The Collaborative Development of a Professional Doctorate at Coventry University

A project submitted to Middlesex University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Professional Studies.

David Leslie Johnson

National Centre for Work-based Learning Partnerships

Middlesex University

June 2005

VOLUME ONE.

CONTENTS.

Abstract.

This project was concerned with the development of a work-based, Professional Doctorate in the Business School at Coventry University.

The Business School at Coventry University has had a suite of part-time, Postgraduate, Work-based Learning courses leading to an M.A. in Management since 1998, and a critical mass of students has consequently built up for whom a Professional Doctorate would present an opportunity to progress their studies.

A key part of this work has been a critique of the literature in this field to determine the key differences between the traditional PhD and the Professional Doctorate in order to highlight the major challenges and considerations for designers of Professional Doctorates.

The research for this dissertation has also included conversations with key individuals at Coventry University, at other universities, employers, professional bodies, graduates and students. Wherever possible, opportunities have been taken to work collaboratively with others from both inside and outside Coventry University.

The tensions around the requirement for Professional Doctorates to demonstrate equivalence to the PhD and yet also be different are discussed and this will show that Higher Education has not resolved these adding to the dissatisfaction and confusion surrounding doctorates per se. The project has also identified a number of other concerns affecting the provision of both the PhD and Professional Doctorates.

The project contains proposals for a Professional Doctorate at Coventry University, to be delivered by the Centre for Higher Education Development rather than the Business School. It also puts forward the view that whether or not the University introduces a Professional Doctorate it will need to consider the revision of its PhD provision.

Consideration of the details of a revision of the PhD does not however form part of this project.

Chapter 1 – Introduction.

The project seeks to change professional practice at Coventry University in the area of doctoral provision, through the introduction in the Business School of a Professional Doctorate.

In order to do that, I have had to seek answers to a number of key questions that will inform my practice as a curriculum designer at doctoral level:

- What defines doctoral level work?
- How can a Professional Doctorate be different, yet equivalent to, a PhD?
- Can the characteristics of Coventry Business School's Postgraduate Work-based Learning Programme be incorporated into a Professional Doctorate?

I first became interested in work-based learning in 1996, as a result of my growing unease about the taught postgraduate curriculum, which was reinforced by comments made by both students and employers that they considered it to be too prescriptive, inaccessible, irrelevant and lacking impact.

Where work- based learning is concerned some academics are troubled, wrongly in my view, by what they perceive to be a lack of academic rigour and standards. Tradition seems to hold sway in a number of universities and the change of mindset required to respond directly to the needs of professional practice seems to be too much for some to cope with. The proposal to introduce a work-based, Professional Doctorate will be especially challenging for all concerned.

Universities are, post-Dearing, having to make a shift from "teaching", which is about content, to "learning" which is about process. There is a debate as to what constitutes "knowledge" as universities try to balance the orthodoxy of Mode 1 Knowledge (academic or disciplinary knowledge) with Mode 2 Knowledge (technical knowledge) which is the concern of Professional Doctorates.

Coventry University recognised the need to embrace this change, and in 1996 set up a taskforce for Teaching and Learning. Coventry University, along with much of

Higher Education, I suspect, promotes innovation in curriculum design and delivery, by such things as the creation of a taskforce, the appointment of Teaching Fellows, and the presentation of Teaching Excellence awards, but in turn does its best to stifle it with heavy handed quality assurance procedures. There will therefore be a number of regulatory issues to be resolved with the introduction of a Professional Doctorate.

I was one of the first people to apply for and be accepted on to the taskforce with a project to introduce work-based learning courses for part-time postgraduate students. The terms of reference were quite broad in the beginning but eventually the focus became the introduction of a work-based M.A in Management, which gained University approval in May 1998.

The introduction of the M.A. was followed in 2001 by the further introduction of a Postgraduate Certificate and Diploma in Management to act as feeder courses. These courses have proved to be successful in terms of recruitment and completions.

The Postgraduate Work-based Learning Programme at Coventry is about process rather than content, and is based on:

- Reflective practice.
- The use of action learning sets.
- Independent study.
- Work-based projects.
- The development of professional capability.
- Impact.
- The use of information and communication technology.

One objective of this project was to find out whether these could be incorporated into the design of a Professional Doctorate.

The Programme can be described as an empty curriculum model, with each stage differentiated by the degree of student autonomy involved.

Since the M.A was first offered in 1998, over 120 students have been awarded the degree. There exists therefore a critical mass of students for whom a work-based Professional Doctorate could be of interest.

Such a doctorate would help the University achieve its mission, namely:

> "Coventry University aims to provide educational opportunities to the maximum sustainable extent, through high quality teaching and research. It is a national institution with international perspectives, but it gives particular attention to the economic and social well-being of its local and regional environment. It encourages enterprise through the application of knowledge, and is founded upon moral values and the principles of equality, justice and academic freedom."

And also a number of strategic aims, including:

> "Facilitate wide participation in the University's provision through flexible structures and procedures, and in partnership with others."

And:

> "Be the first choice university to potential students, partner organisations and employers in the region, within the main areas of the university's work."

This is complemented by the Business School's business plan, which states the following strategic objectives, namely to:

> "Enhance our track record in, and reputation for, successful innovation in the development and delivery of modules and courses."

And to:

> "Develop a flagship area which we can be identified with."

The Postgraduate Work-based Learning Programme, I believe, could represent that "flagship area", with students being able to progress from Postgraduate Certificate through to a Professional Doctorate.

The development of a Professional Doctorate has to be underpinned by a well researched and developed pedagogy. It is here that I intend my project to make a substantial contribution to knowledge and practice in this area.

For me there are a number of puzzles, as outlined above, at the heart of my research that I will try to find answers to, and it is my proposals for the introduction of a Professional Doctorate at Coventry University which could in turn affect the practice of the wider academic community.

It may be however that my project will produce as many, or more, questions than it answers, but it is crucial if Professional Doctorates are to be successful that the academic community must have a shared view on at least the first two questions I raised at the outset:

- What defines doctoral level work?
- How can a Professional Doctorate be different, yet equivalent to, a PhD?

It is interesting, and not a little worrying, that UKCGE (2002: 10) commented about this as follows:

> "In 1999, the UKCGE identified that there was no coherent picture of what these (Professional Doctorates) were, of how they operated, and of how they related to other forms of Doctorate."

Little appears to have changed because in 2005, the Economic and Social Research Council's web site whilst welcoming the development of Professional Doctorates states:

> "However, there is currently much variability in terms of expectations, content and level."

Such are the Council's concerns that it goes on to state that it will not "fund students who choose this route at this stage."

The literature review will to try to shed some light on what lies behind these concerns and what has to be done, in terms of a Professional Doctorate at Coventry, to remedy this situation.

I have disseminated some of my work through the presentation of conference papers and I have written a number of articles which have been published in Innovations in Education and Teaching International. I have given details of these below as evidence of my engagement with critical communities.

Johnson, D.L. (2000) "The use of learning theories in the design of a work-based learning course at Masters- Level", *Innovations in Education and Training International*, 37 (2) May, ISSN: 1470-3297.

Johnson, D.L. (2001) "The opportunities, benefits and barriers to the introduction of work-based learning in higher education", *Innovations in Education and Teaching International* , 38 (4) November, pp. 364-368, ISSN: 1470-3297.

Johnson, D.L. (2005) "Assessment Matters: some issues concerning the supervision and assessment of work-based doctorates", *Innovations in Education and Training International*, 42 (1) February, pp 89-94, ISSN: 1470- 3297

I have also contributed a chapter to the following book:

Johnson, D. L., (2003), "How will the main stakeholders, the learners, the employers and the university, view the introduction of work-based learning courses?" in "Progress in Education", edited by Nata, R., Nova Science Publishers Inc, New York, USA.

I have presented papers at the following conferences:

Bird, L., Johnson, D.L. and Montague, T. (2002) Barriers and blockages to work-based learning, *The Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education Annual Conference 2002*, 26-28 June, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh.

Johnson, D.L. (2002) The operation of an MA in Management where the mode of study is by work-based learning, *Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 12-15 June, MeMaster University, Canada.

Johnson, D. L. (2004), Postgraduate Work-based Learning Developments at Coventry Business School, Network of International Business Schools, May 14th, Coventry University.

Johnson, D. L. (2004), Assessment Matters: some issues concerning the supervision and assessment of work-based doctorates, *ELATE Conference*, June 24th, Coventry University.

I have also attended conferences and workshops during the period 2003-4 held by the United Kingdom Council for Graduate Education and the British Academy of Management which have given me the opportunity to hear, through the papers presented and the plenary sessions, what others are doing in the area of Professional Doctorates and to test out my thinking by debate and questioning.

Prior to commencing my own Professional Doctorate Studies at Middlesex University, I had had very little experience of, or exposure to, doctorates so this project has represented a journey for me, but as a result I now feel able to contribute

to the development of doctoral education at Coventry University specifically and Higher Education in general.

The project is divided in to two parts. Volume One deals with a review of the literature surrounding the PhD and Professional Doctorate, and includes material resulting from a series of interviews conducted with academics and employers. Volume Two deals with the design of a Professional Doctorate for Coventry University.

Chapter 2 - Terms of Reference.

The aim of this project is:

"The Collaborative Development of a Professional Doctorate for Coventry University."

Associated with this are a number of objectives, namely to:

- Critically evaluate the differences between a PhD and a Professional Doctorate. (Volume 1)

- Identify the key issues to be considered in the design of a Professional Doctorate at Coventry University. (Volume 1)

- Identify the stakeholders, or communities of interest, where Professional Doctorates are concerned, and understand their respective influence. (Volume 1)

- Evaluate whether the key characteristics of the Postgraduate Work-based Learning programme at Coventry Business School are applicable to a Professional Doctorate. (Volume 1)

- Design a Professional Doctorate for Coventry Business School that can then be used as a template for Professional Doctorates in general. (Volume 2)

- Disseminate key parts of my work to both the academic and professional communities through the production of journal articles, book chapters and conference papers. (Volume 2)

In addition, the project will meet my personal learning outcomes by informing my practice as a work-based practitioner and as a curriculum designer.

Although the project will need to compare and contrast the Professional Doctorate with the PhD and explain any differences, the focus of this work is the Professional Doctorate. Therefore if the project draws attention to any issues with the PhD, any consideration as to how those issues should be addressed are outside the scope of the project.

Chapter Three - Research Methodology.

The research for this project focused on two main activities:

- A critical evaluation of the literature.
- Conversations with a number of academics, both at Coventry University and elsewhere, professional bodies, and employers.

In addition, past and current students from the M.A. in Management at Coventry Business School were surveyed on their level of interest in furthering their studies at doctoral level and their preferred award title, and the results of this are dealt with in Volume 2.

Academics at Coventry Business School were also surveyed on their perceptions of the PhD and the Professional Doctorate in an exercise that replicated a survey conducted by UKCGE (2002:43), and this is included in Volume 1.

The project therefore, with the exception of the above limited surveys, does not lend itself to quantitative research methods, where there are stated statistical protocols that can be applied to determine the reliability of the numerical outcomes.

This project is about the "why", the "what", and the "how" of Professional Doctorates (Yin, 1994:4-9) The Professional Doctorate is considered as a case study in its own right, and as Yin stated case studies can be either:

- Exploratory.
- Explanatory.
- Descriptive.

This project is both "exploratory" and "explanatory" and is therefore, in terms of the "why", "what" and "how" of Professional Doctorates, concerned with qualitative research methods.

Qualitative research methods do not have the benefit of statistical protocols that can be used, and indeed the only protocol is as determined by the researcher, who then has to convince the audience of the validity and reliability of the methodology.

To that end I have adopted the following framework, based on four central principles for assessing qualitative research evidence (Spencer, Ritchie, Lewis and Dillon, 2003:7).

The principles have in turn led to the generation of eighteen appraisal questions designed to help the assessment of the research and its findings of which the authors say:

> "Indeed, most of them are simply emblems of sound and logical enquiry, whatever its form or purpose."

The principles are:

1. Contributory – in advancing wider knowledge or understanding about policy, practice, theory or a particular substantive field.

2. Defensible – in design by providing a research strategy that can address the evaluative questions posed.

3. Rigorous – in conduct through the systematic and transparent collection, analysis and interpretation of qualitative data.

4. Credible – in claim through offering well founded and plausible arguments about the significance of the evidence generated.

Yin(1994: 20-29) also set out the components of research design as being:

1. The study's question(s).

2. Its proposition(s) if any.

3. Its unit(s) of analysis.

4. The logic linking the data to the proposition(s).

5. The criteria for interpreting the findings.

Taking each of the components in turn, the research design for this project looks as follows.

The study's question(s).	Why and how do universities offer Professional Doctorates? What do they do?
Its proposition(s), if any.	1. There is dissatisfaction with the PhD. 2. The PhD and the Professional Doctorate are hard to differentiate.
Its unit(s) of analysis.	1. Professional Doctorates and Higher Education. 2. Higher Education and Coventry University. 3. Coventry University and Professional Doctorates.
The logic linking the data to the propositions.	An exploration and an explanation of the units of analysis will enable the propositions to be evaluated leading to key issues being addressed in the design of a Professional Doctorate at Coventry University.

The criteria for interpreting the findings.	Using the Spencer et al (2003)framework and the principles of: 1. Contributory. 2. Defensible. 3. Rigorous. 4. Credible.

The above propositions show that a deductive approach has been adopted. Saunders et al (2000), state that this is where a theory, a hypothesis, or in this case proposition, is developed and where a research strategy is then designed to test it.

It was also clear that conducting discussions with a variety of people would also be important. Saunders et al see this as belonging to the inductive approach to research where data is collected and analysed and where a theory is then developed for analysis.

Saunders et al state that the deductive and inductive approaches to research "should not be seen as mutually exclusive." This project therefore uses both approaches, albeit that the deductive approach with its attendant sequentially staged process, as set out above, provides the main influence.

The point also needs to be made that this project is about Mode 2 Knowledge and not Mode 1 Knowledge as defined by Scott (2004:41-55).

There is a tension between theory-orientated or Mode 1 Knowledge and practice-based knowledge or Mode 2 Knowledge. Gibbons et al (1994) see a distinction between disciplinary knowledge constructed in the university which is understood as linear, causal and cumulative (Mode 1), and trans-disciplinary knowledge produced outside the university (Mode 2) which is understood to be autonomous, as the source for identifying problems and solutions resting in the practice setting, and is synoptic rather than reductionist, with the emphasis on innovation and is hierarchical and transcient.

Universities traditionally view knowledge as cumulative in that knowledge develops in the footsteps of previous theories and ideas, therefore the PhD is judged by a paradigm laboriously built up by the work of others in the discipline. The knowledge developed becomes abstract, esoteric, and specialized (Scott, 2004: 43).

This project is not about knowledge for knowledge sake but it is very much about seeking to change the practice of Coventry University by the introduction of a Professional Doctorate and the intellectual challenges involved in the design of the curriculum.

The introduction of a Professional Doctorate at any university cannot be achieved by any one individual, and certainly not by me. The success or otherwise of seeking approval from a university to run a Professional Doctorate has to be based on a team approach thereby representing good professional practice.

There are many stakeholders where the introduction of a Professional Doctorate is concerned. The term "stakeholder" is increasingly being replaced with the more, I think, meaningful "communities of interest." The communities of interest where a Professional Doctorate is concerned include the participants (actual and potential), employers, academics, the University, and Higher Education in general, and they enjoy varying amounts of power and interest. These have all had to be taken account of in the course of this work, introducing the notion therefore of some degree of customisation, necessitating a research and development methodology.

The stakeholders were identified by a variety of means – from the literature, from discussions with a range of individuals and from my own knowledge and experience.

My work also involves a degree of Action Research. Action Research has been interpreted by management researchers in a variety of ways, but there are three common themes within the literature:

1. The focus and emphasis on the purpose of the research.
(Cunningham 1995:515-529)

2. It relates to the involvement of practitioners in the research and in particular a close collaboration between practitioners and researchers. Eden and Huxham (1996:75), argue that the findings of action research result from "involvement with members of an organisation over a matter which is of genuine concern to them." Therefore the researcher is part of the organisation within which the research and change process is taking place.(Zuber-Skerritt, 1996:83-105)

3. It should have implications beyond the immediate project- the results could inform other contexts. In the case of this project this would be the development of Professional Doctorates elsewhere.

Action research leads to change (an iteration), which can then be evaluated leading to further action (another iteration). This project will lead to a proposal for change but the change will not be implemented if at all, and there are many reasons why that could happen, until after my work has been submitted therefore evaluation of what subsequently happens at Coventry University does not form part of this project.

Therefore this project is about the design of a Professional Doctorate for Coventry University, and will propose a structure, and how it should operate. The preparation of course documentation and the production of module descriptors do not form part of this project. They would need to be written in due course by the members of the team, identified as having expertise in those areas.

I have been engaged with work-based learning since 1996 both as a designer of postgraduate courses and as a student. It is safe to say therefore that as an "insider researcher" I came to this dissertation with "baggage", which could be defined as pre-conceived ideas, prejudice and past experience. Therefore I have had to look for ways of ensuring that my work remains objective, and therefore credible, and not so subjective as to be thought worthless. The most obvious way of achieving this was to look for ways of involving others and triangulation of data.

Being an insider researcher however is not just a negative concept as there are positive aspects to this as well. I have, through my work since 1996, an understanding

of work-based learning and have built up over that time a network of contacts that I could and did approach.

