

Why no professional doctorates in Norway

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In 1975 the first formalised program for training of doctoral candidates was established at the faculty for Mathematical and Scientific studies, at the University of Oslo, after considerable resistance from the other faculties, and within 20 years all four universities and scientific colleges had established programs for their respective faculties. In 2003 the Ministry opened for other tertiary education institutions to prepare for the establishment of new doctoral programs and aspire for university status. A national accreditation system was established to monitor the reform. All doctoral studies were renamed from association to the professions, such as dr.juris, dr.med., dr.scient., dr.oecon., etc and organised under the PhD-umbrella. The Council for Higher education, a member organization for alle HE-institutions designed a unified set of rules and directions for the establishment of new PhD-programs. Following criticism of the rigidity of the PhD, adjustments have been made to open for new innovative doctoral programs catering for interdisciplinary and professional areas of study. However, there seems to have been little movement from the scholastic tradition of the PhD to expand the focus and genres of research and documentation within the realm of the PhD. Since the late 1990-ies proposals to include a program for tenured lecturers in HE into a professional doctorate has been turned down consistently, due to the alleged openness of the present PhD. However, two government funded projects aimed at the industry and public governance have been piloted over the last 15 years. In spite of attempts to move from an overwhelming domination of conventional PhDs to a more practice based one, some evaluation reports suggest that these two pilots leave candidates and programme owners with few clues about what the alternative path to a PhD is. This paper argues that the academic drive of even allegedly progressive doctoral programmes undermines non-scholastic and practice based doctoral studies. The theoretical as well as practical implications of a move to a more practice-based conception of a doctoral study is seemingly underdeveloped in the Norwegian context, or at least insufficiently acknowledged and explicated to policymakers and stakeholders. This

paper aims to formulate a basis for a PhD-programme based on these insights nationally and internationally.

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