

**A Report of Commission II:  
A Proposed Model for an International Collaborative Doctorate**

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**Definitions:**

**Registering University:**

The INDEN Consortium University where the student enrolls for candidature in the doctorate. Used synonymously with home institution.

**Host University:**

The INDEN Consortium University where the student visits to undertake coursework and/or fieldwork which contributes to their doctoral candidature.

**Doctorate:**

A doctoral level degree awarded from an Internationally Recognised University. The nomenclature of the award may vary, for example, Doctor of Nursing Science, Doctor of Nursing, Doctor of Health Science (Nursing) etc. The research content of the degree is to be no less than two-thirds of the content of the degree.

**Course Context**

Within doctoral education there are a number of challenges worldwide. International collaboration via a formalised collaborative network under the auspices of INDEN can facilitate the nursing community to overcome problems in doctoral education and enhance the quality of doctoral programmes and ultimately move forward the nursing discipline and contributions to nursing knowledge.

Doctoral education has evolved within a diverse range of postgraduate systems worldwide in thirty-one countries (Ketefian and Mc Kenna, 2005), each responsive to local needs and policy drivers and each reflecting the state of development of nurse education, underpinning knowledge base and levels of nursing research activity.

A collaboration to provide a doctoral programme can collectively harness the advanced nursing science expertise worldwide and present students with an exciting opportunity to draw on leading expertise worldwide.

Within the development of new style doctorates there are currently many labels in use such as “professional doctorate,” “clinical doctorate,” “taught doctorate.” This presents an unclear picture; furthermore in a global context different aims and patterns of course delivery and philosophy have emerged as doctorates have been developed internationally confusing the picture further.

Additionally, it is not an “even playing field,” in that some countries have more resources, there is inequity in the global higher education systems with some nurse leaders having the benefit of highly

developed research capacity and doctoral education systems and others faced with severe resource shortages and lack of supportive research and education infrastructures.

However it is clear that doctoral provision worldwide has substantive commonality albeit in the context of some emergent issues ripe for dialogue. These include: confronting world change and reviewing doctoral education; achieving international clarity of range and purpose of varied doctoral models; widening the dialogue to include service users and policy makers; deciding content of programmes and widening focus and educational methods; protecting credibility and maintaining a consistent relevant content at international level; achieving balance with theory and practice; assuring quality by working together, sharing best practice and collectively developing doctoral education (Slevin and Hanucharunkul, 2005, pp. 22-24).

A collaborative doctorate would facilitate the development of the next generation of nursing leaders to engage with international dialogue concerning the development of nursing knowledge, lay a foundation for cross national and multi-site studies, thereby enhancing the international context of nursing knowledge development and embracing the diversity of its application to practice. Ultimately this will strengthen the state of nursing science and at the same time develop doctoral education models and strategies.

Traditional doctorates (from whatever part of the globe, be they Thesis based PhD or Doctorate of nursing science, taught or research based) are naturally limited to local perspectives and activities, however a new professional collaborative doctorate allows those who are grounded in professional practice to develop theory and innovation in thinking; abstraction from their practice and the international professional base. The programme encourages students to assimilate using a wide choice of international disciplinary sources and to interrogate practice and policy internationally. It is the intention to facilitate students to envision nursing leadership in a global context and to articulate doctoral applications to practice in an internationally diverse sense. Ultimately the aim is to lay a strong foundation for international collaborative postdoctoral studies.

**We aim to provide a doctorate route that:**

- Is supportive, develops a group of students to be critical, reflective leaders in their field with a developed international perspective;
- Provides necessary theoretical underpinning for research inquiry and/or the development of practice, international expertise can be directly drawn upon;
- Facilitates development and inquiry within practice and for practice with opportunity for international exchange;
- Provides a broad research training, complemented with a range of specialist knowledge from experts from around the world;
- Provides opportunity to develop skills to enhance learning in an international practice context;
- Lays a foundation for international collaborative nursing research.

The Programme also offers students an international perspective by engaging with other professionals and sharing experience, knowledge and values across country and continent boundaries. We believe that this is a unique benefit of our programme and that nursing interests will be promoted by building an academic community that will combine the rigour expected at doctorate level with international debate, which will benefit all of the individuals involved. The focus of the doctorate will be nursing but there is also opportunity to engage in interdisciplinary dialogue.

## **Philosophy and Conceptual Basis of the Programme**

The programme will provide students with an opportunity to undertake an international exchange, which is structured as part of their doctoral programme. This doctorate will provide ongoing developmental opportunities to engage with the wider international academic community and practice-based peers. Students will be able to observe international nursing practice and/or carry out all or part of their fieldwork in an international host setting where appropriate.

We wish to expose students to a diverse and global experience where they can observe at first hand emerging paradigms of leadership that are relevant to nursing developments, practice and potential health care improvements. A strong practice focus is inherent in our proposal.

