirement to study at the doctoral level is a recognised Master's degree. Existing regulations are more or less detailed on this point as well as on other conditions that might apply.

Both in France and in the Netherlands there are national regulations that set down the requirements for the doctorate. The regulations in France concern doctoral schools (*Arrêté du 7 août 2006 relatif à la formation doctorale*)<sup>6</sup> and those in the Netherlands address higher education and scientific research in general (the Dutch Higher Education and Scientific Research Act, *Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek*).<sup>7</sup> According to these legal documents, candidates must hold a Master's degree or equivalent to be admitted to the doctorate; French regulations require a national Master's degree or the equivalent. In addition, both documents stress the need for candidates' capacity to perform research (in France, candidates must have completed a course of education demonstrating their ability to do research; in the Netherlands, candidates must have written a thesis or developed a design as proof of their ability to conduct research). The Dutch text further refers to doctorate regulations elaborated by the Board for Doctorates of the institution which must be respected when assessing potential candidates.

In Germany, where the *Länder* are in charge of matters of higher education, the corresponding ministries have developed a resolution concerning access to doctoral

---

'Promotionsstudium', wenn der curriculare Anteil im Einzelfall hoch ist. Für die Medizin gelten in der Regel besondere Rahmenbedingungen."

<sup>5</sup> Results of a survey conducted in 2009 by the UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE 2010: 7): At least one graduate school: 76% of responding HEI; institution-wide graduate school: 63% and 89% respectively for the established (pre) and new (post 1992) higher education institutions.

<sup>6</sup> „Pour être inscrit au doctorat, le candidat doit être titulaire d'un diplôme national de master ou d'un autre diplôme confèrent le grade de master, à l'issue d'un parcours de formation établissant son aptitude à la recherche“ (art. 14 of the *arrêté* 2006).

<sup>7</sup> Art. 7.18 states that admission to the doctorate „shall be granted to any person who:  
a. has been granted a Master's degree in accordance with Article 7.10a, section 1,2 or 3;  
b. has written a thesis or developed a design, as demonstration of his ability to carry out independent academic research and,  
c. meets all the remaining requirements specified in Article 7.19 of the Act“.

Art. 19 stipulates that „The Board for Doctorates shall establish Doctorate Regulations which have due regard for everything for which conditions have been laid down in this Act“ (Higher Education Act 2010).

studies (*Kultusministerkonferenz-Beschluss vom 14.04.2000*).<sup>8</sup> As in the Netherlands, this resolution stipulates that the institutions establish *Promotionsordnungen*, i.e., regulations on the doctorate. As our respondent from Germany specifies, admission to the doctorate generally requires a programme of study lasting a minimum of eight semesters – generally in the same discipline as that of the planned doctorate – leading to a diploma, a Magister, a Master's or other degree (for example, the *Staatsexamen*, i.e., the German state examination).<sup>9</sup> Finally, as in the Netherlands and in France, the resolution requires a Master's degree (or equivalent) acquired at a university or at a university of applied sciences.

The main requirements for access to the doctorate are similar for all three countries: a Masters' degree or the equivalent thereof. At times, however, holders of a Bachelor's degree may also be granted access. This possibility is explicitly named in the German ministers' resolution (KMK 2000)<sup>10</sup>; however, it seems that in practice this possibility is also given in the Netherlands and France. In the UK, too, – the only country where there seem to be no regulations on a supra-institutional level (i.e., national or federal) – it is quite common for Bachelor's graduates to be admitted to doctoral programmes.

Whatever the kind of regulations regarding access, respondents from all countries stress the fact that the responsibility for admission ultimately lies with the institute of higher education itself (the department, school or programme). Moreover, in all countries surveyed, further requirements may apply, for example, a minimal grade point average or, in certain disciplines, proof of language skills (e.g., Latin, Hebrew). In some cases, examinations may have to be taken. For example, in the UK, programmes might have specific requirements in terms of degree results and background knowledge. Furthermore, there are specific requirements attached to certain funded programmes.<sup>11</sup>

## 2. Doctoral candidates from abroad: Are there any further requirements to be met (apart from visa stipulations)?

As set down above, access to the doctorate in France is granted to holders of a national Master's degree or the equivalent thereof. However, the *arrêté* goes on to state that an institute's director can, upon recommendation from the doctoral school, grant an exception to students from abroad who have studied at the equivalent of the Master's level.<sup>12</sup> In practice, as our respondent from France observes, no difference is made between the admission of foreigners and domestic students.

---

<sup>8</sup> „Inhaber von Master- oder Magistergraden, die an Universitäten oder an Fachhochschulen nach § 19 HRG oder im Ausland erworben wurden, sind insoweit den Inhabern von Diplom- oder Magistergraden, die nach § 18 Abs. 1 erworben wurden, gleichgestellt. Die Universitäten regeln den Promotionszugang in ihren Promotionsordnungen“ (art. 1 of the KMK-decision 2000).

<sup>9</sup> See footnote 8; this requirement is common practice.

<sup>10</sup> „Auch für Inhaberinnen und Inhaber eines Bachelorabschlusses besteht in besonderen Fällen die Möglichkeit des Zugangs zur Promotion. Im Einzelfall müssen Eignungsfeststellungsverfahren durchlaufen werden“ (art. 2 of the KMK-resolution). See also Q2.

<sup>11</sup> As our UK respondent states, „for example, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) requires that candidates have or are prepared to undertake ESRC recognised research training in order to take up an ESRC-funded PhD position.“

<sup>12</sup> „...le chef d'établissement peut, par dérogation et sur proposition du conseil de l'école doctorale, inscrire en doctorat des étudiants ayant effectué des études d'un niveau équivalent.“ (art. 14 of the *arrêté* 2006).

