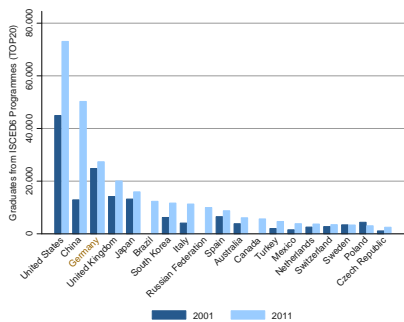


Doctoral Candidates and Doctorate Holders Study Profile

Stefan Hornbostel* - Jakob Tesch* - Janine Lange* - Anja Oppermann*

* Institute for Research Information and Quality Assurance e.V. (iFQ), Berlin, Germany



BASIC CHARACTERISTICS

ProFile is a panel study focussing on the situation of doctoral candidates and their postdoctoral professional careers. Since April 2009, doctoral candidates from different universities and other (funding) institutions are surveyed at regular intervals via means of an online survey. ProFile aims at identifying determinants of postdoctoral career development and providing information on conditions of doctoral education in a comparative perspective via a monitoring approach. Special attention is paid to the effects of structured doctoral programs (Graduate Schools) on doctoral education, which have emerged increasingly during the past years. ProFile contains a number of explanatory elements which can be connected to career theories of decision making in order to explain career outcomes.

ProFile has been set up in response to the insufficient information on doctoral candidates in Germany. While the number of completed degrees is high compared to other countries (see figure to the left) little is known about doctoral candidature. Even the total number of doctoral candidates at German universities can only be estimated, official data does not exist. Therefore, reliable information on the conditions, processes and success of doctoral education is coveted.

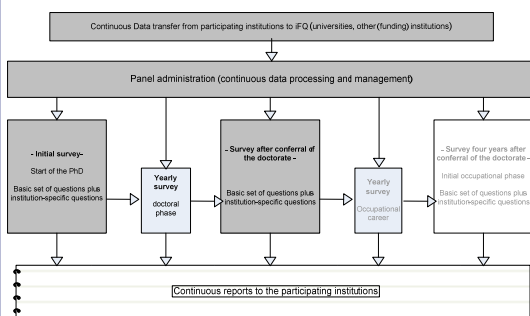
INFORMATION ON SUBSTANTIVE CONTENT OF ProFile

Data sources:

ProFile aims at studying the supervision situation of doctoral candidates and careers of doctorate holders. Thus, doctoral candidates and doctorate holders are the units of analysis. The data covers doctoral candidates from all disciplines with the exception of Medicine, in total about 9,000 persons so far. ProFile receives the contact data of all doctoral candidates currently working on a dissertation at selected universities and funding organisations in Germany. In 2013 the partnering organisations were seven German universities, two graduate schools and three funding organisations. Each ProFile cooperation partner is expected to annually deliver the contact data on the doctoral candidates who have recently started working on their dissertation or who were not reported in the previous year.

Data processing:

The contact data undergo duplicate checks before they are imported into the panel database. The actual micro-data are then collected via a bilingual online survey hosted at iFQ. Survey languages are German and English. Due to the complexity of the data acquisition and specifics of the university system in Germany, it is possible that respondents enter the study at different stages, e.g. after having completed their doctoral degree when they are invited to the ProFile survey for the first time. The survey four years after conferral will go online at the end of 2014.



TOPICS

- Institutional context of doctoral training
- Financing of the doctorate
- Supervision
- Personality traits
- Scientific output
- Research stays abroad
- Quality of thesis
- Educational biography
- Career Intentions
- Interruptions of candidacy
- Job Search during doctoral candidacy
- Thesis by publication

Information on all variables/indicators:

The initial questionnaire section in every survey is dedicated to the current status of the dissertation endeavor which may be "in progress", "interrupted", "aborted" or "completed".

The box to the left shows some of the topics covered in the surveys. All respondents receive a standard questionnaire in order to ensure that basic information is available for all respondents regardless of whether they enter the panel at the beginning or at conferral of the doctorate (marked black in the figure to the left)

The survey after conferral of the doctorate covers topics related to the completion of the doctorate (marked blue in the figure to the left). Persons who report to have quit the work on their thesis also receive the questions about job search among reasons for suspending the work on the thesis.

LEGAL ISSUES ENCOUNTERED AND ACCESS CONDITIONS

iFQ is the legal owner of the raw data. The contracts with the partnering organisations require iFQ to inform the partners if iFQ intends to publish anything containing a clear reference to one specific partner. The clause requires information only and not consent. Moreover, the contracts require that no publication shall be made suitable to trace back results to individual persons. The contract also makes clear that no raw data sets are provided to the partners.

INFORMATION ON THE DATABASE SYSTEM

The database is currently in a longitudinal Stata data-file but could be transferred easily to a different format using the personal identifiers.

RESULT 1: Hybrid Forms of Doctoral Training

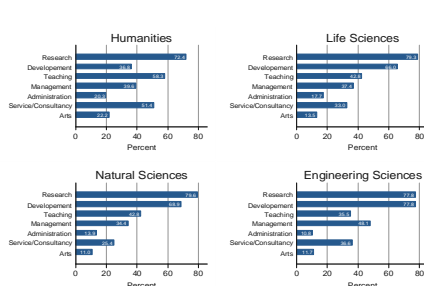
Cluster analysis of doctoral training conditions

Membership Status in structured doctoral programme	Cluster				Total
	Formalised	Supervised	Curricular	Free	
Non-Members	49.4% (271)	41.4% (205)	60.8% (498)	88.9% (393)	59.3% (1,367)
Members	50.0% (278)	58.6% (290)	39.2% (321)	11.1% (49)	40.7% (938)
Total	100% (549)	100% (495)	100% (819)	100% (442)	100% (2,305)

Formalised: All individuals have written agreements with supervisors (23.8%)
Supervised: All individuals meet their supervisor at least weekly (21.5%)
Curricular: All individuals have visited at least one course (35.5%)
Free: None of the above (19.2%)

RESULT 2a: High Orientation Towards Research

Career intentions of doctoral candidates



RESULT 2b: Low Chances of Becoming Professors

Pyramid of academic career positions

