



Is the examination for a doctoral degree fit for purpose?

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Why do we think it isn't? – Does it match the requirement?

Doctoral degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- Creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research...
... extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication
- Systematic acquisition and understanding of body of knowledge...
... at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice
- General ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project...
...and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems
- A detailed understanding of applicable techniques...
...for research and advanced academic enquiry



Why do we think it isn't? – What questions do we ask?

- Precision of the research question
- Issues of data collection
- Reliability / validity of data
- Presentation of the findings
- Sufficiency of the conclusions
- Logic of the narrative – organisation of the thesis
- Presentation issues
- Challenge the topic premise
- Consideration of alternative approaches
- Relation of findings to adjacent disciplines / wider field of knowledge
- What are the implications for

=> Thesis / Topic focus



=> Application / implication focus



What's the purpose? Who's purpose?

- A powerhouse of innovation
- An engine of economic growth
- Legitimacy
- A revenue stream
- A pair of hands
- To enable promotion
- Gain knowledge and skills
- Gap filler – while I decide what to do
- A personal development test
- To become an academic
- ...???
- Government
- University Senior Management Team
- Supervisors
- Students



It's all about IMPACT..... What changes? When?

- **Scholarly impact**... or a contribution to knowledge.
...Do we change the discipline?
- **Practice and Policy impact**... but on what scale?
- **Identity**... personal transformational journey
 - Resilience
 - Critical thinking
 - Confidence
- **Career**... more options, new choices





Focus on the individual

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- Make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields
- Communicate clearly and effectively to
 - Specialist
 - Non-specialist audiences
- Undertake pure and/or applied R&D at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches.

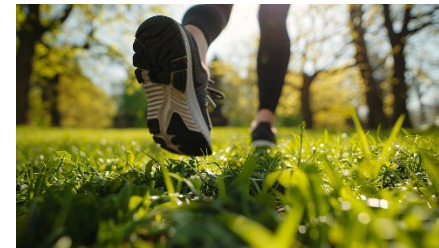
- **Do we assess these?**



Apprenticeship for an academic career? Training for a triathlon?

- **Necessary skills for an academic career:**

- Teaching
- Administration
- Research



- **Do we assess these?**



Opportunities for change – What could we do differently?

- Reflective portfolio...
 - Strategies for managing ambiguous, uncertain and unpredictable situations
- Scenario-based conversations...
 - Quality of judgements on complex issues
- Records of teaching experiences...
 - Teaching capability
- Lecture / Presentation...
 - Communication to a mixed audience
- Composition of examining team...
 - Practitioners; academics from adjacent disciplines



The pinnacle of academic accomplishment – fact or fiction?

- Great days – make it all worthwhile.
- How can we make it even better?



You decide....



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