Equally, in Germany as well as in the UK, foreign candidates on general principle must meet no further requirements to be granted access to the doctorate, although individual institutions may specify particular requirements. Candidates with a foreign degree wishing to earn a doctorate at a German institution of higher education may have to prove that their degree enables them to directly pursue doctoral studies in their country of origin and that their qualifying degree is equivalent to a German degree of higher education (university diploma, Magister, Master's degree) or to the German state examination. Likewise, institutions in the UK often require certificates proving a qualification's equivalency to a UK qualification as well as proof of funding. In Germany, some universities carry out recognition checks (so-called *Anerkennungsprüfung*).

Interestingly, the KMK resolution on access to the doctorate (KMK 2002) mentioned in Q1 underlines the principle of equal treatment of holders of domestic and foreign degrees. Furthermore, the senate of the German rectors' conference issued recommendations for promoting the mobility of students and graduates within the framework of the Bologna process. According to these recommendations, institutions of higher education should develop fair and transparent criteria for assessing and selecting foreign candidates for a Master's degree or a doctorate.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, the doctoral board in Germany (*Promotionsausschuss*) can establish further requirements for admission for PhD candidates with a foreign degree in the form of further studies or examinations in relevant disciplines. In some cases in the Netherlands, students from non-western countries may be asked to first pass the Master's phase before being admitted to doctoral studies.

Mastery of the local language may be important. In Germany, as a general rule, candidates must demonstrate proficiency in German or, in some cases, in English if the lingua franca is English – which is frequently the case in structured programmes. Equally, most universities in the UK require international students to take the IELTS (International English Language Test) administered by the British Council (or, alternatively, TOEFL). British institutions may waive the IELTS in the event that they are persuaded of proficiency in English. In the Netherlands, too, a certain level of English may be required.

Our respondent from the UK states that, in some cases, candidates must be UK/EU nationals due to the nature of a particular funding. He further observes that requirements for doctoral programmes in the UK vary for international (overseas) students regarding funding, admission, entry requirements, programme structures and general support.

---

<sup>13</sup> „Die Hochschulen sollten faire und transparente Kriterien und Verfahren für die Auswahl und die Einstufung ausländischer Masterkandidaten und Promotionsbewerber entwickeln; insbesondere sollte, ebenso wie für deutsche Bewerber, für höchstqualifizierte Bachelor-Absolventen ein Zugang auch ohne vorherigen Masterabschluss (ggf. nach Absolvierung eines entsprechenden „propädeutischen“ Jahres) eröffnet werden, wie das in den USA und in manchen anderen Ländern üblich ist.“ (HRK 2005: 1, b). In addition, the following regulations apply for candidates with a foreign degree: bilateral equivalency agreements / bilateral agreements concluded by the ministers' conference in charge (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) and the rectors' conference and the Lisbon *Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region*.



**3. Admission to the doctorate** (formal assessment of the candidacy and assessment regarding content): Please outline a prototypical admission or – in case of major differences between institutions or disciplines – give some examples and/or present main trends.

- Please name the **persons/organs** responsible for admission (e.g., registration services, professors/future supervisors, committees)
- Please name the **instruments used to assess the candidates' ability/potential** (e.g., a written application, letters of motivation, references, interviews by phone, spot interviews or interviews at the future host university, workshops, tests)?

In the Netherlands, universities grant access to PhD studies based on vacancies. PhD students either receive a salary and benefits (contract with the university) or a grant, possibly from abroad. Both types of positions are advertised and selection is done on the basis of the candidate's CV, a letter of motivation plus, possibly, an interview. Professors and future supervisors play a large role and are primarily responsible for the decision. The registration office only comes in once the selection procedure has been finished.

In France, the persons responsible are set down in the *arrêté* (2006). Typically, the future supervisor suggests a doctoral candidate to the director of the doctoral school and to the head of laboratory or the research group concerned. The doctoral school's advisory board (*conseil de l'école doctorale*) then takes the decision.<sup>14</sup> Admission generally happens *sur dossier*. Other instruments are only seldom used, even for foreign candidates.

In Germany, the university departments (*Fakultäten, Fachbereiche*) are largely autonomous regarding the doctorate. Therefore, the decision on candidates' admission rests with the department which, in turn, consults the regulations on the doctorate (*Promotionsordnung*) to determine whether or not the conditions for a successful completion of the PhD have been met. As there are basically two ways to obtain a PhD degree (*Individualpromotion* and a PhD within the framework of a structured programme), two prototypes can be sketched out:

- In the case of a PhD carried out as an individual work, the doctoral candidate first looks for a supervisor. He or she only applies for admission to the PhD with the faculty at the end of the process, which does not necessarily have to be at the beginning of the dissertation phase<sup>15</sup>;
- In the case of structured doctoral programmes, the candidate does not have to look for a supervisor as he or she will be part of a research team. Candidates apply with the coordinator of the programme or school. As admission to the programme is generally linked to a grant, high standards must be met, meaning that there may be further admission requirements. As in the case of the PhD as an individual work, candidates apply for admission to the PhD programme with the faculty concerned.

---

<sup>14</sup> The *arrêté* (2006) describes the procedures as follows : „L'inscription au doctorat est prononcée par le chef d'établissement sur proposition du directeur de l'école doctorale après avis du directeur de thèse et du directeur de l'unité de recherche (...)” (art. 14).

<sup>15</sup> Description according to our German respondent: “Suche einer Betreuungsperson und evtl. schriftliche Betreuungszusage (Betreuungsperson); 2. Anerkennung des Abschlusses (Bachelor/im Ausland erworbener Abschluss) bzw. Anerkennungsprüfung (Fakultät); 3. Gegebenenfalls Einschreibung an der Universität (Immatrikulationsbüro); 4. Antrag auf Zulassung zur Promotion (Fakultät). Dieser Antrag muss nicht immer zu Beginn der Dissertationsphase gestellt werden.”

