

## Analysis of the information about doctoral degrees presented in the Spanish universities websites

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### ABSTRACT

Globalization has intensified competition, as evidenced by the growing number of international classification systems (rankings) and the attention paid to them. Doctoral education has an international character in itself. It should promote opportunities for graduate students to participate in these international studies. The quality and competitiveness are two of the most important issues for universities.

To promote the interest of graduates to continue their education after the graduate level, it would be necessary to improve the published information of the doctoral programs. It should increase the visibility and provide high-quality, easily accessible and comparable information which includes all the relevant aspects of these programs.

The authors analysed the website contents of doctoral programs. It was observed a lack of quality of them and very poor information about the contents, so that it was decided that any of them could constitute a model for creating new websites.

The recommendations on the format and contents in the web were made by a discussion group. They recommended an attractive design; a page with easy access to contents and easy to find on the net and with the information in more than one language. It should include complete program and academic staff information. It should also be included the study's results which should be easily accessible and includes quantitative data, such as number of students who completed scholars, publications, research projects, average duration of the studies, etc. It will facilitate the choice of program.

**Key words:** doctoral degrees, web, data quality, quantity of information.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization has intensified the competition, as evidenced by the growing number of international classification systems (rankings) and the attention paid to them.

Due to the significant increase in the offer of doctoral programs, not only in Spain but throughout the EHEA, the institutions involved in these studies point out the competition between them as one of the more important ten questions for them.

In the EUA study it was indicated that 38% of institutions consider competitiveness an important issue, while the broader issue selected was the quality of the program with 60% [1].

The growing internationalization in universities, especially at the doctoral level, is also of great importance. Doctoral education has an international character in itself. It should promote opportunities for graduate students to participate in these international studies. This can be done, for example, by increasing international mobility grants, the organization of workshops, conferences and summer schools, developing jointed doctoral programs, and the co-direction of work. The use of new technologies such as teleconferencing or e-learning will also be used to promote the internationalization of doctoral programs.

Although in 2008, some countries have decreased in number of doctors, the percentage of those on all graduate students is more or less stable. According to Eurostat (Statistical Office of the European Communities) the percentage of students in doctoral degrees in the countries of the European Union (EU), compared to the total number of graduate students, is less than 10%. The average in the EU with 27(countries) was 2.78% in the period of years from 2000 to 2008, lower than in the U.S. and Japan. In the U.S. and EU there is an increase of the number of graduate students, meaning that students do not reject higher training cycles [2].

In order to promote the interest of graduates to continue their education by accessing the training of graduate level, it would be necessary to increase the visibility of supply and provide readily accessible data to allow in-depth knowledge of the doctoral programs.

From this perspective, it is of great interest to provide quality information and make it comparable

This information should appear on the network along with a detailed program for the certification, list of teachers, and research proposals.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

In some of the best universities in the world, analysis of web pages doctorates show a generally poor quality and limited content related to the doctoral program.

In view of the results it is not recommended any model of the analyzed pages. Therefore, the working group made up of experts recommended an attractive design, a page with easy access to content, and dynamic and important links. It should also be easy to find on the net and not be forgotten that the new doctoral programs should strengthen its international dimension, so that the information should be useful for any professional, no matter its nationality.

In terms of content, it should include comprehensive information on programs (materials and schedules) and the professors who teach. The results should include an easily accessible form; most of the 26 quantitative data collected in this work and can give an idea of the overall quality of doctoral programs, facilitating the choice of program for students interested.

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