This doctorate will enable participants to achieve wider perspective and to seek out specialist expertise in a global context. Their learning will be grounded in their own specialist area and allow integration of theoretical disciplines to contribute to the development of doctoral enquiry and therefore enhance international development of the discipline. Students will manage their own doctorate within the support of a supervisory team, and with structured facilitation of international exchange.

### **Aims of the Course Are to:**

- Enable participants to negotiate complex theoretical debates and practical skills needed to undertake research to inform quality and health improvements and contribute to a culture of inquiry and research in an international context;
- Provide participants with a critical understanding of how complex research questions can be translated into rigorous proposals and study design implementation;
- Facilitate students to gain an understanding of research governance and its requirements in an international context;
- Undertake research which improves outcomes for people (service users, patients and communities) or develops new insights at the forefront of the discipline;
- Facilitate students to become advanced reflexive practitioners, able to evaluate both their own and others' practice within an international context;
- Facilitate students to become critical appraisers of contemporary developments and knowledge in nursing within an international context;
- Enable students to make original contributions to knowledge;
- Facilitate students in both evaluating their own learning and presenting it to their peers in order to engage in a process of dialogic evaluation;
- Facilitate students to disseminate learning in high quality international media.

### **Programme Objectives**

Graduates of the Programme Will Have:

- Mastered a range of practical skills: to facilitate inquiry; translate complex questions into realistic proposals; collect data using systematic methods and undertake advanced reflective and critical appraisal of an international nursing context;
- Become highly competent in a range of research methods and approaches which facilitate examination of nursings' contribution and potential or exploration of nursing impacts and outcomes upon service users, patients and communities;

- Become highly competent reflexive practitioners, able to evaluate both their own and others practice;
- Undertaken critical appraisal of contemporary developments and knowledge in an area relevant to their own practice which draws upon international perspectives;
- Undertaken an in-depth critical analysis of complex theoretical debates;
- Become able to disseminate original contributions to knowledge and evaluation of learning in peer reviewed international media.

It is anticipated that students will complete this programme within *four* years. Given that premise each year is linked to a stage or unit of study with learning outcomes and assessment that will enable judgement on progression. Students will undertake ‘support units’ that may be shared with Master’s level and doctoral students from a range of Universities in the collaborative consortium.

### **The Programme Structure and Learning Outcomes**

Students will be registered at their main home institution, the award will be granted from that university. However, the programme will facilitate students to spend up to 30% of their time with a Host University. The course model is a semi-supported but structured doctorate in nursing, facilitated by a collaborating network or consortium of universities. By its collaborative nature the universities will collectively be able to offer students a range of research units and specialist units and diverse supervisory expertise.

### **Staged Learning Outcomes**

#### **Year 1: Foundation Coursework for Doctoral Study**

Location: The first year will mostly be based at the home institution but opportunities for exchange to another international university will be available. Students will be able to:

- Critically appraise and differentiate between the research paradigms;
- Critically appraise and differentiate between ethical and practice development frameworks;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the nature and requirements of research and practice supervision;
- Demonstrate ability to critically examine the knowledge base of nursing using systematic methods and a diverse range of sources;
- Critically appraise ethical issues and demonstrate understanding of complex ethical decision making;
- Demonstrate acquisition of a substantial body of knowledge;
- Demonstrate ability to undertake a systematic critical analysis, at an advanced level, which will contribute to the development of new ideas, approaches or techniques;
- Demonstrate practice development potential from their study.

#### **Year 2: Fieldwork and Skills Realisation**

Location: Up to 30% of the students’ time in this year may be spent in international exchange at a Host University where students have access to units of study related to generic research or specialist units pertinent to their study. Students will:

- Demonstrate competency in a range of research methods and techniques;
- Prepare and present a rigorous research proposal at a level of sophistication commensurate with doctoral level study which is subject to peer review at the Registering University;

- Prepare an application for ethical approval and access which meets all the requirements of research governance: demonstrate ability to undertake independent study and to develop a plan of work with understanding of research governance mechanisms and requirements of the country where fieldwork takes place, (this may be at the home or Host University);
- Present a critical appraisal of published knowledge which is subject to peer review by supervisor and associate supervisor (*and home university or collaborative consortium members*);
- Students will demonstrate ability to conceptualise, design and implement a research study for the generation of new knowledge, application or understanding and be able to adjust the study design in the light of unforeseen problems.

### **Year 3: Managing Research Process**

Location: Up to 30% of the students' time in this year may be spent in international exchange at a Host University where students have access to units of study related to generic research or specialist units pertinent to their study or are facilitated to engage in fieldwork. Students will:

- Demonstrate detailed understanding of applicable techniques of research and advanced enquiry in nursing;
- Demonstrate ability and high level skills in undertaking inquiry and practice fieldwork;
- Demonstrate rigorous approach to data analysis and synthesis of findings;
- Demonstrate ability to conceptualise practice to inform future improvement initiatives/ or undertake systematic critical casework or practice observation, for the application or new insights and understanding, which is at the forefront of the discipline in an international context;
- Demonstrate the ability to make informed judgements about complex issues in unpredictable practice environments, often in the absence of traditional data, and be able to communicate these ideas to supervisors and colleagues.