The instruments used to assess a candidate's aptitude for a PhD include: a detailed recommendation and interviews on a candidate's aptitude, telephone interviews, motivation letters, an outline of the thesis project, brief scholarly papers.

In the UK, too, the individual departments are responsible for determining admission to doctoral studies. At the same time, there are a number of norms in the admission process common to most institutions. Most universities will require the submission of a standard application form, including a personal statement in which potential candidates are asked to explain in detail why they are interested in undertaking doctoral studies at a particular institution. As our respondent states, it is common for application forms to include a section requesting the potential candidate to supply either references or details on referees. If a candidate is applying to undertake a research project with no predetermined general programme of research, it is likely that he or she will be expected to submit a research proposal detailing information such as a proposed title, background context and proposed research methodology. Shortlisted candidates are normally invited for an interview. In most circumstances, the persons responsible for interviewing and subsequent admission are the future supervisors. As in other countries, decisions regarding choice of candidates are led by future supervisors and dealt with inside the department concerned, whereas the technical aspects of the admission process tend to be handled by central admission offices within the university.

**4. Admission to the doctorate for students from abroad:** Are there any differences compared with the admission of domestic students (apart from visa stipulations)?

There seem to be no essential differences between admission procedures for foreign and domestic students in all countries examined (apart from demonstrating language skills, see Q2 above) – at least not in principle. However, our respondent from Germany points out that the admission process for foreign nationals may take somewhat longer, especially if the future host institution does not know the university that issued the qualifying degree. In the UK, sponsorship students must submit a formal sponsorship letter from an employer or embassy to the International Office of their chosen university. All new international students must pay a deposit before an unconditional offer and Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) will be issued.

Admission to structured programmes is based on interviews and assessments. If there are many candidates from one and the same region, schools may conduct interviews or even workshops in the country of origin of candidates (spot interviews). This is the case for some German universities that sometimes work with partner institutions abroad who conduct interviews on their behalf.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, our respondent from the Netherlands observes that a position may be created within a university department for foreign grantees (i.e, holders of a grant from his or her country). This means that selection does not occur on the basis of true competition. As our respondent further observes, supervisors frequently wish to speak with candidates who then may have to pass exams or pursue other coursework.

---

<sup>16</sup> As an example of one particular institution's approach to admission requirements for international graduate studies, our respondent from the UK mentions the London School of Economics: <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/study/informationForInternationalStudents/internationalPGEntranceRequirements.aspx>

**5. Recognition of the diploma** entitling its holder to pursue doctoral studies (especially if the diploma has been issued by an institution unknown to the future host university): How is the diploma evaluated? Are there any points of reference or instruments at the universities' disposal?

The national centres for recognition (ENIC-NARIC)<sup>17</sup> play an important role in recognising foreign diplomas. Their standards provide guidelines to the institutions that take the final decision on admission.

In France, for example, the Centre ENIC-NARIC is responsible for diploma recognition. As our respondent from France observes, there are few problems regarding diploma recognition on the doctoral level. In the Netherlands, NUFFIC acts as the Dutch National Academic Recognition Information Centre NARIC for the evaluation of foreign diplomas in higher and general secondary level education. Similarly, the primary source in the UK regarding recognition matters is UK NARIC, the National Agency responsible for providing information, recommendations and expert opinions on scholarly skills and academic qualifications from over 180 countries worldwide.

In the Netherlands, the future host institution may additionally require a formal comparison of a candidate's foreign diploma with a degree from the Dutch system to determine whether all admission requirements have been met. Similarly, in Germany, if the institution that issued a candidate's degree is not well known to the future host institution, the latter may ask for evidence of an institutional or programme accreditation by the organ responsible in the candidate's home country (generally the ministry for higher education). Furthermore, the candidate must prove that he or she would be granted entry to PhD studies in his or her home country. Our respondent in the UK observes that if a diploma has been earned at an institution unknown to the future host university, the diploma is evaluated individually through communication with the university in question.

Institutions can further make use of various instruments when assessing candidates' diplomas. In Germany, higher education institutions have the possibility to consult the database of the *Zentralstelle für ausländisches Bildungswesen* ZAB<sup>18</sup>, a centre for foreign educational systems that replies to individual enquiries. They may also contact the German rectors' conference HRK (*Referat für Fragen der Anerkennung*) which concluded bilateral equivalency agreements with selected countries on issues of mutual recognition of diplomas. In addition, the databases of ENIC-NARIC provide useful information in assessing foreign diplomas (see above).

As a final tool, institutions of higher education can use the experience of their professors and, ideally, structure this experience in the form of institutional databases.

---

<sup>17</sup> [www.enic-naric.net](http://www.enic-naric.net)

<sup>18</sup> [www.kmk.org/zab.html](http://www.kmk.org/zab.html), <http://www.anabin.de>

6. What happens after candidates **have been selected (welcome)**? Is there an institutional or national office that supports foreign doctoral candidates? If yes, what are its main tasks?

There are no national welcome structures in either Germany, the Netherlands, France<sup>19</sup> or the UK, but candidates are welcomed on the institutional level and/or below.

Institutions in the Netherlands generally offer help in finding accommodation or in taking care of formalities. Welcome and introduction take place at the research group level.

In the UK, universities have contact points for international students that are often located within offices for international admissions or student support services; in addition, most universities also offer support websites.<sup>20</sup> Individual departments and even some programmes have Postgraduate Committees made up of representatives of the postgraduate community; all postgraduates, including foreign doctoral candidates, can contact these committees for assistance and advice. Many UK universities and colleges have specialist international advisers to support international students during their stay in the UK.<sup>21</sup>

In France, the so-called PRES (the *pôles de recherche et d'enseignement supérieur* that define the French university system) are currently establishing welcome structures; however, there is no overview of the activities of individual institutions.