In some ways my work touches on Appreciative Inquiry, but does not adopt it in the ways developed by David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva in the 1980's. The basis of their approach is that organisations most often engage in inquiries into problems, the results of which spawn other problems producing a negative self-image. They advocate organisations inquiring after its good points, its strengths, and in so doing it will discover more which can then be used to build a positive self-image where good practice and other positive attributes become the norm.

The inquiry into organisational life should have four characteristics, according to Cooper and Srivastva (1987:129-169). It should be:

- Appreciative.
- Applicable.
- Provocative.
- Collaborative.

My work will seek to *appreciate* the positive aspects of the work of others, and will seek to incorporate such good practice in to the design of a Professional Doctorate at Coventry University, but must as a result of critiquing the literature recognise flaws and problems.

The inquiry will be *applicable* to the work I am doing, and whilst not deliberately setting out to do so, will be *provocative* as a means of further developing Professional Doctorates.

For the reasons stated earlier the project will be *collaborative.* I will talk to a range of individuals to gain an understanding through their descriptions thereby helping me to explain and evaluate as outlined at the start of the chapter, and to test out my emerging grasp of the issues and possible solutions.

The research will enable me to consider "blue sky" ideas that can then be tested out on my discussants. My research if successful will deliver a framework but it will then

need a small team to develop the modules, gain University approval and deliver the programme.

The research approach adopted, as stated earlier, is qualitative. The dissertation does not lend itself to a quantitative approach as it is concerned with how discussants feel about issues and ideas and my evaluation of the literature. There are therefore no particular protocols that can be adopted to evaluate the findings, and so the research is based on my evaluation, which has been subjected to scrutiny in the following ways:

1. Feed-back from academic supervisors.
2. Feed-back from referees on draft articles.
3. Approval processes at Coventry University.
4. Discussions with key staff at Coventry University.
5. Feedback from conference presentations.

As stated at the outset the research involves a critical evaluation of the literature which looks at the development of the PhD and Professional Doctorates, and the work of Simpson (1983) provides valuable background to the doctorate award in Britain.

An understanding of the literature available not only supports and underpins my analysis but also alerted me to issues that I needed to consider and research further.

Where other universities are concerned, I looked for any published articles, web-sites, and QAA reports to gain a picture of developments nationally. In particular the course approval documentation for Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) and Professional Doctorates at the universities of Brighton, Portsmouth and Liverpool John Moores, provided valuable insights in to practice elsewhere.

I have also reviewed the course literature for DBA's offered at the following universities:

- Cranfield.
- De Montfort.
- Durham.
- UCE.

- Henley.
- Aston.
- Hull.

These were selected on the basis that they were the only ones to appear on the Association of Business School's website in 2003. I accessed each of the universities via their web-site and asked for the course information packs to be sent to me.

I am also studying for a Professional Doctorate at Middlesex University and although that can be viewed as valuable, from an ethnographic approach, I consider that it would be too sensitive to directly include any evaluation of the course for this project. Inevitably though, my experience as a student will have influenced my thinking about the design and operation of a Professional Doctorate at Coventry.

The rationale for this approach is very basic namely to:

- Avoid re-inventing the wheel.
- Find examples of good practice.
- Take on board the lessons derived from the reflective learning of others.

It would clearly not have been possible to meet and talk to all those with an interest or otherwise in Professional Doctorates. I therefore held conversations with a range of people drawn from my "network". In that sense the sample is purposive.

The approach therefore also involved me in two further modes of knowledge as identified by Scott. These are Mode 3 Knowledge (Dispositional and Transdisciplinary Knowledge), the ability to reflect on my own practical experience and to go beyond it, and Mode 4 Knowledge (Critical Knowledge), which is reflection on matters that perhaps others would prefer to have left alone.

At the outset this project was to have involved collaboration with Higher Education institutions outside of Coventry University. Following strong initial statements of intention from a number of institutions, nothing happened for a variety of reasons:

- University of Portsmouth – staff disillusionment with the University's approval processes.
- Fire Service College – the Fire Service College adopted Individual Professional Development Schemes and seems to have turned its back on Higher Education.
- University College Chester – had its own regulatory problems.

Although very disappointing at the time, this did not in the end present a major problem and the situation was completely outside of my control or ability to influence the events concerned.

Collaboration therefore had to take the form of working with individuals within Coventry University. This also proved to be an interesting, and at times frustrating experience, because the levels of engagement and pace were again outside of my control.

The academic year 2003/4 at Coventry University had also been largely dominated by the retirement of the current Vice Chancellor at the end of the year and the arrival of the new Vice Chancellor, producing inertia and a corporate holding of breath. In all of this my timescales for completing this project were pushed, albeit not deliberately down the agenda. However it is true to say that the new Vice Chancellor has come with a positive interest in work-based learning and Professional Doctorates, and therefore the pace and interest levels have now picked up significantly.

At the end of Volume 1, I will evaluate my work against the principles established by Spencer, Ritchie, Lewis and Dillon (2003: 7), as shown below.

Principle	**Evaluation**
Contributory	
Defensible	
Rigorous	
Credible	

The research involves an evaluation of the published work of others and consideration of the operation of Professional Doctorates at other universities. To that end the project is a critical consumer of the work of others in order to produce an original solution to an issue of professional practice at Coventry University. This approach is supported by Robson (2002:202) who states that the purpose of evaluation is to:

> "Assess the effect and effectiveness of something, typically some innovation, intervention, policy, practice or service."

While not claiming originality for the "idea" of Professional Doctorates per se, because clearly they have been in existence for some years, the originality of this project will come from the design and proposed operation of such a course at Coventry and in particular the way the issues identified are addressed.

In planning the structure of this project it soon became clear that separating the work in to two distinct but linked volumes represented the best way forward. Volume 1 therefore is the literature review representing the "research". Volume 2 represents the application of the knowledge gained from Volume 1, to make proposals for a Professional Doctorate at Coventry University and is therefore the "and development" aspect of the project.

Chapter 4 - Literature Review.

The focus of my research was one of seeking to change professional practice at Coventry University in the area of doctoral provision through the introduction of a Professional Doctorate in the Business School.

In reading the literature I adopted the following approach, based on Hursthouse's (2003: 14-19) three principles:

1. The principle of charity: to try to find the best (the most reasonable or plausible) possible interpretation of what is written. As Hursthouse states:

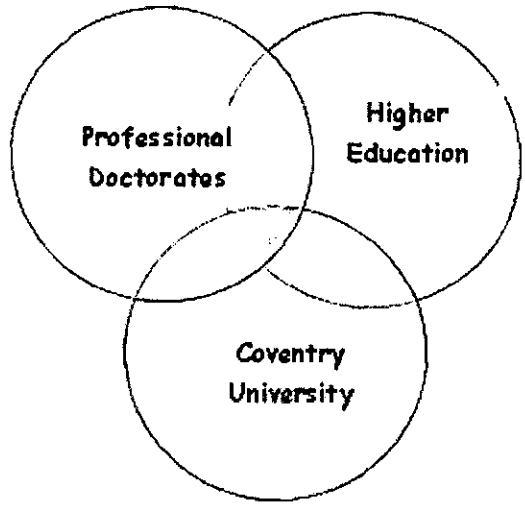
> "Used properly, it helps to avoid making weak criticisms of what you read, which will help you to produce better arguments, and to learn more from what you read".

2. Playing devil's advocate: to be used when you agree with the author, when you may unconsciously be over charitable. (I have attempted to apply this to what I have written myself.)

3. Playing author's advocate: this involves the thinking of arguments or replies on the author's behalf.

It would have been very easy as a supporter of work-based learning for my reading and interpretation of the literature to be skewed and I hope that by adopting the above approach I have engaged with the literature critically and objectively.

The areas this literature review addresses can be mapped out using the following conceptual/diagrammatic model, which is adapted from the Triple Helix model devised by Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (2000:356):



Each circle represents a key domain in this issue- Professional Doctorates, Higher Education and Coventry University. This project will explore those domains namely:

- The Professional Doctorates and Higher Education.
- Higher Education and Coventry University.
- Coventry University and the Professional Doctorate.

The "revolution of the Professional Doctorate" is represented by the shaded area where all three domains over-lap.

There are also a number of stakeholders, or communities of interest, to be considered in any review of doctoral provision, and these perhaps will have differing levels of power and interest over the development of Professional Doctorates per se, and specifically the introduction of a Professional Doctorate at Coventry University.

These can be mapped onto a grid as follows:

		Interest	
		Low	**High**
Power	**Low**		**1.Students** **2.Academics (some)**
	High	**1.Academies (generally)**	**1.Government** **2.QAA** **3.Employers** **4.Universities** **5.Research Councils**

The grid shows that there were no stakeholders identified, who had low power/ low interest, and perhaps this is because of the polarisation of views on this topic.

Those stakeholders with high power/ high interest are:

- The Government – through dissatisfaction with the PhD, as will be discussed below.
- The QAA – by the determination of standards.
- Employers - demanding courses, including doctorates that are seen as relevant.
- Universities –in response to changes in demand.
- Research Councils- while welcoming the development of Professional Doctorates, the Economic and Social Research Council has decided not to fund students who choose this route, at this stage, as stated on their web-site in February 2005. The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council is however supportive of Professional Doctorates.

I have identified students and some academics as individually having low power/ high interest but collectively they could be identified as having high power/ high interest. Students want courses that they see as accessible and relevant, and are recognised by employers as having a value. Some academics are involved with doctoral provision and are pedagogically in tune with work-based learning but can struggle to introduce

courses that are very much about process in a more traditional setting where the emphasis is on academic content.

Finally there is the general body of academies that are traditional in outlook and doubt the academic rigour and equivalence of Professional Doctorates and work-based learning.

The Economic and Social Research Council's (ESRC) web-site (2005) demonstrates the dilemma that faces Professional Doctorates as on the one hand the ESRC "welcomes the development of Professional Doctorates" and acknowledges their potential "to enable students to more directly apply academic knowledge and training". It then goes on to say:

> "However there is currently much variability in terms of expectations, content and level. Whilst the ESRC will recognise professional doctorates in order to assure the quality and level of training provided, it has decided not to fund students who choose this route at this stage".

These were the themes that were explored throughout this project, starting with the development of the PhD and the Professional Doctorate.

For the purposes of this project the terms DBA and Professional Doctorate were used synonymously. As UKCGE (2002:15) stated:

> "In practice since the greatest pressure for the establishment of doctoral programmes has been within the context of the professional fields, the majority of taught doctorates are Professional Doctorates."

The literature review has taken account of the research on Professional Doctorates undertaken in Australia, which considered their development through to the second generation of degrees. The assumption being made here was that this research was of relevance to the situation in the United Kingdom and was therefore generalisable in nature.

In particular the literature review considered the following topics:

- The development of the PhD and the Professional Doctorate.
- Can a Professional Doctorate be differentiated from a PhD?
- Research or research and development?
- Learning Outcomes.
- To credit rate or not to credit rate?
- Original Contribution.
- The Issue of Publication.
- Assessment and Standards.
- The Candidates for a Professional Doctorate.
- Other Universities.

At the end of each topic the major challenges and considerations for designers of Professional Doctorates have been summarised.

I have also, because it seemed the most appropriate way of handling it, introduced into the literature review any relevant comments and views from the discussants I met with in the course of my research.

Development of the PhD and Professional Doctorates.

The development of the PhD is covered by Simpson (1983) and therefore I have only touched on matters that seemed, to me at least, to create a thread through to the development of Professional Doctorates.

The PhD was only introduced into the United Kingdom in the early part of the last century. It was at the United Kingdom Universities Conference, in May 1917, that a recommendation was made to introduce the PhD, and it was subsequently first introduced, by Oxford University.

The development of the doctorate seems even in the 19th century to have been demand rather than supply led. The demand for such awards was twofold. Firstly, doctorates were introduced to satisfy students from North Ameriea, where doetorates had been awarded since 1860 (and in German Universities before that), and in turn they became popular with home students.

But secondly and perhaps more importantly, there was an increasing recognition that Britain was beginning to lag behind other countries in the training of her scientists and other thinkers with serious loss of eeonomic power and prestige.

In 1860, the London University Doctorate of Science had been introduced. This was assessed initially by examination, with the result that it stifled originality. It was later transformed into a researeh degree.

This is interesting because it would appear to mirror what some aeademies feel is currently happening to Professional Doctorates as the pressure to conform to PhD examination methods is now stifling their development.

The PhD in its current format now started to take shape, demonstrating recognition of the importance of research, original thinking and instruction in research to help the country keep its position in the world. There is the beginning here of the tension that still exists in Higher Education between research and teaching. And there is a further tension between research, designed to fill a gap in existing knowledge, and applied research, designed to solve a problem or an issue, that still exists in Higher Education.

The development of Professional Doetorates, rather like the development of PhD's nearly a century before, stemmed, in part, from government dissatisfaction with the narrow career focus of the PhD. In a White Paper (Office of Science and Technology, 1993: 3), this was expressed as the:

> "Government welcomes the growth of postgraduate courses. It is concerned, however, that the traditional PhD is not well matched to the needs of careers outside research in academia or an industrial researeh laboratory."

This is evidenced by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council which states on its web-site (2005) when talking about the Engineering Doctorate (EngD):

> "It is a radical alternative to the traditional PhD, being better suited to the needs of industry, and providing a more vocationally orientated doctorate in engineering. Initial evidence suggests that students do have better job offers and starting salaries than those carrying out more traditional PhD or MSc training."

Dissatisfaction extended beyond Government to employers. UKCGE (2002: 11) reported that:

> "In many other areas the PhD has been rejected as too academic and having insufficient focus on the ability to apply knowledge and skills outside."

McWilliam et al (2002: 7) found that the growth in Professional Doctorates could be attributed to many things ranging from widespread criticism of the PhD, changes to professional practice and changes within Higher Education, and outlined (p. 8) the main weaknesses of the PhD as being the:

- Lack of consistency or quality assurance across programmes.
- Programmes are driven by the philosophy of science in isolation from other key areas.
- Aging and inwardly facing academy.
- Decline in the quality of graduates.
- Failure to address teamwork skills, good workplace practices, creativity and lateral thinking.
- Over specialisation at the expense of risk-taking and innovation.
- Maintenance of the gap between knowledge and skills.

It is clear from this list why there is dissatisfaction with the PhD. It seems that until recently the bulk of Higher Education had been prepared to continue with the PhD in its traditional form despite the growing dissatisfaction. Some universities have

allowed the "dissenters" to develop another type of doctorate, the Professional Doctorate, which also has its imperfections as will be discussed later, thereby causing further widespread confusion and dissatisfaction.

Where Professional Doctorates are concerned, governments could be accused of creating a cult of relevance (Boud and Solomon, 2001) aimed at encouraging closer relationships between universities and the world of professional practice which may be seen by some as unacceptable vocationalism. However the evidence from Australia is that in practice where Professional Doctorates are concerned the closer relationship between universities and the world of professional practice does not exist.

McWilliam et al (2002: ix-x) found that most:

> "Operational professional doctorate programs may be characterised as having "surface" level links", to industry."

Although based on research in Australia there is no reason to doubt its applicability to the UK. When developing courses academics like and need to get the support of the organisation or professions in the sector concerned, yet once the course is approved they like to be allowed to get on with it with little outside interference. At a surface level there is likely to be some engagement with industries and professions, and in some cases this extends to involvement in delivery, supervision and assessment but as McWilliams et al state: "this is likely to be limited and ad-hoc." They found no evidence that surface-level involvement would in time take on a deeper engagement. Deeper level involvement would place the industry or profession as an equal partner in terms of development, delivery supervision and assessment.

Nevertheless, the UKCGE (2002:12) concluded that:

> "The alternative forms of doctoral education, of which Professional Doctorates are one example, have been developed as a positive response to an identified need, whether of industry and commerce or the public sector."

Yet it is interesting to note that the working group brought together by the UKCGE to consider Professional Doctorates, which "brought to its task wide experience of professional doctorates across a variety of academic and professional specialisms". (UKCGE, 2002:8), had no representatives from employers or professional practice! The UKCGE itself therefore did not appear to be seeking deeper level involvement!

Scott (2004:101) found that the dominant conduit for engagement with professional practice is the one between the tutor and the student. The Professional Doctorate is about bringing together the domains of research and professional practice and "enabling their mutual scrutiny." The tutors' main qualification for knowledge of the professional practice concerned is usually based on their research and consultancy work. This may give them a context against which to view the research but one has to question the self-imposed legitimacy of academics representing professional practice, as in reality this can only come from professional practice being involved as an equal partner in the process.

Burns and Chisholm (2000:304) discuss the need for education to be seen as relevant, and hence the growth of work-based learning:

> "However, industry in general usually identifies specific needs to support performance and economic growth and looks for specific responses. Thus, educators have to recognise the importance of relevance and impact of the workplace."

While accepting that universities have to remain relevant, there is a danger if universities start to respond to governments and industry purely as its customers, it may lead to a series of quick fixes that satisfy no-one. While the student may be viewed as a customer, universities should also remember that the student is also a product of the university, hence the importance of academic standards and in the case of Professional Doctorates the need to demonstrate equivalence. There are also occasions when it is right for students to be given theoretical or methodological road maps in order to further their learning.

Some academics therefore are concerned about the academic rigour and equivalence of Professional Doctorate's, and also by work-based learning, and these concerns will be exacerbated if the two are put together.

The impression gained from the literature, and from my discussants, is a feeling that some academics are concerned that the research requirement in a Professional Doctorate is less rigorous than for a PhD and consequently are unhappy that it confers the title of doctor.