### **Year 4: The Thesis Write-up and Viva**

Location: This will mostly be based at the home institution but opportunities for exchange to another international university will be available; additionally, all students will participate in an international student conference where they present their work for peer review. Students will:

- Demonstrate the ability to undertake an empirical study which makes a contribution to knowledge and to communicate the findings to an audience of international peers;
- Demonstrate the ability to critically and reflexively appraise knowledge and its philosophical underpinnings and its application to practice;
- Demonstrate the ability to evaluate the doctorate learning, its integration and contribution to knowledge, and application to international settings;
- Demonstrate a contribution to the creation and interpretation of new knowledge that is at the forefront of the discipline (assessed by thesis);
- Communicate their ideas and conclusions effectively to peers by demonstrating the ability to defend work in a viva with external peers or a public defence with examiners present (to reflect varied international conventions in doctoral examination);
- Demonstrate that they have contributed substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches which draw upon their international exchange experience;

- Contribute to the creation and interpretation of new knowledge at a level which merits publication.

### **Enrollment Projections**

A strategy to facilitate enrolment will encompass close alliance with colleagues within INDEN. Key strengths of the programme will be the:

- Opportunity for doctoral study and personal development in more than one country;
- Integrative focus with clear link to practice;
- Opportunity for reflective practice based learning in an international context;
- Opportunity to advance a specific area of practice via contribution to knowledge;
- Rigorous research training with exposure to multiple perspectives from more than one university;
- Opportunity to critically evaluate practice facilitated by Host University and Registering University;
- Flexibility;
- Peer support;
- Embedded in global research active departments;
- Diverse and international supervisory expertise;
- Opportunity to enhance the international relevance of doctoral enquiry;
- Opportunity to embrace the development of practice within an international context.

We envisage enrolling six students each year if the collaborative consisted of three or more partners. This number could be increased if the collaborative network is bigger.

### **Profile of Graduates**

Candidates will be leaders in practice, academic settings or other relevant domains.

### **Entry Requirements**

Entry requirements will reflect the regulations of the home university where the student will be registered. To participate, students will need to have sufficiently focused ideas to enable them to make full use of specialist expertise available at Host University.

### **Course Structure**

Students present a plan of what they intend to do when they initially enrol so that the course structure meets the requirements of the Registering University.

### **Progression**

Students will progress as in keeping with the Registering University regulations.

### **Graduation**

Students will graduate from the Registering University, with an acknowledgement in the thesis to the international exchange, Host University, faculty mentor, and INDEN.

## **Assessment Taught/unit/international Fieldwork Components**

During exchange and any taught units students will be assessed through a written and assessed learning contract where they draw upon their learning from their exchange experience and map out its contribution to their study. The remainder of their assessment will follow the structures in place at their Registering University.

## **The Thesis**

The thesis will be assessed in keeping with the regulations of the Registering University, and will show a contribution to knowledge that merits international publication.

## **Tuition Fees, Travel, Costs, Living Expenses, Financial Aid**

The university of registration will be responsible for negotiating with the student upon enrolment their source of tuition fees as well as travel and living expenses and other financial aid. Students will have to self-fund where sponsorship from external organisations is not possible.

The Host University will be responsible for facilitating arrangement of placement visits, access to data collection, help with research governance processes.

It is anticipated that Host University will provide office space, a computer and access to email and internet at no cost to INDEN consortium students. Additionally, associate supervision from the Host University would be provided at no cost to INDEN Consortium students.

## **Quality Mechanisms for Course Implementation**

To be developed

## **Memorandum of Understanding**

To be developed

## **Criteria for Selection of Institutions for Consortium Membership**

- Existing experienced supervisor available to the student(s);
- Research active department with evidence of doctoral completions, research active faculty, publication track record and evidence of commissioned research;
- Faculty membership of INDEN;
- Supervisory capacity to support up to two students per year;
- Memo of understanding with collaborative consortium signed up to by Vice Chancellor or President of the university;
- Able to offer units of study on a reciprocal basis.

## **Support Mechanisms for Students**

- Associate experienced supervisor;
- Support of graduate school or international office;
- Email and internet provision extends the possibility of ongoing supervision from a distance and even cross national studies where appropriate.

**Supervision**

Each student will be assigned a first (main supervisor) from their home university, and will be assigned an associate supervisor from the Host University. In some cases the student may have a supervisory team at their home institution.

**Physical Facilities****Library resources****Units of study available**

To be developed if model is accepted in principle by INDEN.

**References**

Ketefian S and Mc Kenna H (2005) Eds. *Doctoral Education in Nursing: International perspectives*. Routledge Abingdon Oxford England.

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