In Germany, institutions increasingly create assistance structures or welcome centres, generally in the International Office. These offices provide assistance in questions concerning residency, accommodation, social and legal matters, and other aspects of daily life (e.g., in the case of families, playschool or school enrolment). Welcome Centres further offer a cultural agenda as well as the opportunity to participate in general events or language courses. They constitute a contact point for creating social networks and establishing contact with other doctoral students.

Finally, big scholarship donors provide a particular form of assistance to their awardees – especially at the beginning of a stay – in the form of orientation events on a regional and national level.

In addition, various structures aim at promoting student mobility on the supra-institutional level and support incoming students, at least to a certain extent. For instance, the majority of universities in the UK are members of the Students' Union which generally has a representative for individual students; furthermore, the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) acts as a national advisory body serving the interest of international students and those who work with them.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> France figures approximately 80 Centres pour les études en France (CEF) in various countries that constitute an entry point for foreign students wishing to study in France and provide advice and help with administrative (visa) or study-related matters (language examinations). Higher education institutions in France can thus create a student profile and gather selected information on students. Whether these centres equally constitute an entry point for doctoral candidates is not made apparent on the CEF-Website (doctoral candidates will probably first contact the doctoral school or its staff).

<sup>20</sup> For example, Aberystwyth University in Wales: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/international/support/>

<sup>21</sup> See <http://www.educationuk.org/UK/Article/Support-for-international-students-in-the-UK?ArticleTagValue=0&ArticleTagValueParam1=&ArticleTagValueParam2>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/about/index.php>

7. What is the role of the **traditional doctorate** on the one hand and **graduate / research schools** (possibly combining Master's and PhD studies) on the other regarding international recruitment and the selection of candidates from abroad?

In France and in the Netherlands, all PhD students are part of a school, be it a graduate, a doctoral or a research school. As a general rule, the creation of schools makes it easier to be present on an international level as the schools themselves function as a marketing instrument. In France, several schools of various disciplines may join together in order to build a *collège doctoral*.

The German dual model shows a clear difference regarding internationalisation of their programmes. The DAAD (*Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst*)<sup>23</sup> website as well as the *Hochschulkompass*<sup>24</sup> of the rectors' conference offer information and advice on finding a supervisor in a „traditional” PhD programme. The future supervisor usually recruits and assesses candidates. On the other hand, structured doctoral programmes are actively promoted. For example, the German rectors' conference and the DAAD offer a checklist of measures and instruments for successful recruitment of candidates or participation in educational fairs and promotion tours in selected countries and regions. The checklist is available via a university pool called „Gate”.<sup>25</sup>

Finally, our respondent from the UK states that graduate schools facilitate international recruitment by clarifying what is available to candidates undertaking doctoral research in the UK and by increasing coherence with countries throughout Europe and the rest of the world where research schools are common. These advantages include the fact that graduate schools organise admission with transparent rules and regulations, and they enhance opportunities for mobility, international collaboration and inter-institutional cooperation.<sup>26</sup> The reverse is equally true: A report by the German rectors' conference states already in 2003 that graduate schools facilitate admission of domestic and foreign candidates with different educational qualifications.<sup>27</sup>

8. Please give some **examples** of institutions/schools that are internationally visible and attract foreign students for the doctorate?

What disciplines are mainly concerned?

What are the main countries of origin of doctoral candidates?

As several respondents pointed out, most universities are actively engaged in positioning themselves internationally and seek to attract foreign students. They have also created

---

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.daad.de>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.hochschulkompass.de>

<sup>25</sup> [www.gate-germany.de](http://www.gate-germany.de)

<sup>26</sup> This and other advantages of graduate schools are listed in UK Council for Graduate Education 2010: 17).

<sup>27</sup> „Graduiertenschulen erleichtern durch ihr Ausbildungskonzept die Zulassung von inländischen und ausländischen Absolventen mit unterschiedlicher inhaltlicher Vorbildung” (HRK 2003: 7). The German *Wissenschaftsrat* came to the same conclusion in its recommendations on doctoral training (2002: 72).

service units or welcome centres to support doctoral candidates, especially those from abroad. One respondent refrained from identifying institutions on this basis, another provided a long list, while the remaining two named one and two institutions respectively. That is why we, too, decided to refrain from giving examples of individual institutions. Instead, we will focus on national data, keeping in mind the fact that data from individual countries are not necessarily comparable as they are gathered in different ways (statistics are sometimes based on registration data, surveys, etc.) and may reflect different circumstances (different populations of foreign doctoral students depending on whether or not they earned their general qualification for university entrance abroad or in the host country; doctoral students or diplomas, etc.). Moreover, a clear statement about disciplines or countries concerned may be difficult because the relevant data is not always available. Some statistics for foreign doctoral students in the four countries are listed below. Generally speaking, the responses show that there is a great deal of incoming mobility in all four countries at the doctoral level.