McWilliam et al (2002:10) summarised the problems surrounding the Professional Doctorate, and although they are based on the Australian experience, I think they act as a good checklist for all such degrees:

- A lack of definitional clarity.
- Widespread rumours of "dumbing-down".
- Concerns that critical thinking is a casualty of pragmatism.
- Domination of the award by universities, accompanied by professional/industry apathy.
- Professional part-time students who are often time-poor and stressed.
- Non-traditional assessment putting quality assurance at risk.
- Trial and error logic.
- Lack of inter-institutional partnerships.
- Fierce competition within a shrinking market.
- Lack of data on completion rates.
- Lack of responsiveness to non-traditional student needs.

Any university therefore looking to introduce a Professional Doctorate needs to find answers to the above points, because it already appears that as a reaction to dissatisfaction with the PhD, Higher Education in creating Professional Doctorates has added to the dissatisfaction and created further confusion and uncertainty.

What follows will deal with what are agreed in the literature as the key issues of difference and equivalence. This project will not discuss the rigour or equivalence of

work-based learning per se, as the assumption being made here is that they are accepted. Discussion of the learning theories underpinning work-based learning are covered in Johnson (2000:129-133).

The Major Challenges and Considerations for Designers of Professional Doctorates.

- The demand for Professional Doctorates arises from Government and employer dissatisfaction with the PhD.
- There are identified weaknesses with both the PhD and the Professional Doctorate.
- Although Professional Doctorates should encourage closer links between Higher Education and employers, the evidence available shows this not to be the case.
- Dissatisfaction with the PhD has led to the development of Professional Doctorates which has created further dissatisfaction and confusion for all stakeholders.

Can a Professional Doctorate be differentiated from a PhD?

A Professional Doctorate is considered to be equivalent, but different to a PhD (UKCGE,2002:62). The words "equivalent" and "different to" look straightforward, but what do they mean in reality? I would also add that Professional Doctorates have to be seen as "relevant" and "fit for purpose", measures that do not have to be applied to a PhD. (I am using the term "relevant" to mean relevant to a particular field of professional practice or indeed an organisational context.)

Where does the notion of "equivalence" come from? Although there does not appear to be any statutory or regulatory imperative as such, the need for equivalence is brought about less directly by such mechanisms as the credit rating of doctorates, and the application of doctoral level descriptors.

Hoddell (2004) suggested that where the Professional Doctorate is concerned it may well be that the use of the word "doctorate" in the title may cause some academics to automatically view it as a doctorate in their terms, namely the PhD. What word however could replace "doctorate" and not hinder the need to demonstrate and be thought of as equivalent? A failure to use the word "doctorate" may send out all the wrong signals to students, employers and academics.

The credibility of the Professional Doctorate depends upon the market, in terms of students and employers, being clear as to what it stands for, its status, how it differs from a PhD and their acceptance that it is an equivalent degree.

UKCGE (2002:43) surveyed academics on their perceptions of the PhD and Professional Doctorate, the results of which are shown below (all figures are expressed as percentages). I repeated this exercise at Coventry Business School in late 2003 and the results are shown in bold:

Question	Those with PhDs				Those without a PhD			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
1. Do you consider that a Professional Doctorate and a PhD represent a similar level of academic challenge?	55	**50**	43	**50**	64	**88**	29	**12**
2. Do you consider that a Professional Doctorate and a PhD confer a similar status on those who hold them?	52	**64**	48	**36**	64	**76**	29	**24**
3. Do you consider that a Professional Doctorate qualification would equip someone for a position as an academic in the same way as a PhD would?	38	**64**	57	**36**	71	**76**	21	**24**
4. Do you consider that a Professional Doctorate would equip someone for doctoral level of understanding and practice in their professional field more adequately than a PhD?	64	**50**	33	**50**	93	**100**	0	**0**

(Note: in the UKCGE'S original survey the results did not add up to 100%. I am assuming that some respondents were undecided, whereas when replicating the survey I only allowed my respondents to answer "yes" or "no".)

UKCGE found that their respondents attitude was "strongly influenced" by whether or not they held a PhD. In the survey at Coventry Business School, a higher percentage of those with a PhD (50 as opposed to 43%) answered "No" to question 1. Included in my sample were a number of academics who had only been awarded their PhD in the last year and they felt very strongly that the two did not equate in terms of academic challenge. Interestingly among those without a PhD the percentage who answered "Yes" was higher at 88%.

For question 2, the percentage at Coventry Business School answering "Yes" was higher for both those with and without a PhD. There would appear to be a contradiction between the answers of those with a PhD to questions 1 and 2 in that 50% say the academic challenge is not the same yet 64% say they confer similar status, where the UKCGE figure was 52%. Many of those answering "Yes" however felt that their response reflected the reality of the situation but did not agree that it was right.

The UKCGE survey showed that where question 3 is concerned only 38% of those with a PhD felt that the Professional Doctorate would equip someone for a career in academia in the same way as a PhD. At Coventry the figure was 64% reflecting the difficulties respondents had in answering this question as they wanted to qualify their answer in terms of the profession involved in the Professional Doctorate and the university concerned, both in terms of where it was awarded and as a potential employer.

Question 4 showed that 100% of those at Coventry without a PhD felt that the Professional Doctorate would better equip someone, in terms of understanding and practice, than a PhD. Of those with a PhD only 50% felt this to be the case, and again there were views that in some professions a PhD would be better, down from 64% in the UKCGE survey.

Although a simple exercise it is helpful in getting at least some sort of view on this issue of the feelings of staff in Coventry Business School. It shows that those with a PhD will need a lot of convincing about the equivalence of a Professional Doctorate.

The problem for the Professional Doctorate is summed up by UKCGE (2002:19):

> "A Professional Doctorate is, to some extent, expected to measure up to two different yardsticks – one being the defined learning outcomes for the award, and the other being the expectation that, as a doctorate, it must measure up to the implicit but uncodified understanding of the level of achievement represented by the PhD."

Its credibility therefore can only be achieved if Higher Education itself is clear about these issues, and it is not evident from my research that this is the case.

Bareham et al (2000:401) stated that the DBA can be viewed as a form of work-based learning and as such:

> "Represents the coming of age of work-based learning within the higher education curriculum".

And yet Scott (2004: 1) stated that:

> "Professional Doctorates exist in the twilight zone between the University and the workplace."

This echoes the view of McWilliam et al (2002: 1) who stated:

> "On the other hand there are many signs that these programs sit somewhat awkwardly within the postgraduate offerings of Australian universities, an outsider to all but those who manage, teach and study within a particular professional doctorate program."

The newness of and confusion surrounding Professional Doctorates will cause some prospective students and their employers to pause for thought and consider the risk involved in terms of time, cost and credibility. Scott (2004: 76) thinks they will deal with this by seeking to minimise the risk in doing a Professional Doctorate by only enrolling somewhere they consider to be prestigious. This will, if correct, have implications for Coventry University as this will bring in to play such issues as performance league tables where it does not enjoy a particularly high standing.

This next part of the literature review will consider whether the PhD and the Professional Doctorate can be differentiated and if so how? It will also explore why, if the Professional Doctorates represents "a coming of age of work-based learning" they inhabit a "twilight zone"?

The Major Challenges and Considerations for Designers of Professional Doctorates.

- A Professional Doctorate is equivalent yet different to a PhD. It should also be "relevant" and "fit for purpose".
- Professional Doctorates are judged against two yardsticks – firstly the PhD and secondly its own defined learning outcomes.
- Higher Education does not have a shared vision where the Professional Doctorate is concerned.
- Students and employers will seek to minimise the risks associated with studying for a Professional Doctorate by enrolling at what is perceived as a prestigious university.

Research or Research and Development?

It is necessary to start with some definitions to aid understanding of the difference between a PhD and a Professional Doctorate.

Portlock, Castle and Mills (2001: 24) defined the PhD as being:

> "Fundamentally about the application of research training and methodology to a narrow field of full-time study, leading to a project thesis."

Cranfield University (2003: 2) defined its DBA as a:

> "Research based degree, but unlike the PhD it is driven by a topical, applied management issue or problem rather than an academic research question. The outcome of the research is designed to provide valuable insights to the sponsoring organisation, in addition to contributing to our knowledge of its field of management."

This emphasises the earlier point made that the Professional Doctorate is equivalent but different to a PhD.

In a trilogy of papers, (2000-2001), Bareham et al looked at the DBA in terms of: "What is it for?", "Form and Function", and "Assessment and Standards". Bareham et al (2000: 397) said that the DBA:

> "Is intended to provide a research-based development for those who are in, or who are destined for, senior management positions".

The UKCGE (2002:18) summed up the case for a Professional Doctorate as:

> "The experience of a doctorate can reasonably be expected to generate a research based approach to solving problems, a systematic way of collecting evidence and an independent and open mind for the analysis and interpretation of evidence. These skills can be very usefully deployed in a number of

different contexts, as their value is certainly not confined to the academic world."

Quotes taken from the course literature of the universities offering the DBA reinforce this point:

Cranfield University (2003: 1):

> "The Cranfield DBA focuses on stretching minds rather than just filling them; and on creating the ability for individuals to critically evaluate both their own experience, the experience of others and the work of practitioner and academic experts."

University of Durham (2003: 2):

> "The Doctorate of Business Administration is primarily designed to enable a significant contribution to the enhancement of professional practice in the business area through the application and development of theoretical frameworks."

The above definitions show that it is the applied nature of the research which is the key element of a DBA, and therefore a Professional Doctorate programme, and it is this that distinguishes it from a more traditional PhD.

The PhD normally starts from what is known in a subject discipline to identify the gaps in knowledge in that field, while the Professional Doctorate normally starts from a problem, in effect what is not known.

The PhD is designed to produce the next generation of academics, yet in a pragmatic twist in Malaysia, where their equivalent of the QAA stipulates that 60% of a course team for a Masters level programme must possess a doctorate, academic staff prefer to undertake a Professional Doctorate at Australian universities because it can be completed in fewer years than a PhD. It appears therefore that at least in Malaysia equivalence is not an issue.

Walker (1998: 93-96) said that the EdD, another form of Professional Doctorate, was coneeptualised as:

> "Contributing to the development of professional praetice rather than research conducted primarily as a contribution to academic knowledge."

The implication is that Professional Doctorates should be about action, impact and improvement.

The PhD is about producing professional researehers while the Professional Doetorate is about producing senior professionals who appreciate the contribution that good research can make to decision making. Rather than perceiving research as an end in itself, the PhD position, a Professional Doctorate plaees research at the serviee of the professional practitioner.

The issue therefore seems to be that the PhD is about research, and the Professional Doctorate is about research and development, and this is explored by Scott (2004: 11) who cited Yeatman (1996) as identifying three kinds of knowledge which reveal a tension between theory-orientated and practice-based knowledge and then (pages 41-55) discusses Gibbons et al's (1994) typology of four modes of knowledge.

Yeatman's three types of knowledge and the first of Gibbon's two modes of knowledge are mapped against both the PhD and the Professional Doetorate in the table below.

Model Knowledge is knowledge that is constructed in the university and is understood as being linear, eausal and cumulative. Such knowledge develops on from the work of others but Scott argues in doing so becomes abstract, esoteric and specialized. Nevertheless this is what a PhD typically is judged against.

Mode 2 Knowledge however is knowledge that is produced outside the university and is typified as autonomous, as the (Scott, 2004: 41):

> "Source for identifying problems and solutions resting in the practice setting, it is synoptic rather than reductionist with the emphasis on innovation."

This type of knowledge is viewed with concern by some academics – how can it be assessed for example when there are no objective criteria? It is viewed as an inferior type of knowledge, as it does not develop the work of others, and is therefore not valued by academics.

Type of Knowledge (Yeatman)	**Applicable to the PhD or Professional Doctorate?**	**Typology of Knowledge (Gibbons)**
How to use theoretical analysis and scientifically orientated empirical research.	PhD – Concerned with research. Professional Doctorate – concerned with its application to professional practice.	Mode 1
How to reflect on the requirements of the practice and practice setting in question.	Professional Doctorate– Concerned with research and development.	Mode 2
How to work with service users to deliver and improve the service concerned.	Professional Doctorate– Concerned with research and development.	Mode 2

The above table shows that the PhD concentrates on Mode I Knowledge and the first of Yeatman's typology, with the Professional Doctorate addressing the remaining two and Mode 2 Knowledge. What this demonstrates is the difficulty surrounding equivalence and this tension, already a recurring theme throughout this project,

features time and again in the literature. As Brennan (1998:72) argued the Professional Doctorate has been created to add value to professional knowledge rather than academic knowledge, hence it has a perceived lesser status.

There has been an explosion in the volume of knowledge that has taken place in recent years and as a consequence the proportion of this that is new knowledge is rising rapidly. New knowledge (Mode 2 Knowledge) is more tentative than facts that have been tried and even proven over generations (Model Knowledge). As professional practice and its environment changes ever more rapidly, more knowledge becomes ephemeral, and it is important that obsolete assumptions and beliefs, yesterday's facts, are identified. Where Professional Doctorates are concerned, Higher Education has to accept that much of the new knowledge required for problem solving and decision making will be situational and context specific, and therefore very definitely Mode 2 Knowledge.

There are two further modes of knowledge – Mode 3 Dispositional and Transdisciplinary Knowledge and Mode 4 Critical Knowledge.

Scott (2004:47-51) sees Mode 3 Knowledge as accommodating Modes 1 and 2. Academic texts, produced outside of the practice setting, provide a resource for practitioners (Mode 1) but cannot provide technical knowledge (Mode 2) about professional practice. The knowledge that results from this interaction or synergy is about the "development of the individual through reflection".

Scott (2004:49) states that the:

> "Reflection occurs in relation to the activity under examination and is therefore action based. The student sees their practice in a different light, which means that the decisions they make in relation to future actions are different."

Mode 4 Knowledge is seen by Scott(2004:51) as having a purpose that is:

> "Explicitly or implicitly political and change orientated."

Critical Knowledge will enable the practitioner to question current practices and therefore their legitimacy in order to understand the reasons for a particular organisational phenomena.

The table above shows that the PhD is concerned with Mode 1 Knowledge and the Professional Doctorate primarily with Mode 2. This can be seen as simplistic and unrealistic but it quickly establishes the differences between the two types of doctorates. In reality Professional Doctorates are also concerned with Modes 3 and 4 Knowledge and must be cognisant of Mode 1 Knowledge as well. This cannot be said for traditional PhD's which are exclusively concerned with Mode 1 Knowledge.

It is interesting to note that Mode 2 Knowledge can in time start to mirror the disciplinary knowledge of a university subject discipline and become to all intents and purposes Mode 1 Knowledge. An example of this would be the professional institutes such as the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and the Chartered Management Institute where disciplinary knowledge becomes the basis for the institutes' examinations which then form the gateway to the profession.

Scott (2004: 25) stated that some universities have dealt with this tension by discontinuing their Professional Doctorates:

> "While the university re-designs the PhD with a greater focus on the integration of theory and practice, and the creation of more flexibility."

This is interesting in two ways. Firstly it denotes an acceptance by the universities concerned that there is a problem with the PhD, and secondly their view that if the PhD is re-designed then Professional Doctorates will not be needed. It also shows a lack of commitment to the further development of the Professional Doctorate. If there are accepted problems with the PhD would it not have been preferable to have corrected those rather than create a new type of doctorate and introduce a further set of issues and confusion, and in so doing finish up with a situation that appears to satisfy none of the stakeholders?

Whatever else they do, universities cannot disregard the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) where the design and delivery of courses are concerned. The QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (2001) has the following descriptor for qualifications at doctoral level and the table below maps the PhD and the Professional Doctorate against this.

The QAA descriptor is important because as Burns and Chisholm (2001:36) stated:

> "Postgraduate work-based learning is intended to enable individuals to prepare a programme of study that meets personal aspirations, fulfils company strategic objectives but still satisfies the appropriate QA standards."

The Mapping of Professional Doctorates and PhD's Against the QAA Framework Descriptor for Qualifications at Doctoral Level.

Doctorates are awarded to students who have demonstrated:	**PhD**	**Professional Doctorate**
1. The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research, or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication.	YES	YES
2. A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice.	YES	YES

Doctorates are awarded to students who have demonstrated:	**PhD**	**Professional Doctorate**
3. The general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems.	YES	YES
4. A detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.	YES	YES
Typically holders of the qualification will be able to:	**PhD**	**Professional Doctorates**
1. Make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences.	NO (No: because this encompasses both Modes 1 and 2, and the PhD addresses Mode 1 Knowledge only)	YES
2. Continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas, or approaches, and will have:	YES	YES
3. The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.	NO (No: because this is concerned with Mode 2 Knowledge)	YES

The table above shows that while the Professional Doctorate meets the QAA descriptor in full, the same cannot be said for the PhD, which is still seen by many as the gold standard for higher degrees. This will be viewed as a provocative claim by many academics and is based upon my interpretation of the descriptor, which clearly others may and will feel compelled to challenge.

The conclusion to be drawn from the above table is that Professional Doctorates are disadvantaged by the need to demonstrate equivalence to something that is flawed, which is also demonstrated by the work of McWilliams et al (2002) which identified problems with both the PhD and the Professional Doctorate.

The Major Challenges and Considerations for Designers of Professional Doctorates.

- The key element of a Professional Doctorate is the applied nature of the research.
- The PhD and the Professional Doctorate have different purposes.
- Professional Doctorates are about action, impact and improvement.
- The PhD is about research and the Professional Doctorate is about research and development.
- The tension between Mode 1 and Mode 2 Knowledge.
- Some universities have discontinued their Professional Doctorates and have redesigned their PhD's.
- The Professional Doctorate fully meets the QAA descriptor while the PhD, the accepted gold standard, does not.

Learning Outcomes.

