Higher Degree by Research Candidates and the (accelerating) internationalisation of research

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Research has always been international...

- Ideas and innovations have always crossed borders
- Portability of print
- Cosmopolitanism of early academies
- Patrons (early funders of research and innovation) sought out world talent to enhance their prestige
- European Renaissance fired by the discovery of “new knowledge” from the east
- In modern period, circulation of researchers for advanced study in great centres of learning
- Higher degree study attracting colonial and other scholars to UK, Europe and increasingly US
- For example, Australia’s first doctorate awarded in 1948.
Acceleration of internationalisation of research

- “Networked society” effects: internet replicated and intensified the effect of the portability of print

- Mass rapid transit allows the portability of researchers

- Ubiquitous political “knowledge economy” optimism from late 1990s

- First phases of internationalism of HE create large populations of graduates seeking higher degrees

- Rise of “world class university” aspirations globally (Salmi 2009 publication)

- Rise of global rankings: research, HDR load and completions, and internationalisation key to many ranking formulae

- Flattened local demand for higher degrees in STEM fields in US, UK, Australia

- Increasingly expensive and resource/research intensive nature of research
Global Collaborations in Research

- Heightened capacity to draw on best talent
- Share infrastructure and resources
- Capacity to attract funding from range of sources
- Late 20th and 21st century research problems are global in character:
  - Climate change
  - Global pandemics
  - Food security
  - Effects of migration, social cohesion
  - Rise of fundamentalism
Key findings from the IAU Survey (2014): fourth global survey

» Top ranked internationalisation activities: outgoing student mobility (29%), international research collaboration (24%) and in a distant third place strengthening internationalisation of curriculum (14%)

» A significant proportion of respondents (between 39 and 47% depending on the activity) cited increased budgets for internationalization over the past three years in the following areas: international research cooperation, outgoing mobility for staff and outgoing mobility for students.

» 54% of the respondents indicate that in the previous year, up to 10% of their faculty members taught or undertook research for a short-term (least 3 months) period abroad.

» NOTABLE regional finding: For respondents in Africa, Asia and Pacific and the Middle East, international research collaboration was cited as the most important internationalization activity.

» 1336 universities x 131 countries
Institutional challenges

Globally, most universities now include both internationalisation and research as part of their strategy.

Aligning the two represents a challenge due to:

- Silo effect: leadership and administrative resources divided between education, research and internationalisation.
- Researchers: like herding cats?
- Internationalisation expertise often invested in coursework education, methods and approaches not readily transferable to research.

Leadership is vital: see results of 2014 IAU 4th Survey.
Higher Degree by Research as a driver of international research collaboration

- Higher degree study has always been international
- The individual researcher-to-researcher networks have been enhanced by scholarship schemes which allow for “returns”, generational flows of students – these often “growing” into research collaborations
- HDR study provides one site where university silos can be broken down or mediated – flows of students are enhanced when there is strong communication between international and research portfolios.
- This is a key relationship within universities: needs attention!!
- Landscape is changing rapidly
- Emergence of range of collaborative research training models: joint/double badged degrees, cotutelle arrangements
- International HDR study increasingly framed within broader research capacity building collaborations (brain circulation v brain drain)
Emerging co-operative frameworks in international doctoral education: CODOCS and IDEA

» CODOCS: Cooperation on Doctoral Education between Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe, 2012

» An initiative of the European Universities Association (EUA), 2012

» Strongly regional approach: European Education Area building research and research capacity building linkages with Africa, Asia and Latin America through a focus on doctoral education

» Similar initiative may be seen in the International Universities Association (IUA) project IDEA: Innovative Doctoral Education for Africa.

» Both projects appear keen to counter “brain drain” concerns with earlier models of international doctoral education

» Strong focus on building in-country research and research training capacity as well as providing international doctoral education.
Areas which need work in the international research training space

» Accessing industry placements for international HDR candidates within Australia

» Using international research and industry networks to access industry placements and internships for Australian candidates overseas

» Increasingly important due to the employability concerns of many candidates and governments
Transnational Research: whose agenda?

» Who chooses research partners? Top down, bottom up?
» Both…ideally working in concert within a strong and supportive framework
» Regulatory and compliance issues across jurisdictions: easier to make the call with respect to research integrity and research ethics as the Australian requirement is that the Australian standards must apply.
» Potentially more complex with respect to IP and commercialisation but the principle of “getting it all down on the table” for discussion in early stages of negotiation is best
Select References


- International Assocation of Universities (IAU) IDEA (Innovative Doctoral Education for Africa) project. See project webpage at: [http://www.idea-phd.net/](http://www.idea-phd.net/)

- International Association of Universities (IAU) Fourth Global Survey on Internationalisation of Higher Education. See: [http://www.iau-aiu.net/content/4th-iau-global-survey-internationalization-higher-education](http://www.iau-aiu.net/content/4th-iau-global-survey-internationalization-higher-education)
Questions?