- In France, in the academic year 2009/2010, 41% (or 26'665) of all doctoral candidates were of foreign origin<sup>28</sup>, most of them from Africa, followed by Asia and, less frequently, the European Union and North America. The data can be complemented by a survey among young researchers conducted by the French association of young researchers showing that one third of foreign doctoral candidates is from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia and 23% are from the European Union (Romania, Italy, Germany, Spain, etc.). Other commonly represented countries include Lebanon, China, Cameroon, Brazil and Mexico. According to the authors, this representation reflects France's historical influence. The survey further demonstrates that all disciplines are concerned, but that most candidates earn their doctorate in the area of Material and Life Sciences (Confédération des Jeunes Chercheurs, undated).
- In the Netherlands, no central data on the number of foreign doctoral candidates in Dutch higher education exists. One of the difficulties in compiling these statistics may be the fact that doctoral candidates are viewed as employees and not as students (NUFFIC 2010: 85). As a result, only estimations are possible. For example, the President of the PhD candidates Network of the Netherlands (PNN) concludes that around 30% or 2'500 of all PhD candidates in the Netherlands are of foreign origin. Most work at the three Universities of Technology where they account for over 60% of all PhD candidates. The retention rate of foreign doctorate degree holders is, however, low (Tommel 2008).
- Similarly, in Germany, our respondent draws our attention to the fact that no exact numbers on foreign doctoral candidates can be given as doctoral candidates do not always have to/are not always allowed to register. Data on PhD holders seem to be much more reliable and show that 49,2% of foreign doctoral degree holders (2008) are from Europe (Eastern and Western Europe are roughly equal). India and China account for 20% of doctoral degree holders (the percentage probably refers to students having earned their qualification for university entrance in their home country) when taken together. With regard to disciplines, surveys show that in 2009 about 28% of PhD candidates from abroad attempt to earn a doctorate in biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics, followed by 13% in engineering (including informatics).<sup>29</sup> As in other countries, the number of foreign doctoral students has grown rapidly over the past few years, especially in comparison to the number of domestic students.

---

<sup>28</sup> The definition given is as follows: "Sont pris en compte dans les différentes enquêtes de recensement des étudiants inscrits en France, ceux se déclarant de nationalité étrangère, ce qui inclut ceux ayant effectué leur scolarité du secondaire dans le système scolaire français" (DEPP 2010: 190ff).

<sup>29</sup> [www.wissenschaft-weltoffen.de](http://www.wissenschaft-weltoffen.de)

- Finally, in the UK, international students now make up over 30% of the total number of students working towards a doctoral degree according to the *Review of Graduate Schools report*. The UK recruits large numbers of students from China, India, Malaysia, Taiwan, Thailand, the US and Canada, whilst within the EU, most students come from Greece, Germany, Italy and France (UK Council for Graduate Education 2010: 10). The HESA statistical data shows that in 2008/09, 8.2% of 536'810 postgraduate students were domiciled in other countries of the European Union and 25.9% of them in non-European-Union countries. In the same year, 14.2% of the 17'650 doctoral degree recipients were domiciled in another country of the European Union and 29.5% in non-European-Union countries (HESA 2009). Finally, according to the same report, international student numbers are concentrated in particular disciplines, namely computing, engineering and technology, business, management and law.

## Conclusion

In all countries surveyed, most universities are actively engaged in positioning themselves internationally with the aim of raising, among other things, the number of qualified PhD students. As a consequence, great importance is attached to international cooperation and mobility of students and staff. In its latest communication, the French rectors' conference even defines the doctorate as an international degree.<sup>30</sup>

Institutions are generally largely autonomous and have developed various strategies to recruit doctoral students. Welcome centres advance internationalisation (see point 6) as they represent an important advantage when recruiting international doctoral candidates against a backdrop of international competition. There are also joint efforts to raise the attractiveness of the PhD in Europe in general (background: Lisbon-Agenda, European Strategy, etc.). In this regard, the project PromoDoc, financed by the European Commission, wants to raise the attractiveness of PhD studies in Europe, improve information on doctoral programmes and facilitate access to doctoral studies for candidates from third countries.<sup>31</sup>

The question of how to acquire the best students – and particularly, how to evaluate and compare students – seems to be more complicated and represents a challenge that will not become smaller in the years to come, particularly because the pool of candidates is growing increasingly diverse as an immediate result of the universities' internationalisation strategy as well as of globalisation in general. The French rectors' conference recently debated the challenge.<sup>32</sup> Among the solutions suggested was improved coordination with the home university in order to evaluate foreign students. At the same time, speakers stressed the importance of improving the quality of access and admission procedures in order to objectify qualifications and allow decisions based on stated objectives or

---

<sup>30</sup> “Le Doctorat apparaît de plus en plus comme le seul diplôme de haut niveau dont la définition et la légitimité sont d'emblée indiscutablement internationales” (CPU 2010).

<sup>31</sup> Project starting in December 2010 under the lead of CampusFrance with the participation of the German DAAD, the Dutch NUFFIC, the British Council, the Institute of International Education in the US as well as the European Council for Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers eurodoc, <http://www.campusfrance.org/fr/b-agence/PDF/PromoDoc.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> „Attirer de jeunes talents, qu'ils soient issus de Master nationaux ou qu'ils viennent d'autres filières formations, y compris étrangères, nous obligent à procéder à des sélections multicritères. Ces dernières doivent être efficaces et offrir les meilleures garanties de succès aux établissements.“, Workshop n° 5 (*accès au doctorat*), Colloque 2010 of the French rectors' conference, see the following document: [http://www.cpu.fr/uploads/media/Fiches\\_01.pdf](http://www.cpu.fr/uploads/media/Fiches_01.pdf); see also Workshop n° 4 (*écoles doctorales et international*).

strategies to be taken (CPU 2010a: 11). The floor is open for further discussion: Last but not least, we refer to the Salzburg II recommendations adopted on 21 October 2010 (EUA 2010):

“Structured programmes should develop recruitment strategies that correspond to their particular mission and profile. Recruitment strategies should be connected to explicit outcomes, identifying clear profiles of the candidates wanted. Such profiles should build on the parity of esteem of a range of different qualities and ensure equality of opportunity. In this manner, recruitment policies could take into account criteria such as international recruitment, gender equality, social background or different age groups. Recruitment should value the research potential of the candidate over past performance and above all the candidates’ potential to succeed in the programme to which they are being admitted.

Admission to a doctoral programme is an institutional responsibility, which must include a strong involvement of research staff. Admissions policies must be transparent and accountable and should reflect the research, supervisory and financial capacity of the institution. Admissions policies should also provide the appropriate flexibility in the choice of a supervisor. Transparency and accountability will be strengthened by having a single, identifiable place to apply, at least at programme level. Institutions should accept risk in admitting doctoral candidates and allow them to demonstrate their potential through a monitoring system.”