A further significant difference between the two doctorates is that Professional Doctorates have learning outcomes as a result of having taught elements. The PhD currently does not have learning outcomes, although the new generation of PhD's with a taught element will have to have them.

Intended learning outcomes are crucial to the completion of a programme specification, but they have to be well thought out, well formed and specific. Where work-based learning is concerned, which is process driven rather than content driven, this is not so easy. The student will learn whatever is necessary to achieve the outcome desired in terms of their professional practice and this learning will not respect the domains of knowledge namely:

- What we know we know.
- What we know we don't know.
- What we don't know we don't know.

The first domain is likely to be dealt with by the award of credit for a pre-existing Masters. Specified learning outcomes apply to planned- learning, the province of the second domain, which is where the PhD is designed to build on an identified gap in the existing knowledge, and would apply to a Professional Doctorate in terms of the taught modules.

The learning involved in the third domain can be typified as emergent, unforeseen, and because it does not lend itself to the construction of a learning outcome(s), it has a tendency to be either unrecognised or completely discounted in academic terms. This can be viewed as the province of the Professional Doctorate.

For example the learning outcomes of a DBA, as established by Bareham, et al (2000: 482), which are applicable to Professional Doctorates as a whole, are seen as a student on completion being able to:

- Appreciate the potential contribution of research to the work of senior managers, thereby enhancing the professional empathy towards research as a vehicle for policy improvement.
- Develop research skills, "...concerned with researching real business and management issues via the critical review and systematic application of appropriate theories and research to professional practice." (Association of Business Schools, 1997: 1)
- Make an original contribution of knowledge in the field of business management, by undertaking research assignments which display a high level of academic rigour, and the capability of being accepted for publication in refereed journals.
- Application of research findings in terms of management practice within an organisation. What Bareham et al (2000: 398) found of interest here is that the application referred to, is not the application of the theories or research findings of others, but rather the application of the research findings from their own research investigation within their own practice. This may give rise to issues of the generalisability of findings for others.
- Manage research and researchers. Although in this case Bareham et al (2000:399) found little evidence on examining course documentation from universities stating this as a learning outcome, there was a clear understanding of what this meant and therefore how it could be addressed.
- Have the capacity to plan and manage own learning and continuing professional development. The Association of Business Schools(1997: 1) in its guidelines states that the DBA

  > "...is intended to provide opportunity for considerable personal development, such that the participant achieves a greater level of effectiveness as a professional practitioner or manager."

- Have the skill of improving own performance through reflection on past practice

- Knowledge and understanding of business and management to at least the level of a Masters degree in the field of study.

Bareham et al (2000: 400) found few references to learning outcomes in the area of subject knowledge and this may be viewed as a weakness of the Professional Doctorates because it places the focus of assessment on to the research rather than the development of professional practice as in the third domain. It is important to remember that the PhD is about research and the Professional Doctorate is about research and development. The learning outcomes detailed above do not address the "and development" aspect either.

At the majority of the universities Bareham et al looked at in their research, the minimum entry qualification was a Masters degree, usually specified as an MBA. They concluded from this that in fact universities say little about the subject specific learning outcomes because they see these as having been achieved by setting the entry qualification at the level of a relevant Masters degree.

The De Montfort University DBA course documentation (2003: 1) stated that:

> "Students who already possess an appropriate postgraduate qualification (or an equivalent such as extensive work experience at a senior level) can normally begin directly at level 2."

Level 2 at De Montfort is about Advanced Research Methodology, but it also includes the study of a selected specialist pathway, either Strategic Management or Accounting and Finance. However the emphasis elsewhere is almost entirely on research methodology.

The PhD, as has been discussed earlier, is generally accepted as being about producing professional researchers and there is concern among some academics that the Professional Doctorate treats research in a different way. Given the different focus and audiences involved where Professional Doctorates are concerned this is not only inevitable but should be a requirement.

The PhD, as stated earlier, is the academic gold standard yet UKCGE (2002: 30) commented that:

> "By contrast (to the Professional Doctorate), it is not uncommon for PhD students in some disciplines to need knowledge of only a relatively narrow range of research methods."

The point being made is that where a Professional Doctorate is concerned, it requires students to have a wider grasp of research methods because of the need to define a puzzle affecting professional practice rather than a gap in the existing knowledge and therefore perhaps the PhD is not the all encompassing research degree many think it is.

If learning outcomes are a key difference then consideration also needs to be given as to whether a Professional Doctorate should be credit rated?

The Major Challenges and Considerations for Designers of Professional Doctorates.

- Professional Doctorates unlike PhD's have learning outcomes.
- How can learning outcomes be constructed for emergent or unforeseen learning?
- The need for learning outcomes to address both research and subject knowledge.
- The Professional Doctorate can require students to have a wider grasp of research methods than is the case with some PhD's.

The Credit Rating of Professional Doctorates.

The literature review has so far established that it is the combination of taught modules and the strong focus on research designed to investigate a real problem of professional practice at doctoral level, which distinguishes the Professional Doctorate from the PhD.

In designing a modular framework for a Professional Doctorate there needs to be a clear sense of what constitutes D-level work as well as the regulatory implications and the scheduling of the modules. A major regulatory issue is whether some or all of the modules should be credit rated.

In the Credit and HE Qualifications (2001: 8), the descriptor for doctoral work at level 8 is:

> "Make a significant and original contribution to a specialised field of enquiry demonstrating a command of methodological issues and engaging in critical dialogue with peers, accepting full accountability for outcomes."

The process or the curriculum to be followed by students must therefore allow students the opportunity to demonstrate that their work meets the requirements of that level descriptor.

Coventry University, under its current structures, would require a Professional Doctorate to have a modular framework and all modules to be credit bearing. The Academic Regulations state that postgraduate or M-level modules must be based on 12 credits or multiples thereof, although there is no statement as to the minimum number of credits for a D-level module.

NICATS (2001: 3) defined a credit framework as providing a set of specifications for valuing, measuring , describing and comparing learning achievements which it felt were needed because of the wide ranging changes in the type and delivery of learning.

NICATS (2001:13) set the minimum credit value for a Professional Doctorate at 540 credits at D-level.

There does not appear however to be any clarity as to what constitutes a D-level credit. At the moment M-level is the highest credit level defined, so therefore D-level must effectively mean M-level plus. The QAA in 2001 did not define a D-level credit, although it had been in earlier drafts according to Hoddell (2004), and so Higher Education continues to struggle with this issue.

As has been stated earlier, a doctorate should add up to 540 credits, 180 credits of which can be at Master's level, with each credit equal to 10 hours of student effort. Should M-level credits count as part of a doctorate? Consideration of this question starts to reveal a possible solution to the problem of defining a D-level credit, which if accepted would necessitate a change to academic regulations because of the change suggested for Stage 2. If the doctorate is looked at as three stages it could be viewed as:

Stage 1	Masters	180 M-level
Stage 2	Taught Modules	180 M-level plus
Stage 3	Project (s)	180 D-level

The approach taken in the table above is helpful because it introduces the notion of M-level plus, or level-7 as denoted by NICATS (2001: 8), to denote progression from the Masters to the Doctorate stage. Level-7 is defined as:

> "Display mastery of a complex and specialised area of knowledge and skills, employing advanced skills to conduct research, or advanced technical or professional activity, accepting accountability for related decision making including use of supervision."

There is a clear logic here because students cannot be expected to be operating at D-level on the day after enrolment – that needs to be demonstrated in the final project(s).

(If this is not the case then logically all undergraduate modules ought to be at Level-3, and not just in the final year.)

The difference between a Masters and a Doctorate is that at Doctoral-level the student is expected to make a significant and original contribution to a specialised field of enquiry and engage in critical dialogue with peers.

There is a further interesting question namely can the research aspect of the doctorate be subject to credit rating? This moves the student on a Professional Doctorate in to the third domain, as discussed above, and therefore can originality and the making of a significant contribution be defined as a D-level learning outcome in a project module descriptor? It will be more difficult to do this if one all encompassing project is involved but easier in the case of a number of smaller projects.

The taught modules will require module descriptors to be written and these should include:

- The module's aim and summary.
- Learning Outcomes.
- Assessment Methods.
- Assessment Criteria.

This will bring a transparency to a Professional Doctorate that is not the case with the traditional PhD, although the advent of the taught PhD should bring transparency to it as well. It seems wrong in these days of quality assurance and transparency of processes that PhD's do not have specified learning outcomes, or any firm criteria, against which to judge a student's work. It brings a mystique to the assessment process that cannot be satisfactory.

The adoption of a modular approach also implies the need for the appropriate scheduling of modules, which allows for a cohort approach to give participants a doctoral experience, with distinct intake points throughout the academic year. This is

an important issue for universities thinking of introducing a Professional Doctorate as it will highlight the need to have adequate resources available.

As UKCGE (2002: 26) stated:

> "A relatively small programme of four year's duration, recruiting perhaps twelve students each year will, in normal operation, have 48 students in total. This represents a demand for doctoral level supervision that many of the new universities would have found quite impossible to meet in the early 1990's and may still present some difficulty."

It is important therefore that universities ensure that the student intake is matched to the long term availability of qualified and suitably orientated supervisors. Also, it is important to bear in mind that if a cohort is made up of senior practitioners they will bring with them a high level of expectations of a level of service and attention routinely experienced at development programmes from the private sector. This can be reflected in the course fees charged but universities will have to meet and/or manage those expectations.

There are other ways of resourcing a Professional Doctorate programme. In the article included as Volume 2 of this project, the supervision and assessment of a Professional Doctorate is considered and an alternative approach is suggested that would involve the use of professional practitioners and workplace supervisors.

Another possibility would be collaborative working either within a university between its schools, or with other universities. A Pro-Vice Chancellor at Coventry put forward the idea of a:

> "Coalition of like- minded institutions with equal partners of equal status."

Under this arrangement the student could choose which of the partners to receive their award from, hence the need for partners of equal status.

This was an approach considered by the Anglia Polytechnic University, which was faced with a considerable number of its Professional Doctorate supervisors retiring in one year. The Dean of the School concerned considered looking for other innovative ways of dealing with the problem beside staff development and suspension of the programme, including a partnership with another university. In the end the University embarked on staff development and did suspend the programme for a period.

Students will need to have their performance in the taught modules assessed and therefore considered by an assessment board. At Coventry, module results would be considered at a subject assessment board and then the programme assessment board, the award making body, looks at overall student achievement.

The relationship between the subject assessment board and the programme assessment board is interesting given the timescales involved for the completion of a doctorate. There could be a gap of three years, for example, between successful progression from the taught elements to final submission.

A further factor in this relationship concerns the involvement and responsibilities of the external examiners. (UKCGE, 2002:51) stated that:

> "External examiners for taught programmes have a very different role from that of external examiners for research degrees. The Professional Doctorate model, incorporating both elements, presents a particular challenge."

A fundamental question is whether or not the examination of the final project(s), with the appointment of an external examiner with expertise in the area to be examined, together with a viva as per a PhD, is appropriate? When two examiners, one internal and the other external, examine a PhD their decision is usually final and it can be viewed as a very personal decision (UKCGE 2002:50), largely because a PhD does not involve the achievement of specified learning outcomes.

A taught doctorate, being modular based, is different, as students would be expected to demonstrate that they have met the stated learning outcomes for each module and these achievements would be reported to and considered by an assessment board. An

external examiner for the module/programme would have considered a set of samples of student work prior, to the board's meeting.

It is not inconceivable that the project itself could be seen as the assessment tool for a module. In which case, the results of the "project module" would be subject to consideration by an assessment board, and the outcome considered alongside that of the other modules. A strong performance in the other taught modules could tip the balance in favour of the student if the project was thought to be a borderline pass, which could not be the case currently with a PhD.

However, Coventry University is unlikely to want to adopt a different process to the one used for the examination of the PhD. Therefore it will be necessary to adopt a hybrid approach. The taught modules would then represent a stage that a student would be required to pass before being allowed to undertake the project. The appropriate assessment boards could then consider student performance in the normal way. The examination of the project could then follow the traditional process.

But should a Professional Doctorate be credit based? A UK PhD is not based on credits, as credits are associated with the demonstration that learning outcomes have been achieved. The PhD is about the demonstration of the work having made a significant original contribution to knowledge, and assessed via a thesis, and as this is not seen as a learning outcome it cannot be translated into a volume of credits. A Professional Doctorate on the other hand does involve learning outcomes and these can be translated into a credit value.

The UKCGE (2002:31) stated:

> "In most discussions of the use of credit at doctoral level, it has been assumed that credit should either be used for the whole award or not at all."

Given the importance of demonstrating the equivalence of a taught doctorate to a PhD, the UKCGE went on to say:

> "In the eyes of many academics, attaching credit to the research element reduces it to the status of a postgraduate project, without the requirement of a significant original contribution. This forms an additional argument for not requiring that credit be associated with the research element of a Professional Doctorate."

This seems to argue for a hybrid approach where the taught modules are credit rated but not the thesis. This seems to contradict the all or nothing approach to credit rating raised by UKCGE above, but is undoubtedly a pragmatic way forward.

There is one way that adopting a credit rating for the thesis can be seen as a good thing in that it would provide a calibration methodology that would help to keep its size to a sensible level rather than the notion of word count which is conventionally used. The problem here is that word counts are perhaps used without much thought and are therefore an unreliable guide to student effort.

In their trilogy of papers, (2000-2001), Bareham, Bourner and Ruggeri Stevens, made an important point in that for Professional Doctorates to be viewed as equivalent yet different to a PhD, they have to be transparent in terms of rigour and standards, one course falling into disrepute for example will adversely affect all others.

Credit accumulation also paves the way for credit transfer. The adoption of credits for the taught element of a Professional Doctorate implies that a university would be prepared to give a student credit for prior learning. This at Coventry would be on the basis of specific credit for a specific module.

A decision has to be made as to whether the whole programme is going to be subject to a credit framework, in which case the research or project element has to be included. Alternatively everything is credit rated except for the final project on the grounds that such a piece of work involving originality and a significant contribution

to professional practice cannot be defined by learning outcomes. This is as true for the PhD as it is for a Professional Doctorate. As UKCGE (2002:33) stated:

> "Most universities would resist the notion of credit transfer for any part of the research element of a doctorate."

The practical solution therefore is to view the Professional Doctorate as being in three parts namely Masters-level with 180 credits (dealt with by way of APL), the taught modules with 180 level 7 credits, and the final project(s) carrying no specified credits, although clearly this attracts a notional 180 credits.

The Major Challenges and Considerations for Designers of Professional Doctorates.

- A Professional Doctorate is differentiated from a PhD by its combination of taught modules and a strong focus on research designed to investigate a real problem of professional practice at doctoral level.
- The inclusion of taught modules means most Professional Doctorates are cohort based. This has implications for staff resources.
- What exactly is a D-level credit?
- Should the research aspect of the Professional Doctorate be credit rated?
- The regulatory implications of the introduction of a Professional Doctorate.

Original Contribution to Knowledge.

Bareham et al (2000:394) stated that there is a reasonable consensus as to what is understood by a PhD degree:

> "It is a programme of study requiring an extended research investigation leading to a significant, *original* contribution to knowledge and recorded in a written dissertation."

If a Professional Doctorate is to demonstrate equivalence, a student's work must show significance and originality, and make a contribution to knowledge. (In the case of the PhD this has already been established as Mode 1 Knowledge.) UKCGE (2002:35) felt that Higher Education looked for originality where doctorates are concerned but the growth of a range of other doctorates must lead to a fundamental re-evaluation of what is meant by "originality" and that "the traditional tests of originality may not apply."

The Association of Business Schools' guidelines (2002: 3) stated that the DBA is:

> "Primarily designed to enable a significant contribution to the enhancement of professional practice, in the business area, through the application and development of theoretical frameworks."

It would appear therefore that the DBA, and therefore a Professional Doctorate, does not have to make "an original contribution" as per the learning outcomes mentioned earlier, yet Middlesex University (1999: 8) stated about its Doctor of Professional Studies that:

> "The standard of the DProf is that expected of a candidate who has engaged in advanced learning from taught and project sources which achieves major organisational change and/or excellence in professional practice resulting in original work worthy of publication in complete and abridged form."

Apart from an obvious confusion, this may demonstrate that Professional Doctorates at that time had not managed to break free of the traditional academic paradigm and its view as to what constitutes a doctorate. There is a danger here of getting in to semantics over what is meant by the key words "significant" and "original", and yet this goes to the heart of the differentiation and equivalence issue.

The terms "original contribution", and "original work" are unclear. Do they mean the student has to make an original contribution to their field of professional practice or just to their organisation?

Again the learning outcomes looked at above would seem to promote the latter, yet also appear to require "the application of research findings in terms of management practice within an organisation", which may be of more limited interest to others. UKCGE (2002:35) said:

> "However it is possible for the work to make an original contribution to the way in which a theory is applied, or to the nature of practice within a profession. The aim of the Professional Doctorate is that candidates should be able, subsequently, to make a contribution to their professions of precisely this sort. This is a reasonable definition of the type of originality that should be sought."

The course literature I looked at however, other than Middlesex University, did not include any reference to "original contribution". The University of Central England's literature, for example, stated that a course aim is to make a:

> "Significant contribution to the enhancement of professional practice in the business area through the application and development of new knowledge and theoretical perspectives".

I think it helps by considering that where work-based doctorates are concerned, originality should be viewed as context specific. This is consistent with the Mode 1 and

Mode 2 debate on knowledge and accords with Scott (2004:46) who said that Mode 2 Knowledge is:

> "Applied to the practice setting, and indeed its rationale is whether it makes the workplace a more efficient and productive place."

This will in turn raise a number of questions around how academics can assess this.

Originality would therefore be in terms of the student's organisation in the first place and the wider community second. In terms of my project, the introduction of a Professional Doctorate at Coventry is neither significant nor original to Higher Education as a whole, after all Professional Doctorates have already been introduced in many other universities. It is however significant and original to Coventry University. What would make it significant and original to others would be its design and operation, and the reasons behind those.

A further interesting question therefore is what differentiates the Professional Doctorate from a Masters level qualification? Certainly at Coventry University, students on the M.A. in Management have to take a mandatory, research methods module and the learning outcomes of this module are assessed through the production of a 3000 word project proposal. Will this be recognised as sufficient research training for a Professional Doctorate or will it need to be added to? As has been stated earlier, it would be accepted on some existing DBA courses.

The M.A. in Management projects, which are work-based, as are those on the Executive MBA, demonstrate application of theory to a workplace setting. As for originality, it can be argued that it can be evident in work at Master's level. So what is left? It may be simplistic but it would appear to boil down to the size of the final project, and I have already said that word length is not the most reliable measurement of academic standards, which is used to determine the size and scope of the issue or problem that the student can address. There needs to be a clear view in Higher Education not only about the differentiation between the PhD and the Professional Doctorate but also between M and D-level.

The Major Challenges and Considerations for Designers of Professional Doctorates.

- Where Professional Doctorates are concerned, "originality" should be viewed as context specific.
- How easy is it to differentiate Doctoral level work from Masters level work? Is it more than just word length?

Publication as a Means of Disseminating Student Work.

A traditional test of a PhD has always been that it is worthy of publication, in whole or in part, in a refereed journal. This can still be a requirement for Professional Doctorate candidates, and is to be encouraged so that such work is disseminated as widely as possible thereby providing opportunities to change professional practice and demonstrate impact. The question here has to be the nature and audience of the journal concerned.

Is it better for the output from a Professional Doctorate to be published in an academic journal than a professional journal? Publication in an academic journal provides for the rigour of a paper being independently refereed, which engenders confidence as to its quality, but does it address the right audience? Would a practising professional be likely to read an academic journal or be more inclined to read a professional journal? Professional journals may not have the rigour that results from being refereed but they will have the rigour produced by a larger readership.

Maxwell (2003: 8) made the point that as the academics own the doctorate process and for them publication in academic journals is what they value, perhaps driven by the Research Assessment Exercise, this again seems to give Mode 1 Knowledge primacy over Mode 2 Knowledge.

The counter argument would seem to be that although the Professional Doctorate is about the enhancement of professional practice it can also be used to contribute new knowledge to the stock of existing knowledge, and the most common way of doing that is through publication in a scholarly journal.

If the aims of the Professional Doctorate are to me met it will not be sufficient for the students to communicate their research findings to academics only. In order to bridge the gap between research and practice the student will need to develop the skills and the capacity to communicate their research results to their professional peers.

Another factor to be considered is the time it can take to get an article published. The article: "Assessment Matters: some issues concerning the supervision and assessment of work-based doctorates" included in Volume 2 for example, was first written in June 2003 and although accepted was not published until February 2005. It will be necessary for universities to take this into account of when considering this issue as some have already done. For example at the University of Central England (2003: 3) assessment entails:

> "The assembly of a personal portfolio of professional practice. This includes three studies of issues within one or more organisational contexts where they are working. Each study has to be presented in a journal article format to publishable standard. The student will have the benefit of comments upon the professional standing of the studies from an international panel of professional practice referees who serve as referees for academic and professional journals in business and management related fields."

The Major Challenges and Considerations for Designers of Professional Doctorates.

- The nature and audience of the journals concerned.
- Timescales for publication.

Assessment and Standards.

(**Note:** An article entitled: "Assessment matters: some issues concerning the supervision and assessment of work-based doctorates." was published in Innovations in Education and Training International in February 2005. This article is included in Volume 2 of this project. What follows in this section is not designed to replicate that article but to complement it, bearing in mind that it was first written in June 2003.)

A paper on this was presented to the ELATE Conference at Coventry University in June 2004. The text that follows will include slides from the power-point presentation made.

The Supervision and Assessment of Professional Doctorates

ELATE 2004

Dave Johnson
Coventry Business School

Ruggeri-Stevens, et al (2001: 2001:61-71), looked at the DBA in terms of its assessment and standards, in the area of business administration.

Their research was based on the content analysis of course documentation, programme brochures, handbooks and degree regulations of those universities offering the DBA. An important initial finding was that all required their students to submit a project rather than a portfolio of evidence, which was used in some other subject disciplines.

Although the project is the main focus of assessment, of about 50,000 words in length, the DBA often required the submission of other work such as a 10,000 word management report.

From the course literature that I have looked at, DBA's involve a number of intermediate assessments, and an example of this is the University of Durham, where during year 1 and the first part of year 2, participants will be required to submit four written assignments, each of the order of 5,000 words. The remainder of year 2 will be spent preparing a detailed research proposal and literature review for assessment with a combined length of 15,000 words (maximum). At the end of year 2, students will be required to make a formal presentation of their proposal. The central element of assessed work will be a thesis of doctoral standard, of between 40-50,000 words in length, submitted by the end of year 6, making an accumulated word count of 75-85000 words. There will also be an oral examination so overall there is equivalence here at least with the size of a PhD thesis.

Ruggeri-Stevens et al (2001: 63), found that in the courses they looked at examiners were expected to apply the same criteria as would be the case with traditional PhD's with the thesis making a contribution to the body of knowledge of management practice, for example a: ".. theoretically informed contribution to management practice."

Scott (2004: 43) confirmed this precedence of Mode 1 over Mode 2 Knowledge, saying:

> "For the student the knowledge being demanded is esoteric and irrelevant. For the examiner, or disciplinary gatekeeper, it is central to the practice."

This would seem to go to the heart of the DBA/ Professional doctorate question namely against what criteria should they be assessed? Can they be awarded for evidence of excellence in professional practice alone? Does Higher Education in this country view the submission of a portfolio in place of a thesis, as proof of lesser standards applying? It is interesting that second generation Professional Doctorates in Australia do in some cases assess portfolios.

Why have a separate award?

- Universities have been creative in the design and delivery of Professional Doctorates but slow to innovate in terms of its final product –it looks like a PhD thesis and is examined in the same way.

  "Essentially a PhD with coursework."
  Maxwell and Shanahan(2001)

It might also be necessary to consider the assessment of two or three smaller projects rather than one all encompassing piece of work, as it may not be possible for all students to come up with a project that will, for all manner of reasons, sustain their course of study over three or four years. For such students the flexibility to do a number of smaller projects may be helpful.

There is clearly an argument for comparability around standards and learning outcomes, but do these have to be identical? The danger would seem to be in dressing up, what at the end of the day will be a traditionally assessed PhD, in work-based learning clothes. Perhaps to use a current, television, advertising slogan, it has to "do what it says on the tin."

The challenge for academics therefore will be in accepting that there can be quality with diversity, and course designers demonstrating that the learning outcomes, assessment methods and criteria can deliver work at doctoral level that may be different to a PhD but is its equivalent. However if that difference is based on differing types of knowledge then equivalence becomes harder to demonstrate. Therefore as Bourner et al have shown through their research what happens in practice in that although Professional Doctorates should be addressing Mode 2 Knowledge, scratch the surface and a more traditional course concerned with Mode 1 Knowledge will be revealed.

Failure to achieve equivalence yet difference will lead to a tension between the university, the students and the employer. For the employer a Professional Doctorate

could be viewed as an opportunity for some internal consultancy backed up by the resources of the university. Employers will not be happy if they then see an outcome from sponsoring their employee on a Professional Doctorate that they had not signed up for. Scott (2004: 74) said the:

> "Underlying principle is that, as a professional doctorate, there should be a greater equity between the university, the profession and the workplace in the control of the processes and the sanctioning of the products of the course."

This raises an important question, namely is the Professional Doctorate a genuine attempt by universities to offer a different product because of widespread dissatisfaction with the PhD, or is a cynical attempt to attract a new market to what is essentially still a PhD by another name?

The DBA courses looked at all included taught research methods modules, and typically these were separately assessed, but not in terms of the module's contribution to the eventual thesis. This module had to be completed before the student was allowed to proceed with the dissertation. In some instances, and in particular on PhDs, the research module is located within a programme of related studies, usually the student's Masters degree, which Ruggeri-Stevens et al (2001:63), said can lead to "phantom research training."

Another significant finding in their paper is that the attention given to the assessment of research methods is far more than is given to the assessment of studies of business or management and therefore issues of professional practice. This reflects the research versus research and development argument addressed earlier in this project. Although Ruggeri-Stevens et al commented on this, almost in passing, it is a point of interest for course designers and examiners. The credibility of Professional Doctorates depends upon the business and management content, the "and development", of the project, to be as rigorously assessed as the research methods.

An important factor here, as will also be covered later, is the ability of academics to assess the development aspects of a Professional Doctorate project. Maxwell and Vine (1998: 73-81) said:

> "Also the coursework will likely as not need to be mediated by the proposition that the students' know more about their contexts than the academic."

This may be why academics concentrate on examining the research aspect of the thesis at the expense of the professional practice aspects.

In addition to the project, the Association of Business Schools (1997: 3) stated that:

> "It is further intended to provide opportunity for considerable personal development, such that the participant achieves a greater level of effeetiveness as a professional practitioner or manager."

Indeed the course documentation from the University of Central England (2003: 2) stated clearly that its DBA is:

> "Designed to certify the professional competence of individuals engaged in business and management related occupations."

Henley Management College (2003: 1) stated that its DBA focuses on:

> "The skills required in senior management, consultancy, management development and management education."

Ruggeri-Stevens et al, found that DBAs employ two broad strategies for achieving skills development namely the learning contract and/or action learning. They found discrepancies in how they were assessed, as typically learning contracts were assessed

while action learning was not. This is another interesting finding where course designers are concerned because what are doctoral-level skills and how are they to be evidenced?

Their analysis of DBA courses revealed a number of assessment methods, besides the assessment of the thesis, namely a:

- Working critique of other theses or published research papers of publishable standard.
- Thesis proposal
- Literature review

The course literature that I have looked at shows a variety of assessment methods in addition to the above namely:

- Studies of issues within one or more organisational contexts where the student is working.
- Written assignments.
- Portfolios.

All of the above were complemented by opportunities for formative assessment and feedback.

Ruggeri-Stevens et al (2001: 66) then compared the assessment of the DBA with the PhD, which is how the rest of Higher Education will evaluate Professional Doctorates:

> "The PhD is assessed by means of a dissertation which contains a report of a single extended research investigation resulting in a thesis."

The assessment criteria used is:

- Has the student provided evidence of being able to carry out a research project using research methods that are appropriate to the field of study?

- Has the student provided evidence of being able to make a significant original contribution to knowledge?

The problem comes if examiners seek to apply the PhD criteria to a Professional Doctorate. If they do then there is a risk that the most important element of the Professional Doctorate, the "and development" aspect may not be examined.

A PhD plus.

- Professional doctorates tend to be assessed in ways that are familiar to, comfortable for, and acceptable to those from the traditional academic paradigm – the PhD examination process.
- Professional doctorates are subject to more assessment (intermediate) plus PhD style viva, traditional thesis and publication of papers

Where a PhD is concerned there may not be any assessment between a student gaining a good degree and presenting their dissertation. Ruggeri-Stevens et al (2001: 67), concluded that DBA students are more heavily, and frequently, assessed than their PhD counterpart, perhaps leading to a view that the Professional Doctorate represents a PhD plus.

This is another important point for course designers to bear in mind because to be awarded a doctorate of whatever type should require the same amount of student effort. As long as the intermediate assessment on the DBA leads to a smaller dissertation/thesis/project in terms of word length, more frequent assessment may not be a bad thing if it leads to a higher completion rate than is the case with PhDs.

Ruggeri-Stevens et al (2001: 67-69), conclude that the assessment requirements of the DBA compare well with those of the traditional PhD, less well with the guidelines of the ABS, and least well with the espoused learning outcomes of the courses themselves and this cannot be viewed as acceptable..

McWilliams et al (2002:11) stated that the:

"Practices of supervision are being changed as a result of greater scrutiny from within and outside the university in relation to resources, rates of completion and market-focused outcomes.

How Satisfied should academics, students and society be with the rigours of a PhD?

- "..as Higher Education collides with the culture of accountability, and as the government pursues quality assurance throughout Higher Education, making a reconsideration of the PhD "...a rite of passage that has governed admission to the medieval guild of scholars for generations".

  ".. examination inevitable." Wakeford (2002)

Issues?

- "One could argue that students learn about supervision from their supervisors but this assumes some quality control on supervision in the first instance for which there is little evidence." Gillingham(1999)
- "Most academics have only ever seen one other supervisor in action- the man or woman who guided them during their own postgraduate days." Budd (2003)

Budd (2003) said about postgraduate supervision that it is:

> "One of the few things that still goes on behind closed doors, where there is a minimum of box-ticking and the culture of accountability is still excluded."

This is not a situation that Higher Education can allow to continue.

UKCGE (2002:36) in supporting the need for change went further on the basis that:

> "Many Professional Doctorate students wholly or largely conduct research within their employment. It is therefore important that there should be a supervisor within that context, and much of the subject expertise that is needed in the supervision process may well sit with that person, the professional supervisor. The role of the academic is then to ensure that the work has an appropriate research emphasis, and is conducted at the right level, but with less direct influence on what is actually done."

This should extend further than just supervision and also encompass the assessment process.

Professional Doctorates - Supervision

- Need to involve practitioners –sponsoring organisation.
- "Professional Supervisor." UK Council for Graduate Education (2002)
- "Given that academics apparently take a major supervisory role and publication is paramount, is analytical knowledge privileged at the expense of non-analytical knowledge?" Maxwell(2003)

The Major Challenges and Considerations for Designers of Professional Doctorates.

- Assessment criteria for a PhD thesis and a Professional Doctorate project are not clearly differentiated.

Actions?

- Agreed learning outcomes, assessment criteria, operating documents and supervisor development workshops will ensure that all parties – student, academic, and practice supervisor understand the process.
- The use of practice supervisors would help overcome resource issues.

- The need, in the case of some students, for a number of smaller projects to replace one all encompassing piece of work.
- A PhD assesses Mode 1 Knowledge and the Professional Doctorate assesses Mode 2 Knowledge.
- Where the Professional Doctorate is concerned the professional practice content must be as rigorously assessed as the research methods.

Actions?

- Agreed learning outcomes, assessment criteria, operating documents and examiner workshops should help ensure the assessment process is de-mystified for the benefit of all concerned.
- Work with professional bodies.

Actions?

- For the credibility of the award, ways have to be found to involve practitioners in the summative assessment.
- But at the very least, practitioners should be asked to provide formative feedback on the developmental or application aspects of a student's work.

- Are academics equipped to assess the professional practice aspects of the projects?

Professional Doctorates - Assessment

- Examiners who are capable of assessing the Research and Development aspects of a student's work.
- Despite having a PhD some examiners, both internal and external, may not have professional experience or understanding of the student's working context, making assessment of the developmental and application aspects difficult.

Issues?

- A student's work may need to be mediated on the basis that the student knows more about their context than the academic. Maxwell (1998)
- Involving practitioners would bring credibility to the process
- Too often dismissed as problematic.
- Must be a coalition of equal partners.

- What are Doctoral level skills and how can their achievement be evidenced?
- Professional Doctorates should not be more heavily assessed than PhD's.

The Candidates for a Professional Doctorate

Based on the work of Bareham et al and others, it can be said that .Professional Doctorates are aimed at those currently employed in senior positions with significant responsibility. The ideal candidate is likely to be at least in their early thirties with a Masters degree in an organisation or field of practice that is subject to substantial changes in its environment and its operational practices. The candidate may be viewed as a change agent for a project with long term significance, and be someone whose abilities can be evidenced by a record of achievement. If candidates are expected to be in a senior position then a minimum of five years appropriate professional experience would seem reasonable, on the basis that for an MBA programme candidates are meant to have between two years and three years post experience.

The candidate profile emerging from the above paragraph leads to consideration of the duration of the programme, which reveals a further difference between a PhD and a Professional Doctorate. A PhD tends to be of variable duration with the length of the programme of study specified only in terms of a minimum and a maximum duration. By contrast most Professional Doctorates specify a fixed period of study, reflecting the fact

that they are cohort based. As the programme is about professional practice and will be undertaken by part-time students, it can be anticipated that there will be both planned and unplanned domestic and professional demands made on them, and therefore there will need to be flexibility around submission of course work.

McWilliams et al (2002: 22) referred to studies by Bruckerhoff, Bruckerhoff and Sheehan (2000), Green et al (2001) and Reynolds (2001) and summarised the characteristics of candidates as:

- Mostly mid career professionals.
- Most study part-time and cannot afford, either financially or career-wise to study full-time.
- Have jobs which demand considerable time, emotional and intellectual energy.
- Many will experience some degree of job uncertainty and a significant number will change job at least once during the course of their study.
- A significant number join the programme with work experience and a demonstrable contribution to professional practice for which they receive course credit.
- Most work in professions in which there is no financial reward for postgraduate study, although there may be some reward in terms of organisational promotion.
- Most are not supported by their employer with time release for study purposes.
- Most undertake further study for intrinsic reasons.
- Many withdraw or suspend their studies because of life events.
- Most are strongly oriented towards research that will improve professional practice, and at the same time organisational performance.
- Few expect their studies to result in an academic career since universities rarely express clear preferences in their selection criteria for substantive industry/professional experience combined with professional doctorate training.