Finally, judging from our respondents’ answers, it would be worthwhile to dig deeper and examine selected examples at the level of the departments, schools and programmes which are, after all, the entities responsible for admission. This would, however necessitate a different, more elaborate format than the present survey and be based not only on written information, but also on interviews with the various stakeholders in order to fully understand the mechanisms at work.



## Respondents

We would like to thank the following people for taking the time to answer our questions:

Thomas Böhm, Head of Section Africa/Middle East, Equivalences and Recognition, International Department, German Rectors' Conference (HRK)

Nick den Holländer, Beleidsadviseur Onderzoek, Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU)

Harald Schraeder, Chargé de mission pour l'Europe, Conférence des présidents d'université (CPU)

Christian Yeomans, Policy Officer (Europe), UK HE International and Europe Unit, Universities UK (UUK)

## Materials

### Germany

HRK (2005), *Zur Förderung der Mobilität von Studierenden und Graduierten im Rahmen des Bologna-Prozesses vom 15.2.2005*, Empfehlung des Senats der HRK vom 15.2.2005, [http://www.hrk.de/de/download/dateien/HRK\\_Empfehlungen\\_Mobilitaet.pdf](http://www.hrk.de/de/download/dateien/HRK_Empfehlungen_Mobilitaet.pdf).

HRK (2003), *Zur Organisation des Promotionsstudiums*, Entschliessung des 199. Plenums vom 17./18.2.2003, <http://www.hrk.de/de/download/dateien/Promotion.pdf>.

KMK (2000), *Zugang zur Promotion für Master-/Magister- und Bachelor-/Bakkalaureusabsolventen*, Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 14.04.2000, [www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen\\_beschluesse/2000/2000\\_04\\_14-Bachelor-Master-Promotion.pdf](http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2000/2000_04_14-Bachelor-Master-Promotion.pdf).

Wissenschaftsrat (2002), *Empfehlungen zur Doktorandenausbildung*, 15.11.2002., <http://www.wissenschaftsrat.de/download/archiv/5459-02.pdf>.

[www.hrk.de](http://www.hrk.de)

[www.anabin.de](http://www.anabin.de)

[www.daad.de](http://www.daad.de)

[www.hochschulkompass.de](http://www.hochschulkompass.de)

[www.kmk.org/zab.html](http://www.kmk.org/zab.html)

[www.wissenschaft-weltoffen.de](http://www.wissenschaft-weltoffen.de)

### France

*Arrêté du 7 août relatif à la formation doctorale* (arrêté 2006) <http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000267752>.

Conférence des présidents d'université CPU (2010), *Colloque CPU 2010, „Doctorat, doctorants et docteurs“*, *Conclusions*, <http://www.cpu.fr/fileadmin/fichiers/confidentiel/conclusions.pdf>.

The workshop documents of the Conference (*fiches des ateliers*) are available at: [http://www.cpu.fr/uploads/media/Fiches\\_01.pdf](http://www.cpu.fr/uploads/media/Fiches_01.pdf)

Conférence des présidents d'université CPU (2010a), *CPU le mag*, N°3, septembre 2010, [http://www.cpu.fr/uploads/tx\\_publications/CPU-mag-web.pdf](http://www.cpu.fr/uploads/tx_publications/CPU-mag-web.pdf).

Confédération des Jeunes Chercheurs (undated), *Les Jeunes Chercheurs Etrangers en France. Résultats du sondage réalisé par la CJC*, <http://cjc.jeunes-chercheurs.org/expertise/etrangers>

DEPP (2010), *Repères statistiques et références sur les enseignements, la formation et la recherche (RERS 2010)*, septembre 2010, [http://media.education.gouv.fr/file/2010/16/9/RERS\\_2010\\_152169.pdf](http://media.education.gouv.fr/file/2010/16/9/RERS_2010_152169.pdf)

<http://www.cpu.fr>

## Netherlands

Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek WHW (Higher Education Act 2010); translation in English, taken from the TU Delft Doctorate Regulations, New revised edition September 2010, Part V, [http://www.tudelft.nl/live/pagina.jsp?id=2ff4d997-dd48-4807-a457-2a09c7c2eed6&lang=en&binary=/doc/DoctorateRegulationsTUDelft\\_ENG\\_092008.pdf](http://www.tudelft.nl/live/pagina.jsp?id=2ff4d997-dd48-4807-a457-2a09c7c2eed6&lang=en&binary=/doc/DoctorateRegulationsTUDelft_ENG_092008.pdf).

NUFFIC (2010), *Obtaining a PhD 2010/2011* (PhD leaflet), <http://www.nuffic.nl/international-organizations/docs/publications/SIH-PhD-leaflet.pdf>

NUFFIC (2010a), *Mapping Mobility 2010: International Mobility in Dutch Higher Education*, <http://www.nuffic.nl/international-organizations/information/mobility-statistics>.

Tommel, Gertjan (2008), *1000 PhDs Extra for the Dutch Knowledge-Intensive Society: A result from increasing efficiency of current processes and retention of doctorate holders of non-Dutch origin*, speech addressed at the Innovatie Proeftuin at the Van Nelle Design Factory on December 3rd, 2008, [www.hetpnn.nl/.../1000-phds-extra-for-the-dutch-knowledge-intensive-society-speech-gtat-innovatie-proeftuin-3-december-2008.pdf](http://www.hetpnn.nl/.../1000-phds-extra-for-the-dutch-knowledge-intensive-society-speech-gtat-innovatie-proeftuin-3-december-2008.pdf).