A clear vision of the characteristics of a candidate for a Professional Doctorate in turn should lead to a consideration of the need for interim or exit awards. There are a number of reasons why a student may not complete their doctoral studies which are given in the table below together with some possible responses from course designers.

Reason	**Possible Response**
Lack of training in research methods.	Should any research training at Masters level be accredited?
Poor supervision.	Staff development for the academic supervisors and the use of professional practice supervisors.
Choice of an over-ambitious project.	Clear guidance from the course team and/or the use of smaller projects.
Social and intellectual isolation.	The use of residentials, action learning sets and a course web.
Life events.	Realistic and appropriate exit awards.

What should constitute an exit award? At the November 2004 UKCGE conference on Professional Doctorates, there were mixed views expressed on this subject. One view, Cranfield University's, was that as the students already had a Masters they would not want another one and therefore it was the Professional Doctorate alone that they were interested in. Others felt an exit award was needed, if only to allow a senior practitioner to withdraw with something. The MPhil was not seen as a compensatory award on the grounds that if a student was going to submit work for that then they would be better advised to do a little more work and submit for the doctorate.

Middlesex University has the facility of offering a Master of Professional Studies as an exit award from its Doctor of Professional Studies and the conference saw logic to this and appreciated its neatness. A logical link between the named doctorate award and the

exit award would seem a sensible solution to this problem. They should not be viewed as a compensation prize and students would be expected to have successfully completed work commensurate with the level of award being offered.

The issue of entry criteria will be looked at when considering Professional Doctorates at a number of UK universities because as Scott (2004: 78) said:

> "It is in the setting of formal entry requirements that the control of the university is most clear."

The Major Challenges and Considerations for Designers of Professional Doctorates.

- Professional Doctorates are aimed at those in senior positions with significant responsibility.
- Length of programme.
- The need for interim or exit awards?
- Entry criteria, both academic and experiential.
- The expectations that senior professionals will have of the course and the levels of support they will expect.

Other Universities.

A check of the Association of Business School's website, in January 2003, revealed that the following Business School's offered the DBA:

- Cranfield School of Management, Cranfield University.
- Faculty of Business and Law, De Montfort University.
- Durham Business School, University of Durham.
- UCE Business School, University of Central England.
- Henley Management College, Henley Management College.
- Aston Business School, Aston University.
- Hull University Business School, University of Hull.

As well as discussing the more general points of duration, assessment methods and cost, these Professional Doctorates will be mapped against the elements of Coventry Business School's Postgraduate Work-based Learning Programme.

Documentation from the Universities of Portsmouth, Brighton and Liverpool John Moores, has also been considered and these are also included in the table below.

UNIVERSITY	**Reflective Practice**	**Action Learning Sets**	**Independent Study**	**Work-based Projects**	**Development of Professional Capability**	**Impact**	**The Use of ICT**
Cranfield	√		√	√	√	√	√
De Montfort	√		√	√	√	√	√
Durham			√	√	√	√	
University of Central England	√		√	√	√	√	√
Henley	√		√	√	√	√	√
Aston	√		√	√	√	√	√

UNIVERSITY	Reflective Practice	Action Learning Sets	Independent Study	Work-based Projects	Development of Professional Capability	Impact	The Use of ICT
Hull	√		√	√	√	√	√
Liverpool John Moores	√		√	√	√	√	√
Brighton	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Portsmouth	√	√	√	√	√	√	

This table is of interest in a number of ways. Firstly all the elements of Coventry Business School's Postgraduate Work-based Learning Programme are covered in the Professional Doctorates looked at. Only two however make use of Action Learning sets. The documentation from the other universities show the international make-up of their cohorts, with students travelling to Britain for set piece events such as study weeks and student conferences, and it is this that makes the use of action learning sets problematic.

This is not insurmountable as action learning sets can be held on a virtual basis or students can be given encouragement and the means to operate these on an informal basis.

The documentation from these Universities shows that the duration of study varies from two to six years. As has been mentioned earlier in this project this raises a number of issues:

- Expectation of one all encompassing project or a number of smaller projects.
- The level of support students will require over a significant period of time.
- The availability of interim or exit awards.

In all cases the entry criteria stipulated a relevant Masters qualification, but the required period of time for prior relevant experience varied from not being required at all up to five years.

The issue of academic entry criteria is interesting. The requirement to have a Masters qualification demonstrates a level of academic attainment, and this form of common currency is easily understood in Higher Education but it could act as a barrier to entry for others. In the unlikely event that Sir Richard Branson wanted to study for a Professional Doctorate, at what level would he be required to start?

Finally, course fees varied form £8000 to £24000. In the same way that a word count is not necessarily the best measure of student effort, it should not be assumed that course fees are necessarily an arbiter of quality. Inevitably however that is how the market will judge Professional Doctorates, and therefore the Cranfield "brand" will be more highly valued than say that of the University of Central England, in much the same way as the market views the MBA.

The Major Challenges and Considerations for Designers of Professional Doctorates.

- The elements of Coventry Business School's Postgraduate Work-based Learning Programme are applicable to Professional Doctorates.

- Where students are drawn from will determine the use that can be made of Action Learning sets.

- What will determine the market's perception of a university's brand?

Chapter 5 - Conclusion.

The aim of this project was:

"The Collaborative Development of a Professional Doctorate for Coventry University."

There are a number of stated objectives in the Terms of Reference that the literature review has addressed and these will now be looked at in turn.

Critically Evaluate the Differences between a PhD and a Professional Doctorate.

The development of the Professional Doctorate stemmed from Government and employer dissatisfaction with the narrow academic career focus of the PhD. McWilliams et al (2002) have identified weaknesses with both the PhD and the Professional Doctorate, which are shown in the table below:

PhD	**Professional Doctorate**
Lack of consistency or quality assurance across programmes.	A lack of definitional clarity.
Programmes are driven by the philosophy of science in isolation from other key areas.	Widespread rumours of dumbing-down.
Ageing and inwardly facing academy.	Concern that critical thinking is a casualty of pragmatism.
Decline in the quality of graduates.	Domination of the award by universities, accompanied by professional/industry apathy.
Failure to address teamwork skills, good workplace practices, creativity and lateral thinking.	Professional, part-time students who are often time-poor and stressed.
Over specialisation at the expense of risk taking and innovation.	Non-traditional assessment putting quality assurance at risk.
Maintenance of the gap between knowledge and skills.	Trial and error logic.
	Lack of inter-institutional partnerships.
	Fierce competition within a shrinking market.
	Lack of completion rates.
	Lack of responsiveness to non-traditional student needs.

In addition, the PhD does not appear to fully meet the QAA level descriptor for doctorate qualifications.

McWilliams et al's identification of "industry apathy" towards the Professional Doctorate appears to be at odds with employer dissatisfaction with the PhD. The UKCGE (2002:12) maintained that Professional Doctorates:

> "Have been developed as a positive response to an identified need, whether of industry and commerce or the public sector."

In reality the position would appear to be that employers are also dissatisfied with the Professional Doctorate, which the table above shows has more identified weaknesses than the PhD, although no attempt has been made to weight these in terms of their relative importance.

Some academics are also dissatisfied with Professional Doctorates, and I think this encompasses the more traditional academic as well as those dissatisfied with the PhD and looking for an alternative doctoral provision.

A Professional Doctorate is viewed as being equivalent yet different to a PhD. I believe a Professional Doctorate also has to be relevant and fit for purpose if it is to claim to be focused on professional practice. The credibility of the Professional Doctorate depends upon its market, in terms of students and employers being clear as to what it stands for, its status, how it differs from a PhD and its acceptance as an equivalent degree.

Academics also need to be clear about these issues as well. The literature reveals that there is dissatisfaction and confusion as Scott (2004: 1) stated:

> "Professional Doctorates exist in the twilight zone between the university and the workplace."

The fundamental problem as identified by UKCGE is the Professional Doctorate's need to ultimately have to:

> "Measure up to the implicit but uncodified understanding of the level of achievement represented by the PhD."

The PhD is about research training leading to a career as an academic, whereas the Professional Doctorate is about research development that will produce an understanding in senior professionals of the benefits properly conducted research can bring to decision making.

Yeatman's three kinds of knowledge and Gibbons typology of knowledge produce some interesting insights when mapped against both the PhD and the Professional Doctorate. It shows that the PhD is concerned with "How to use theoretical analysis and scientifically orientated empirical research" (Yeatman) and Mode 1 Knowledge (Gibbons). The Professional Doctorate is about "How to reflect on the requirements of the practice and practice setting in question" and "How to work with service users to deliver and improve the service concerned" (Yeatman) and Mode 2 Knowledge (Gibbons). The PhD is therefore about research while the Professional Doctorate is about research and development.

This goes to the heart of the equivalence question and reveals how difficult it is to demonstrate. The PhD is seen as the academic gold standard against which all other degrees are judged, and yet when it is mapped against the QAA's doctoral level descriptor it fails to meet all the outcomes stated, whereas the Professional Doctorate meets all of them, adding further mist to the fog surrounding doctorates.

A further difference between the two degrees is that Professional Doctorates have stated learning outcomes as a result of having taught elements, although these will be a feature of the new generation of PhD's. Bareham et al identified a number of learning outcomes for a DBA which almost exclusively focus on research rather than subject knowledge or the development of professional practice.

If Professional Doctorates have learning outcomes then consideration has to be given as to whether it should be totally or partially credit rated. (This in turn must lead to a consideration of how D-level work can be identified, a point that will be further discussed when drawing conclusions about my second objective.) Explicit learning outcomes bring a transparency to Professional Doctorate that is not currently the case with a PhD.

The adoption of a modular approach requires the appropriate scheduling of modules and therefore programmes need to be cohort based. As UKCGE pointed out, this will result in a substantial demand for doctoral level supervision, which some universities have found impossible to meet.

Linking back to the earlier comments on industry apathy this, together with the resource issue, could be addressed by engaging professional practitioners in the supervision process and also the examination of the final project. The resource issue could also be addressed by universities joining together to form a coalition of equal partners.

Cohorts made up of senior professionals will bring with them expectations of a certain level of service and attention and universities have to be prepared to meet or manage these. It would be a telling mistake to over-sell the university and its Professional Doctorate and then to under-provide in terms of delivery and support. If the delivery and support is as it should be, then these same senior professionals will become the university's best "disciples".

The engagement with learning outcomes and credits also raise a number of regulatory issues. Student performance in the taught modules will have to be considered by an assessment board and it is the relationship of that board to a programme assessment board that could be problematic, given the timescales involved for completion of the doctorate.

The literature review raises the question as to whether the final project(s) should be credit rated and therefore whether the results should also be considered by an assessment board. If this is the case could a strong performance in the taught modules

compensate for a weaker performance in the project which is certainly not the case with the PhD?

UKCGE's view was that credits if used should apply to the whole programme or not at all, and yet went on to state that "attaching credit to the research element of a doctorate reduces it to the level of a postgraduate project." Pragmatically many Professional Doctorates adopt a hybrid approach where taught modules are credit rated but not the final project. The basis for this is that originality and a significant contribution to professional practice cannot be defined in terms of learning outcomes.

If the term "equivalent yet different" causes difficulties then "originality and a significant contribution" causes similar problems. The literature points to the need to consider originality as context specific as defined by Scott (2004:46):

> "Applied to a practice setting, and indeed its rationale is whether it makes the workplace a more efficient and productive place."

Both the PhD and Professional Doctorate place a requirement on students to disseminate their work. For the PhD this means publishing articles in refereed academic journals. Some universities require students on Professional Doctorate programmes to do this as well, when perhaps it would be better to target professional journals. They may not have the academic rigour of academic journals but they do enjoy the rigour produced by a much larger readership.

Assessment of Professional Doctorates seems in the majority of cases to be focused on a final project, almost certainly as a result of the need to demonstrate equivalence to a PhD. Ruggeri-Stevens et al found that in the case of the DBA 's they looked at, external examiners were expected to assess it as they would a PhD. This has to be wrong because of the different paradigms in which the two degrees are located.

Professional Doctorates, focused as they are on senior practitioners, may have to allow for the submission of two or three smaller projects rather than one all encompassing one, because it may not be possible for a student to do work on a single project that will sustain them over their period of study.

If it is accepted that Professional Doctorates are about research and development, then this raises real issues around the assessment of the "and development". There are flaws in the assessment of the PhD which are being replicated in the case of Professional Doctorates. Universities have to address the "and development" and it may be pure conceit for the assumption to be made that because an academic has a doctorate and is involved in research and consultancy that they can understand the context of the project better than the student and can assess the originality of the significant contribution to practice better than a practising professional. The status and standing of the Professional Doctorate would be immeasurably improved through more meaningful engagement by universities with employers and the professions.

A Professional Doctorate as a taught doctorate will have intermediate stages of assessment, which is not the case with the PhD. In demonstrating equivalence it is important that a student's overall workload on a Professional Doctorate comes to no more than the PhD in terms of word output, although there are flaws in the use of a word count as a quality measure, otherwise it could be viewed as a PhD plus.

At least in theory there are differences between a Professional Doctorate and a PhD. The literature shows however that in practice there are real problems in demonstrating equivalence and yet at the same time being different to a PhD, a somewhat flawed gold standard. There is widespread confusion in universities and for employers and students, which seems to be resolved by making the two degrees almost indistinguishable. This raises an important question namely is the Professional Doctorate a genuine attempt by universities to offer a different product because of widespread dissatisfaction with the PhD, or is it a cynical attempt to attract a new market to what is still essentially a PhD?

As Scott stated, some universities have discontinued their Professional Doctorate programmes in favour of re-designing the PhD. This perhaps is a sensible course of action, otherwise Higher Education is still left with a PhD that is falling into disrepute and a Professional Doctorate that causes further confusion and dissatisfaction.

Scott (2004:106) summed- up the problem by saying:

> "Practice does not seem to live up to expectations in terms of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment of those who celebrate the transformative potential of professional doctorates."

The literature review has left me with a burning question which is, I wonder how my peers and colleagues will view my Doctorate in Professional Studies? Will those with a PhD feel that I have joined their club or will they think that although I have a doctorate it is not a proper one? The replication of the UKCGE survey gives a strong indication of the likely answer to this.

The literature review has served to inform me of the issues surrounding doctorate provision. At the outset I naively thought the introduction of a Professional Doctorate would be relatively straightforward but I am now aware of a considerable number of issues. It is still my view, despite those issues, that Coventry University should introduce a Professional Doctorate demonstrating clearly how it is equivalent yet different to a PhD.

Whatever Coventry University does in the area of Professional Doctorates it cannot avoid the need to revise its PhD provision and deal with the dissatisfaction surrounding it.

The risk is compounding the problem of a flawed PhD provision with the introduction of an equally flawed Professional Doctorate.

Scott (2004: 25), as quoted earlier, stated that some universities have dealt with this tension by discontinuing their Professional Doctorates:

> "While the university re-designs the PhD with a greater focus on the integration of theory and practice, and the creation of more flexibility."

Perhaps that is an appropriate conclusion to be drawn from the literature review, but only if one accepts the argument that get the PhD right and Professional Doctorates are

then rendered unnecessary. It is not a valid response if one accepts that the two types of doctorates have different purposes.

Identify the Key Issues to be considered in the Design of a Professional Doctorate for Coventry University.

The key issues shown in the table below are drawn from the major challenges and considerations for designers of Professional Doctorates given at the end of each section in Chapter 4.

Key Issue	Reference within this project.	Has this issue been addressed in the Coventry University design?
Have the identified weaknesses of the Professional Doctorate been addressed?	Page 26. (McWilliam et al, 2002:10)	
Does the course encourage close links with employers?	Page 25. (McWilliam et al, 2002:ix-x)	
Can the course demonstrate equivalence with the PhD?	Page 27. UKCGE, 2002:62)	
Is the course about research and development?	Page 30. (Cranfield University,2003:2)	
Does it meet the QAA descriptor?	Page 35. (QAA, 2001)	
Are the learning outcomes clearly stated?	Page 37.	
Is the project(s) credit rated?	Page 46. (UKCGE,2002:31)	
Have the regulatory issues been addressed?	Page 45.	
Does the design of the course facilitate recognition of what constitutes D-level?	Page 42.	
Are the academic and administrative resources available?	Page 43. (UKCGE,2002:26)	
Does the course demonstrate a clear vision as to what constitutes originality?	Page 49. (Middlesex University,1999:8)	
Does the course demonstrate a clear view as to its expectations of the dissemination of students' work?	Page 52.	
Does the course provide for interim or exit awards?	Page 65.	

The above table will be reproduced in Volume 2, where the third column will be completed to show how the proposal for Coventry University has addressed the key issues identified, enabling the reader to cross reference between the two volumes.

The proposals for a Professional Doctorate will need to gain University approval, through a formal approval process that will consider the content (if any) of the course, the assessment structure, the availability of resources to support students and deliver the course, the regulatory framework and the pedagogic research underpinning the design of the course.

Identify the stakeholders, or communities of interest, where Professional Doctorates are concerned, and understand their respective influence.

The literature review identified the stakeholders and mapped them on to a grid which is reproduced below and takes account of their respective power and interest.

		Interest	
		Low	**High**
Power	**Low**		**1. Students** **2. Academics (some)**
	High	**1. Academics (generally)**	**1.Government** **2.QAA** **3.Employers** **4.Universities** **5.Research Councils**

These then are the stakeholders who will need to be taken account of when introducing a Professional Doctorate at Coventry University, and therefore it is possible to construct a checklist which will then be used in Volume 2 to ensure that their interests and concerns have been taken account of.