<http://www.vsnu.nl>

[www.cbs.nl](http://www.cbs.nl)

<http://www.nuffic.nl>

## UK

HESA (2009), Higher Education Statistics Agency, *Students in Higher Education Institutions*, 2008/09, [http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php/component/option,com\\_pubs/Itemid,286/task,show\\_year/pubId,1/versionId,4/yearId,184/](http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php/component/option,com_pubs/Itemid,286/task,show_year/pubId,1/versionId,4/yearId,184/)

UK Council for Graduate Education (2010), *A Review of Graduate Schools in the UK*, 2010.

Yeomans, Christian (2010), *Bologna Seminar: Doctoral Studies in the European Higher Education Area, 17-18 June 2010*, Warsaw, Briefing, Europe Unit, Universities UK.

[www.universitiesuk.ac.uk](http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk)

[www.educationuk.org](http://www.educationuk.org)

[www.hesa.ac.uk](http://www.hesa.ac.uk)

[www.postgraduatestudentships.co.uk](http://www.postgraduatestudentships.co.uk)

[www.ukcisa.org.uk](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk)

## Switzerland

CRUS, *Excellence through Research, Joint Position Paper by the Swiss Universities on the Doctorate* (2009), Version from 6 November 2009, <http://www.crus.ch/dms.php?id=6872>.

CRUS Secretariate (2009a), *Bericht zum Doktorat 2008. Eine Übersicht über das Doktorat in der Schweiz*, <http://www.crus.ch/dms.php?id=6511>, summary in English <http://www.crus.ch/dms.php?id=6872>.

## General

EUA (2007), *Doctoral Programmes in Europe: Access, Recruitment and Admission*, Report of the EUA Workshop in Brussels, 11-12 October 2007.

EUA (2010), *Salzburg II Recommendations. European Universities' Achievements since 2005 in Implementing the Salzburg Principles*, [www.eua.be/Libraries/Publications/Salzburg\\_II\\_Recommendations.sflb.ashx](http://www.eua.be/Libraries/Publications/Salzburg_II_Recommendations.sflb.ashx).

<http://www.enic-naric.net>

## Abbreviations

art.	article
CAS	Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies
CEF	Centre pour les études en France
CPU	Conférence des présidents d'université, France
CRUS	Rektorenkonferenz der Schweizer Universitäten / Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities
DAAD	Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst
ENIC-NARIC	European Network of National Information Centres on Academic Recognition and Mobility - National Academic Recognition Information Centres
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
EU	European Union
EUA	European University Association
HEI	higher education institution
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HRK	Hochschulrektorenkonferenz, Germany
IELTS	International English Language Test
KMK	Kultusministerkonferenz
NUFFIC	Netherlands organization for international cooperation in higher education
PNN	Promovendi Netwerk Nederland / PhD candidates Network of the Netherlands
PRES	Pôles de recherche et d'enseignement supérieur
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
UK	United Kingdom
UKCGE	UK Council for Graduate Education
UKCISA	UK Council for International Student Affairs
UUK	Universities UK
VSNU	vereniging van universiteiten / Association of Universities, Netherlands
ZAB	Zentralstelle für ausländisches Bildungswesen

## Annex I: Recruitment and selection of students from abroad for the doctorate – Example of Switzerland

CRUS secretariat, 23 June 2010

---

### 1. Access to the doctorate:

- Are there regulations/recommendations at a national level for granting access to doctoral studies? Does admission lie in the responsibility of individual universities?
- What requirements apply?

In Switzerland, the organisation of the doctorate – including the issues of access and admission – lies within the responsibility of the individual universities under consideration of their different profiles and the particularities in a given discipline. However, Swiss universities are in agreement about the conditions of access, as set down in the Joint Position Paper by the Swiss Universities on the Doctorate (Version from 6 November 2009).

“The doctorate has been designed on the basis of university Master studies. In case of proven scientific qualifications, access is also possible with a Master’s degree from other types of higher education institutions.”

Next to this main requirement, universities (institutions/disciplines) might call for students to fulfil other requirements. Among these, the conditions of approval by the future supervisor or of a minimum grade (for the Master thesis or the Master’s degree) are quite frequent. Students might further have to submit information allowing the university to judge their ability/potential for a PhD (see below point 3 admission to the doctorate).

### 2. Doctoral candidates from abroad: Are there any further requirements to be met (apart from visa stipulations)?

The conditions of access to the doctorate are the same for both Swiss and foreign students.

### 3. Admission to the doctorate (formal assessment of the candidacy and assessment regarding content): Please outline a prototypical admission or – in case of major differences between institutions or disciplines – give some examples and/or present main trends.

- Please name the **persons/organs** responsible for admission (e.g., registration services, professors/future supervisors, committees)
- Please name the **instruments used to assess the candidates’ ability/potential** (e.g., a written application, letters of motivation, references, interviews by phone,

spot interviews or interviews at the future host university, workshops, tests)?

As set down in the Joint Position Paper by the Swiss Universities on the Doctorate, “admission to the doctorate lies in the autonomous responsibility of the universities and is decided case-by-case on the basis of individual qualifications. There is no right to be admitted to doctoral studies.”

The admission-procedure might thus differ according to institution, discipline, but also according to whether the doctorate is organized within the framework of a structured programme or in the “traditional” way.

Persons/organs responsible for admission:

An administrative unit of the university or school/programme generally effects the formal examination of the candidate’s application. Selection is often effected by the future doctoral supervisor or – particularly (but not only) in the case of the structured doctorate, frequently depends on a decision by a committee. Selection and recruitment being tightly linked, we can distinguish more traditional recruitment and selection processes (doctoral candidates contact future supervisors or are recruited by the supervisors) on the one hand and calls for candidates on the other hand. The latter have become more common and have an acknowledged merit, but recruitment and selection by future supervisors who „discover“ promising students have retained their value, especially in the humanities and the social sciences.

Instruments for the assessment a candidate’s ability/potential:

Especially within the framework of structured doctoral programmes (but not only), candidates will have to submit and are assessed on the basis of the following: letters of motivation, references, outline of the research project, interviews, oral presentations of previous work, tests.