Stakeholder	Interest	Does the proposal for a Professional Doctorate at Coventry University address this?
Government	Dissatisfaction with the narrow, academic career focus of the PhD.	
QAA	The need for the Professional Doctorate to meet the descriptor for qualifications at doctoral level.	
Employers	Looking for relevance as the PhD is seen as too academic.	
Universities	Responding to the criticism of the PhD by the introduction of innovative doctoral programmes. This is balanced by a desire to maintain the position of the PhD.	
Coventry University	Balance innovation with the maintenance of standards.	
Research Councils	Welcome the introduction of the Professional Doctorate but cautious due to concerns around variability of programmes.	
Academics	Traditional academics doubt the rigour and standards of a Professional Doctorate. Others recognise the need to change.	
Students	A doctoral programme that is not focused on research training for future academics.	

The inclusion of this table in Volume 2 will enable the third column to be completed.

Evaluation of the Research Methodology.

I proposed in Chapter Three Research Methodology, that my work should be evaluated against the four principles of the framework developed by Spencer, Ritchie, Lewis, and Dillon (2003) and the table from page 18 is reproduced below with the "Evaluation" column now completed.

Principle	**Evaluation**
Contributory	The research does advance knowledge of the policy and practice where Professional Doctorates are concerned. Articles have been published and papers presented at conferences.
Defensible	The research does address the evaluative questions posed in the framework document.
Rigorous	The research methods used are systematic and transparent in terms of both collection and analysis.
Credible	Volume 1 demonstrates that the arguments presented are well founded, plausible and credible because of the research undertaken.

It is my contention therefore that as judged against the above principles my research approach stands up to scrutiny.

Cooper and Srivastva (1987:129-169) stated that an inquiry into organisational life should have four characteristics namely:

Appreciative
Applicable
Provocative

Collaborative

The literature review sought to *appreciate* the positive aspects of the work of others enabling these to be incorporated into the design of a Professional Doctorate at Coventry University. In taking a critical approach to the literature, I have also drawn out the flaws and problems associated with Professional Doctorates. The relevance of considering the development of both the PhD and Professional Doctorates from the relevant literature is the understanding this gives of the wider context of doctoral provision.

This will in turn be *applicable* to the development of a Professional Doctorate at Coventry University. In discussing my research methods in Chapter Three, I raised the issue of my work possibly being *provocative* and while not deliberately seeking this, the literature review is challenging where Higher Education and doctorates, both PhD and Professional Doctorates, are concerned

The development of a Professional Doctorate has to be *collaborative* and undertaken by a team and this will need to be the case at Coventry University. In the course of this project opportunities have been taken to collaborate with others both inside and outside Coventry University in the development of a proposed structure for a Professional Doctorate.

The project has been a critical consumer of the work of others in order to produce a solution to an issue of professional practice at Coventry University namely the introduction of a Professional Doctorate.

Bibliography.

ABS (1997), "Guidelines for the Doctorate of Business Administration Degree", Association of Business Schools, London

Bareham, J., Bourner, T., and Ruggeri-Steven, G. (2000), "The DBA: What is it for?", Career Development International., Vol.5, no. 7, MCB University Press

Bourner, T., Ruggeri-Steven, G., and Bareham, J. (2000), "The DBA: Form and Function", Education and Training, Vol. 42, no. 9, MCB University Press

Boud, D. and Solomon, N (2001), "Work-based Learning: a new higher edueation?", SRHE, Open University Press, Buckingham.

Boydell, T. (1976), "Experiential Learning", Manchester Monograph, 5.

Brennan, J., Little, B. (1996), "A Review of Work-based Learning in Higher Education", The Open University.

Brennan, M. (1998), "Struggles over the Definition and Practice of the Educational Doctorate in Australia", Australian Educational Researeher, vol. 25, p. 71-89.

Bruckerhoff, C. , Bruckerhoff, T. and Sheehan, B. (2000), "National Survey concerning implementing the EdD Program for Southern Connecticut University" (ERIC 446526), Southern Connecticut University, New Haven.

Budd, J., (2002), "The Long Haul: even after four years research, many students are still unable to complete their studies. But the record is improving, thanks to a research council crackdown", the Guardian, 3rd September 2002

Budd, J., (2003), "Less than super supervisors", The Guardian, 18th March, 2003.

Burns, G., Chisholm, C. and McKee, W. (2000), "Economic and Strategic Issues Relating to Work-based Learning.", Global Journal of Engineering Education, Vol. 4, No. 3, Australia.

Burns, G., and Chisholm, C. (2001), "Quality Assurance Issues Relating to the Delivery of Work-based Learning Programmes.", Global Journal of Engineering Education, Vol. 5, No. 1, Australia.

Costley, C., "Organisational and Employee Interests in Programs of Work-based Learning", The Learning Organisation, Vol. 8, no. 2, MCB University Press.

Cranfield University, School of Management, (2003), "The Cranfield DBA", the Association of Business Schools' Online Business and Management Course Directory.

Cranfield University (2003), "The Cranfield DBA: a research-based degree linking theory with practice", Cranfield University, Bedford.

Cusins, P., (1995), "Action Learning Re-visited", Industrial and Commercial Training, MCB University Press, Vol. 27, no. 4.

De Montfort University, Business School (2003), "Doctor of Business Administration", De Montfort University, Leicester.

Etzkowitz, H, and Leydesdorff, L. (2000), "The Dynamics of Innovation: from National Systems and "Mode 2" to a Triple Helix of university - industry – government relations", Research Policy, Vol. 29.

Harvey, K., (2000), "Doctoral Programmes: the number of candidates from home and overseas, opting for DBA courses in the UK is increasing."

Henley Management College (2003), "Doctorate of Business Administration", the Association of Business Schools' Online Business and Management Course Directory.

Hoddell, S. (2004), "Institutional Regulatory Issues, Audit and the Funding Bodies", paper presented at UKCGE Conference, London, 1 December 2004.

Hursthouse, R. (2003), "Humans and Other Animals", Open University, Milton Keynes

Johnson, D., (2000), "The Use of Learning Theories in the Design of a Work-based Learning Course at Masters level", Innovations in Education and Training International, Vol. 37, no.2

Marton, F., Saljo, R., (1984), "Approaches to Learning", in Marcon, F., Hownsell, D., Entwhistle, N., "The experience of learning, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press.

Maxwell, T.W. (2003), "From First to Second Generation Professional Doctorate", accepted for publication in Studies in Higher Education, vol. 28, issue 3, August.

Maxwell, T.W., and Vine, K. (1998), "The EdD at UNE: the view through conceptual bifocals", in Maxwell, T. W. and Shanahan, P.J. (eds), "Professional Doctorates: innovations in research and teaching", Faculty of Education and Professional Studies, UNE, Armidale, Australia.

McWilliam, E., Taylor, P., Thomson, P., Green, B., Maxwell, T., Wildy, H., and Simons, D. (2002), "Research Training in Doctoral Programs: what can be learned from professional doctorates?", Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training, Australia.

NICATS, CQFW, NUCCAT, SEEC, (2001), "Credit and HE Qualifications: credit guidelines for HE qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland".

Portlock, J., Castle, A., and Mills, G. (2001), "Professional Doctorates in Pharmacy and Biomedical Sciences at the University of Portsmouth.", The Pharmaceutical Journal, vol. 267.

Revans, R., (1971), "Developing Effective Managers", Longman.

Robson, C. (2002), "Real World Research", 2nd edition, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford.

Ruggeri-Stevens, G., Bareham, J., and Bourner, T., (2001), "The DBA in British Universities: assessment and standards", Quality Assurance in Education, Vol. 9, no 2, MCB University Press.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., and Thornhill, A. (2003), "Research Methods for Business Students.", Prentice-Hall, Harlow.

Scott, D., Brown, A., Lunt, I., and Thorne, L. (2004), "Professional Doctorates: Integrating Professional and Academic Knowledge", Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press, Maidenhead.

Simpson, R. (1983), "How the PhD came to Britain: a century of struggle for postgraduate education", Society for Research into Higher Education, Guildford.

Spencer, L., Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., Dillon, L. (2003), "Quality in Qualitative Evaluation: a framework for assessing research evidence", Government Chief Social Researcher's Office, London, Cabinet Office.

United Kingdom Council for Graduate Education (2002), "Professional Doctorates", United Kingdom Council for Graduate Education, Dudley.

University of Central England Business School (2003), "Doctorate of Business Administration", the Association of Business Schools' Online Business and Management Course Directory.

University of Durham Business School (2003), "Doctorate of Business Administration", the Association of Business Schools' Online Business and Management Course Directory.

Wakeford, J. (2002), "What Goalposts? To fail a PhD at the viva is devastating", the Guardian, 17th September 2002

Walker, R. (1998), "Writing Down and Writing up in the Professional Doctorate: Journals and Folios", in Professional Doctorates: Innovations in Teaching and Research, edited by T.W Maxwell and T.W. & P.J. Shanahan, Faculty of Education and Professional Studies, UNE, Armidale , Australia.

Wexler, D. A., (1974), "A Cognitive Theory of Experiencing, Self-actualisation and Therapeutic Process", Wiley.

Yin, R., (1994), "Case Study Research: Design and Methods, 2nd edition", Applied Social Research Methods Series, SAGE Publications, London.

Volume Two.

Coventry University and the Professional Doctorate.

CONTENTS. Page

Chapter 1 - Introduction.

Volume1 established that a Professional Doctorate is about research and development. Where this project is concerned Volume 1 represents the "research" and now in Volume 2 the "and development" aspects will be addressed, and will deal with the application of the outcomes of the research. As such, Volume 2 also represents a practical working document for submission to Coventry University.

The following areas will be addressed:

- Coventry University and Professional Doctorates.
- The Award Title.
- Coventry Business School.
- The Proposed Structure.
- Does the Proposed Structure Address the Key Issues?
- Reflection on Personal Learning Outcomes.

Volume 2 will also contain examples of the articles written and conference presentations made, as detailed in Volume 1, as a result of this project. Where appropriate, slides from the power-point presentations will be included in the sections that follow.

Chapter 2 - Coventry University.

A Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University gave the following response to the question, is the University open to new ideas?

> "The University is open to new ideas, yet conservative about standards, and this can be a negative influence on new developments."

As was said in Volume One, the University on the one hand appears to promote innovation in teaching and learning by the formation of a Teaching and Learning Taskforce, the appointment of Teaching Fellows in each School, and the presentation of Teaching Excellence awards. On the other hand it stifles innovation by its approval processes, which act as a deterrent where new course developments are concerned. This can be seen in the way a proposal from Newman College was dealt with as will be discussed on page 4.

A new Vice-Chancellor joined the University on September 1 2004, and it remains to be seen whether the approval processes will change as the University is undertaking a "bureaucracy busting" review which will include consideration of quality assurance and course approval processes. This is not to say that the course approval process should lack rigour.

In December 1997 the University's Academic Board considered a paper entitled: "Alternatives to the "traditional" PhD – MPhil and PhD by published work." Referring to a working group that had met in August 1997 the paper said:

> "After some preliminary discussions, it was agreed to keep the principle of "taught" or "practice-based" doctorates under review and instead focus attention on the awarding of both MPhils and PhDs by published work."[1]

The minutes of the meeting do not record any consideration of the above view.

[1] Academic Board, 17 December 1997, agenda item 19, document B37/15.

In 2002, the Academic Board[2] considered a paper entitled: "Proposal for a Taught Doctorate in Education (EdD) Award at Newman College of Higher Education."

Newman College was seeking approval for a taught doctorate in Catholic Education which would have been the first of its kind in the United Kingdom. It was to run in part-time mode with a cohort of 10-12 students. The entry criteria were to be the same as for a PhD, and would be delivered over a minimum of four years.

The proposed structure was for the first two years to cover the taught modules and the last two years the thesis.

The minutes record that the proposal for an EdD was endorsed and referred to the Research Degree Committee for a "careful consideration of the particular proposal for an EdD in Catholic Education." As a result a number of conditions were imposed on Newman College which resulted in the College seeking approval from another university. This reflects the opening comment that Coventry University is open to new and innovative approaches to teaching and learning and yet stifles them by its approach to quality assurance issues.

The Research Degrees Committee in 2002[3] was asked to consider a paper on: "Guiding Principles for the Introduction of Independent Chairs." This paper was in response to an anticipated HEFCE paper that was likely to recommend the introduction of independent chairs at viva voce examinations.

As discussed in the article on "Assessment matters: some issues concerning the supervision and assessment of work-based doctorates", which is reproduced later in this Volume, was the introduction of independent chairs for the benefit of the candidate or the University? The paper states that (para. 3.1):

> "Due to the increased incidences of litigation taking place by students after disappointing outcomes to the viva, independent chairs would afford the University more protection from potential lawsuits."

[2] Academic Board, 20 March 2002, agenda item 5, document B50/3.
[3] Research Degrees Committee, 4 June 2003, agenda item 8, document RDC154/5

The paper does then go on to say (para. 3.4) that the independent chair would also:

- Allow the external examiner to concentrate on the examining the student rather than co-ordinating the viva.
- Ensure that the examination process is carried out correctly and that the candidate is treated fairly at all times.

However in paragraph 4, "The Role of the Independent Chair", the first defined role is to:

> "Act as an independent witness if any appeals or litigation arises."

This makes very clear the driver for this proposal which is to protect the University, and further on the paper (par. 5.4) states that:

> "A research student could not request an independent chair, it would be the responsibility of the Chair of the RDC to judge whether one was required."

What the paper does not make clear is in what circumstances an independent chair would be appointed. The subsequent minutes do not clarify, this stating (Minute 158/9.3):

> "It was argued that independent chairs would only be used in special cases and that the whole process should be kept independent."

The key phrase here is "special cases" but what does it mean? Could it mean when dealing with a candidate who is known to be difficult or the presence of a difficult external examiner?

The minutes show that the principles were accepted and a separate meeting would be held to determine the exact role.

That meeting came up with a set of guidelines which have subsequently been incorporated into the University's Research Degrees Handbook[4], which set out the circumstances when an independent chair must be appointed, namely when:

- A candidate is a current member of staff.
- A candidate has been examined and is required to resubmit their thesis for a further oral examination.
- An external examiner requests it.
- The Chair of the Research Degrees Committee deems it appropriate.

This further emphasises that the student has no rights in this matter. The perceived "difficulty" of a student or an examiner does not therefore specifically constitute a reason for the appointment of an independent chair, although this could perhaps be said to come under the final point above.

A paper entitled: "A Framework for Research Degrees with a Taught Component", was considered by the International Development Committee in 2003,[5] which proposed a framework for MPhil and PhD registrations that include an element of taught modules from Master's programmes.

The need to consider this approach derived from the fact that 50% of the applications for research degrees in 2003/4 had been rejected and some of these were because the University was unable to support a research programme which included a significant taught element in the early stages of the programme. The University is therefore responding to changes in the international market and the paper stated (para 2.5):

> "Failure of the University to respond to this market demand is likely to lead to the loss of other related business and would also lose an opportunity to enhance the University's research activity."

The University did have provision for up to one third of a research degree to be taught but each case needed the approval of the Academic Board of the University. The

[4] Research Degrees Handbook, 2003, p.30.
[5] International Development Committee, 8 October 2003, agenda item 10, document VID9/6.

paper proposed that this requirement should be dropped and Schools should be allowed to deal with this subject to the agreement of the Research Degrees Committee. This issue has still to be resolved.

The above papers have been included to show what prior consideration of Professional Doctorates and associated matters had taken place prior to my involvement at the start of 2004. At that time I approached the University's Academic Registrar to ascertain what approval documents would be needed for a Professional Doctorate and some guidance as to award titles and credit rating.

I was directed to the Research Degrees Administrator, who I met on two occasions to discuss where the University was in terms of Professional Doctorates and my work in progress. One of the first things discovered was that the award title DBA was already approved,[6] (At that time DBA was the preferred title being proposed by the Business School.) and was awarded as an Honorary Degree.

By February 2004, I was informed that a draft framework document was to be prepared by Academic Registry, to which I was asked to contribute my views. It was felt by the Senior Registry Officer that[7]:

> "Such a doctorate would clearly have to have a significant research element and would therefore have to have the support of the Research Degrees Committee. In addition the taught elements would need to have clearly stated intended learning outcomes and would need approval by a CARP[8], therefore QAC[9] would also need a say in the matter. The framework once endorsed by QAC and RDC[10] would need to be approved by Academic Board."

The target date was a paper to be presented to the Research Degrees and the Quality Assurance Committees by the summer, but in fact a paper went to the Committees in the autumn.

---

[6] Research Degrees Handbook, 2003, Appendix 1, p.61.
[7] E-mail dated 11 February 2004.
[8] Course Approval and Programme Review.
[9] Quality Assurance Committee.
[10] Research Degrees Committee.

The Quality Assurance Committee[11] resolved that the proposal to develop a generic framework for Professional Doctorates be endorsed and the following points were noted:

1. "There was support for a generic framework to underpin the establishment of Professional Doctorates within the University in order to reduce the potential divergence of different structures over time."

2. "It was felt that some courses might offer common elements and it would therefore be more resource efficient to offer these together on a cohort basis."

3. "It was noted that the University had for many years awarded a range of honorary degrees including higher doctorates. Some care would be needed to avoid any potential confusion between award titles and the status of the honorary awards."

Of these, point (2) above is the most interesting in pointing the way to across-university collaboration.

The Research Degrees Committee[12], considered a paper entitled: "Professional Doctorates", the purpose of which was to inform the committee about developments in doctoral education and to discuss the possibility of introducing Professional Doctorates in to Coventry University's academic portfolio.