Finally, some institutions generally accept their candidates on a provisional basis only on the understanding that further conditions be met in the following months (for example, submission of a research outline). Other institutions will conditionally accept candidates who do not completely meet the necessary requirements. This is generally the case with students who have a Master’s degree in one field and want to earn a doctoral degree in another, related discipline.

**4. Admission to the doctorate for students from abroad:** Are there any differences compared with the admission of domestic students (apart from visa stipulations)?

Admission procedures are generally the same for Swiss and foreign candidates.

However, recognition of the diploma might be more complicated for candidates from abroad if the future host university does not know the candidate’s institution (delivering his/her Master’s degree), see below point 5.

In case of candidates from abroad for the doctorate, universities often rely on their professors’ recommendations. Some institutions run a database that is continually updated on the basis of their professors’ network and experiences in order to make such personal knowledge available to everybody.

Interviews are frequently used within the framework of structured doctoral programmes, especially if the PhD position in question is linked to a grant. Events/workshops allowing the university to evaluate the candidates' ability/potential and "match" doctoral candidates and supervisors also exist, but are less frequent. Interviews or events/workshops seem to be indispensable when the candidate's home institution is unknown by the future host institution. If there are many students from the same country wanting to do a PhD in the future host university (e. g. Asian countries), the latter might choose to organize interviews in the respective country of origin of the candidates in order to operate a pre-selection of candidates, to be conducted by its staff or by a local contact point. It has to be noted, however, that structured doctoral programmes are a relatively new phenomenon in Switzerland and that it is only recently that Swiss universities have started to actively look for candidates for the doctorate on an international level. Therefore, there are not many experiences up to date with such instruments. Finally, some institutions prefer to attract international students on the Master level. This allows the university to get to know its students before they embark on a PhD; however, the question of recruitment and selection remains the same on a lower (Master's) level.

At the same time, it has also been pointed out that a certain amount of uncertainty and thus risk-taking on behalf of the university always remains (this is true for both Swiss and foreign candidates).

Admission of foreign candidates might imply technical questions for example on visa.

**5. Recognition of the diploma** entitling its holder to pursue doctoral studies (especially if the diploma has been issued by an institution unknown to the future host university): How is the diploma evaluated? Are there any points of reference or instruments at the universities' disposal?

Recognition of the diploma might be more complicated for foreign candidates if the candidate's host institution (delivering his/her Master's degree) is not known.

Universities sometimes have their own solutions – for example, they might keep a database that is continually fed and updated according to the experiences of their professors; see above point 4. Some universities ask for a written confirmation by the candidate's home university (having delivered the Master's degree) attesting that the candidate would be admitted for a doctorate in the respective home country.

Universities might also refer to the Swiss Enic: This national contact point issues non-binding recommendations on the recognition of Swiss and foreign academic diplomas; however, it generally deals with the admission to Master studies and not with the admission to doctoral studies – although it might also offer some support at this level, too. ENIC is concerned with formal aspects and does not judge diplomas on the level of contents. It makes use, among others, of databases (anabin.de and others) and contacts with international referees.

6. What happens **after candidates have been selected (welcome)**? Is there an institutional or national office that supports foreign doctoral candidates? If yes, what are its main tasks?

Euraxess Switzerland providing proximity assistance to incoming researchers offers some support. Again, however, what happens after the selection of candidates largely depends on the university. Generally speaking, this point is not well developed in Switzerland, even though the percentage of doctoral students from abroad is very high – see below point 8.

The institutions where the percentage of doctoral students from abroad is higher than average are most advanced. For example, they might organize welcoming days for foreign (doctoral) students.

7. What is the role of the **traditional doctorate** on the one hand and **graduate / research schools** (possibly combining Master's and PhD studies) on the other regarding international recruitment and the selection of candidates from abroad?

For many universities, translating their declared international focus into a corresponding recruitment strategy at the doctoral level remains a challenge (not least because of the dilemma quantity vs. quality). As a matter of fact, especially in cases where recruitment and selection processes are still organised in a traditional way (that is, doctoral candidates contact future supervisors or are recruited by the supervisors), it is hard to transcend the personal contacts of the institution's faculty/professors (their contacts might be international, but, necessarily, limited to a given number of institutions). In this context, it has been noted that programmes and especially institutionalised schools constitute in themselves a marketing instrument. They might also offer the necessary support (critical mass and financial/personal resources) when it comes to the question of assessing the candidates' ability/potential for the doctorate.

Some institutions prefer to attract international students on the Master level before they embark on a PhD (within the framework of structured doctoral programmes or schools, but also within the framework of the traditional doctorate). This gives them time to get to know their students and identify talented students at the Master's level already.

8. Please give some **examples** of institutions/schools that are internationally visible and attract foreign students for the doctorate?

- What disciplines are mainly concerned?
- What are the main countries of origin of doctoral candidates?

The organisation of the doctorate varies according to individual institutional profiles as well as according to the particularities within a given discipline. Therefore, different types of doctoral programmes can be found. In the following, two typical examples are given – however others could be cited as well:

Doctoral School of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne (EPFL) – admission is organized in a de-centralised manner.

Life Science Zurich Graduate School of the University of Zurich (UZH) and Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETHZ) – admission is organised in a centralised manner.

Generally speaking, it's in the sciences above all that universities attract international students for the doctorate.

Countries of origin of doctoral students: In the academic year 2009/2010, 48.2% of the total amount of 20120 doctoral students has earned their university entrance qualification abroad. Among these, 76.1 % earned their degree in a European country – mainly in Germany with 34.9%, Italy with 9.5% and France with 7.9%. 13.5% come from Asian countries – mainly from India with 3.5% and China with 3.4% – 6.4% from the American continent, 3.7% from Africa and the remaining 0.4% from Oceania.