The paper draws heavily on UKCGE[13] (2002), and covers many of the points considered in Volume One of this project. The Committee was asked to consider a number of general queries posed regarding Professional Doctorates in order to arrive at a view as to whether the University should introduce a single framework for such degrees. These queries were:

[11] Quality Assurance Committee, 29 September 2004, agenda item 12, document BQAM49.
[12] Research Degrees Committee, 27 October 2004, agenda item 7, document RDC163/9.
[13] UKCGE (2002), "Professional Doctorates", Dudley, ISBN 0 952 5751 83

- Would a one size fits all framework be appropriate for Professional Doctorates?
- Would each Professional Doctorate require its own specific regulations?
- Would a one size fits all framework be appropriate or should it be up to individual Professional Doctorates to state their specific entry requirements?
- Whether both the taught and research components of the programme should be credit rated?
- Whether the maximum number of M-level credits that can be counted toward the doctoral award should be defined?
- What form of supervision should be adopted?
- Whether the University's current academic regulations and quality mechanisms for taught programmes could be adopted for taught doctorates with or without modification?
- What should the title of the award be?

The minutes of the meeting show that the Committee agreed in principle to the introduction of Professional Doctorates and that these were: "required in order to compete with other universities." (Minute 163/7.3)

In response to the above questions the following comments were noted:

> (Minute: 163/7.5a): "It was argued that for the framework to work it should not be too rigid and should allow a degree of flexibility for the different subject areas across the University."

On the matter of credits it was agreed that (Minute: 163/7.5b):

> "The structure of the Professional Doctorate should have credits attached, a possible solution would be to equate 50% of student time to 240 credits."

(Unfortunately there is nothing in the Minutes to explain the thinking behind this. If a doctorate equates to 540 credits then 50% would be 270 credits, or alternatively if the

180 credits for a pre-existing Masters is discounted, then this would be 50% of 360 credits which is 180 credits. It is likely therefore that the Committee was confused on the issue of credits and doctorate programmes!)

> (Minute: 163/7.5c): "The mechanisms for students transferring onto the programme, based on prior qualifications, would also need to be investigated. It was argued that unless a robust transfer policy was built into the framework, there would be a danger of students fast-tracking from their MPhil/PhD studies to a Professional Doctorate."

> (Minute: 163/7.5d): "Although a traditional approach to offering such a qualification seemed an obvious and sensible way forward, Committee members felt that in order to make this qualification successful the Committee should think "outside the box"."

This was perhaps as surprising as it was encouraging, and shows an appreciation of the situation that I would not have expected from my prior discussions with members of the Committee. It also reveals the traditional mindset of the Committee because why is "a traditional approach to offering such a qualification .....an obvious and sensible way forward"?

Following on from that meeting I was invited to join a working party to look at Professional Doctorates that met for the first time in January 2005. The purpose of the working party was to consider five questions and the responses, as contained in the minutes of the Research Degrees Committee Sub-group[14], are as follows:

1. Would a "one-size fits all" framework be appropriate? The working party concluded that there should be a generic framework, but flexible enough to accommodate the needs of the different Schools. For example most Schools expected the minimum entry requirement to be a Masters programme: however, others argued that this would not always be necessary.

[14] Research Degrees Committee Sub-Group Minutes, 11 January 2005.

2. Should both the taught and research components be credit rated? After a lengthy discussion it was decided that both components should be credit rated. This did not suit all Schools, particularly Health and Social Sciences, who argued that the professions they worked with, did not want credit rating on what they saw as a professional programme. It was agreed that in such cases the credit rating would only be for internal university information. It was also agreed that the minimum credit rating for the thesis/project would be 90 credits. Credit rating was seen as a "sensible approach" on the basis of transferability, the option of fall-back qualifications and the requirements of UKCGE.

3. Whether the maximum number of M-level credits that can be counted towards the Doctoral award should be defined? It was agreed that up to the maximum of 180 M-level credits could be counted.

4. What form of supervision should be adopted? It was agreed that taught modules would remain a matter for the University but that all doctoral thesis/projects should be supervised collaboratively with the employer/profession.

5. Whether the University's current Academic Regulations and quality mechanisms for taught programmes could be adopted, either with or without modification? The working party did not in the end have to consider this matter as the University was carrying out a root and branch revision of its Academic Regulations.

The meeting was interesting for a number of reasons:

- The meeting was chaired by the chair of the University's Research Degrees Committee who claimed to have no prior knowledge of Professional Doctorates. I believe this is noteworthy because of the length of time that Professional Doctorates have been around in Higher Education and the considerable literature on the topic that exists.

- Some of those present felt that Professional Doctorates would not be needed if the PhD was redesigned and made more flexible. This accords with some of the material covered in Volume 1.
- Professional Doctorates were not seen as being as rigorous as a PhD where research training was concerned. This again demonstrates the confusion that exists surrounding the purpose of a Professional Doctorate as opposed to a PhD, and the issue of equivalence.
- Some of those present felt that a Professional Doctorate was no more rigorous or demanding than an MSc. I was particularly interested in this point because it again is an area covered in Volume 1, and was made by an academic who had recently examined a Professional Doctorate. This may reveal nothing more than a bias towards the PhD, but nevertheless an academic telling that particular story will not help the cause of the Professional Doctorate. If on the other hand it represents a genuine disappointment with the work seen then the university concerned is doing a disservice to all the universities offering Professional Doctorates.

In my introduction to the project I talked of a circular journey, and the position now reached at Coventry University is exactly what I meant, as although the preceding twelve months have not to any great extent moved this issue forward at the University I am now better informed and as a result I have a different perspective on Professional Doctorates which puts me in a much stronger position to contribute to their development.

Chapter 3 - Award Title.

In 2003, I conducted a survey of the M.A. in Management graduates from the Business School. They were asked to indicate their preference for the award title of a Professional Doctorate, from a pre-prepared list, and to state briefly their reasons. A total of 90 forms were sent out and 38 were returned, a return rate of 42%. Of the 38 who responded, 29 (76%) were interested in studying for a Professional Doctorate.

The list of possible award titles, as listed below, was generated from the literature review, including the course documentation from other universities.

- Doctor of Business Administration.
- Doctor of Professional Practice.
- Professional Doctorate.
- Doctorate by Work-based Learning.
- Executive Doctorate.

First place went to the award title of Doctor of Business Administration (33%), and in second place was the Doctor of Professional Practice (18%).

(Presentations to employers revealed a preference for the same two award titles on the grounds that they better conveyed what the doctorate would be about.)

The students' reasons for their stated preferences are given below:

Doctor of Business Administration.

- Other titles seem more awkward when read out.
- Simply currency as I think the DBA is a recognised title (although not necessarily understood) and easier to explain.
- The title MBA is well known and recognised by employers. To extend this to doctorate level would allow easy recognition of course content and level of achievement without the need to explain the detail.

- The title is similar to the MBA and hence more recognisable to employers. It has a collective connotation of core management/business concepts at the doctorate level which I think sums up the qualification.
- Reflects the content of the doctorate.
- Sounds realistic and based on professional disciplines.
- Gives a concise description of the level of study/application to be achieved. The title gives weight to the individual's professional status and competency whilst supporting the work-based nature of the research and its practical application.
- The title is likely to be more marketable than the other ones, for both the University and the students.
- Would have general recognition in the wider business community. Whilst there are many advantages, both to the person studying the doctorate and the value to both them and their employers with the course being work-based, it does not reflect the degree of effort required to achieve it compared to a more easily understood and recognised award.

Doctor of Professional Practice.

- Most relevant to my current role.
- The title allows/gives a broader scope to its interpretation in the business fraternity.
- This title sounds more generic and descriptive.
- This preference is based on the award title being offered elsewhere and is therefore a known entity.

This award title would have the benefit of allowing students to define the focus of their studies and this could then be included in brackets, giving a Doctor of Professional Practice (in XXX). The "XXX", would give the focus such as Fire Service Management, Health and Social Care or Project Management.

Doctorate by Work-based Learning.

- I feel that emphasising the work-based learning compliments the move to continuous professional development, and the title demonstrates that this development is in the workplace.
- The title reflects the main area of learning and would cover many different roles undertaken by those who participate in the course.
- The title best reflects the context in which the doctorate is to be achieved.

Executive Doctorate

- The title reflects the senior managerial and experiential elements of the programme at the appropriate executive level.
- Takes cognisance of the attitudes and environment currently prevailing in the professional world. The title is applicable to the role of a senior manager in line with occupational standards.

The students' views, as to their preferred award title, provide valuable in-sight in to the issues of relevance and fitness for purpose that professional practitioners and their employers will look for. The award title must convey as accurately as possible the focus of the doctorate so that potential students and employers, current and future, can see that it is a) a doctorate and b) it is different to a PhD.

The proposed structure will however be for a Doctor of Professional Practice and the reasons for this will be dealt with later.

Chapter 4 - Coventry Business School and a Professional Doctorate.

The Business School has over 3,500 students studying on a wide range of courses from part-time to full-time and from Higher National Diploma level to PhD. The part-time courses lead to professional qualifications as well as to more general qualifications.

The School operates in partnership with organisations locally, nationally and internationally. It prides itself on preparing people for the real world of work, which requires more than mere knowledge. Consequently emphasis is placed on the acquisition of the skills and competencies necessary to cope with the rapidly changing work environment of the 21st century.

The two paragraphs above are a précis of the "brand" the School presents to those thinking of applying for a job.

Academic year 2003/4, was an interesting one for Coventry Business School involving a mock audit of two areas of its postgraduate provision and a re-approval event for the MBA programme.

The mock audit was in preparation for a QAA Continuation Audit to be held in April 2004, and looked at the areas of Postgraduate Work-based Learning, and the MBA. While the Postgraduate Work-based Learning provision was cited as an example of good practice, and praised for its conceptualisation and operation, the MBA was criticised for many things including being under-resourced in terms of academic staffing.

There was some leakage from the mock audit into the MBA re-approval event, when concerns were again expressed over the staff resources available to that programme.

At the time my thinking on a work-based, Professional Doctorate was running along the lines of a Doctorate in Business Administration for the Business School, although I was aware of a lack of resources in the School to support such a programme. With

the programme being modular based and therefore cohort based the resource issue would only be exacerbated.

As was stated in Volume 1, to be a worthwhile learning experience the cohort would need to ideally be a minimum of ten students. If the programme took four years to complete then over a four year period there would be forty students in the system to be supervised. Even with the use of practitioner supervisors the Business School would not be able to cope without significant numbers of new academic appointments. It is further interesting to note that at the moment the School rejects about 70% of PhD applications because there are insufficient numbers of supervisors available.

This consideration on its own would not stop the School putting forward proposals for a DBA to an approval panel, but the events outlined above would I believe stop that approval being obtained. I have discussed this point with the Dean of the School but he still speaks of the imminent introduction of a DBA at staff forums, while also saying that budget restrictions would prohibit the recruitment of new academic staff, which is in any case needed to support existing courses. These two conflicting statements are not compatible. There is absolutely no point in developing a Professional Doctorate and taking it to market if the resources are not there and it cannot be delivered properly in terms of standards and quality.

This reinforces an already strong argument to be made for a Professional Doctorate not to be "owned" by any one School as this might well serve to stifle development across the campus. A Professional Doctorate that is approved by the University as a generic programme, managed centrally, drawing on resources from the Schools, would establish a platform from which in time more specific pathways could be developed.

Consequently, following discussions with the Director of the University's Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED), a firm interest was expressed in the programme being located in CHED. As CHED would not be interested in offering a DBA, other award titles had to be considered, hence the interest in calling it a Doctorate of Professional Practice..

The focus of the student's studies would be reflected in the brackets after the main award title. This focus could either come from a pre-determined list drawn up by the University or by the student themselves putting forward a rationale for their choice, which from my discussions with stakcholders was the preference with one exception. There was concern within Coventry University as to whether its Academic Registry would be able to cope with this administratively, but in my view this is not, and should not be allowed to be, an insurmountable problem.

This approach is consistent with the conventions of the QAA[15]:

> "Titles used for doctoral qualifications awarded after programmes that include a substantial taught element should normally include the name of the discipline in the title."

The alternative would be to go down the route proposed by the Research Degrees Committee Sub Group of a generic framework that is flexible enough to meet the needs of the different schools who would then deliver their own Professional Doctorate. The framework would outline the baseline requirements for the design of individual awards and define the processes each school must go through to get approval to deliver a Professional Doctorate.

[15] Annex 2 , QAA National Qualifications Framework

Chapter 5 - Can the Characteristics of Coventry Business School's Postgradute Work-based Learning Programme be Incorporated into a Professional Doctorate?

The Terms of Reference in Volume 1, contain the following objective:

> "Evaluate whether the key characteristics of the Postgraduate Work-based Learning Programme at Coventry Business School are applicable to a Professional Doctorate."

These were listed as:

- Reflective Practice.
- The use of action learning sets.
- Independent Study.
- Work-based Projects.
- The development of professional capability.
- Impact.
- The use of information and communication technology.

The key characteristics were mapped against Professional Doctorates offered at other universities and are shown in a table on page 69 of Volume 1. The mapping exercise showed that all of the key characteristics were present in the Professional Doctorates offered elsewhere, although only two made use of action learning sets. This reflected the international make-up of cohorts at the other universities thereby making action learning sets impractical. This could be overcome by the use of virtual action learning sets either through the course web or video conferencing but this solution could translate into a problem for some students if they cannot access the right equipment.

Adherence to the use of action learning sets should only happen where it is practical and virtual solutions need to be thought about carefully if international students are not to be disadvantaged. .(As an aside to this it is interesting that in January 2005, at a time when it aspires to offer a Professional Doctorate, the Business School has decided to scrap its audio-visual suite which included video conferencing.)

On the School's Postgraduate Work-based Learning Programme, the use of action learning sets is seen as an important part of the learning process and one of the vehicles for providing support to students. The other sources of support are:

- An induction programme.
- Residentials.
- Workshops.
- The cohort itself.
- A mentor.
- Academic supervisors.
- Course web.

These would also need to be in place for students on a Professional Doctorate who in addition will need:

- A Professional Doctorate advisor(s).
- A work-place supervisor.
- Leading edge presentations by "gurus."
- Support for publication.

The workplace supervisor, working as part of the supervision team, will primarily focus on the "and development" aspect of the project and will be able to supervise on a day to day basis. These supervisors will be individuals who will have experience of managing projects in the workplace.

There will therefore have to be a development programme for both academic supervisors and workplace supervisors to ensure clarity of purpose. At the very least this should entail the issue of a set of operating documents, one of which would be on the "Role and Responsibilities of Supervisors."

Given that neither the academic or workplace supervisor will be involved in the assessment of the project, there would appear to be a case for replacing the word "supervisor" with "mentor". Supervision with its connotations of inspection and control may convey a harsher vision of the relationship with the student whereas mentor, defined in the dictionaries as "a wise counsellor" may be a more accurate term.

The course will require a high level of individual academic support. As discussed in Volume 1, the students will be senior professionals who will bring with them expectations of a level of service and attention they routinely experience from training programmes from the private sector. The fees therefore should reflect this level of service and support, which must then be provided.

The Postgraduate Work-based Learning Programme received a Teaching Excellence Award from the University in June 2004 for its innovative assessment and the quality of the formative feedback given to students. Feedback is an essential part of learning and can take many forms and be given in different forums.

Individual feedback is a relatively expensive activity but needed in certain situations and in a managed way. The induction programme should ensure that the students' expectations are managed and are realistic. All academics have experienced a student submitting so many drafts for comment that the tutor eventually ends up summatively assessing their own work, and therefore it may be necessary to state at the outset that only one draft will be looked at before final submission.

Feedback may also be given by the:

- The other students.
- The mentor.
- Feedback resulting from a presentation given by the student.
- Feedback arising from submitting an article to a journal for publication.
- Reaction to actions taken in the workplace.
- Summative assessment of work.

The course team will use feedback as well to minimise non-completion by students which may result from:

Issue	Result	Response
Lack of training in research methods.	Undermines all the project(s)	The Advanced Research and Development Methods module, building on the research content of the Masters will address this.
Poor Supervision	An unsatisfactory experience for the student resulting in possible failure in the projects and an undermining of the courses reputation.	The production of a supervisor's handbook and staff development activities
Choice of overly ambitious projects	The project will not be feasible and appropriate given the student's time and other constraints.	Project proposals will be considered by the course team, the doctorate supervisors and fellow students.
Isolation.	Non-completion	The course is cohort based and will come together for residentials /workshops. The student will also have doctorate supervisors, a workplace mentor and contact via a course web. This will need to be addressed at induction.

These key characteristics therefore can be incorporated in to a Professional Doctorate. The course team will need to consider "if" and "how" it will operate action learning sets and how it will provide the level of support students will require. This will need to be translated in to a business plan to ensure that the University is aware of the resource requirement and is prepared to provide it.

It would be disappointing if the University made a decision about Professional Doctorates on the basis of whether or not it makes money from them. While accepting that universities are businesses with competing demands for resources, doctoral provision does help a university to engage with a research community which can bring many benefits, which could be reason enough to proceed.

Chapter 6 - The Proposed Structure.

The proposed structure provides for a generic Doctor of Professional Practice that could be supported by any School and serve the needs of professional practitioners and employers across the board.

The structure, as shown below, is based on the requirement for a student to achieve 540 credits, of which 180 credits can be at Master's level (CQFW, NICATS, NUCCAT, SEEC, 2001). The Master's therefore is treated as the first stage of the doctoral programme, with students receiving 180 credits. This approach is consistent with the QAA (1998) [16] proposal that a maximum of 180 credits could be credited towards the 540 credits of a doctoral award.

The proposed structure is an amalgam of best practice at other universities and from the extensive literature reviewed carried out in connection with this project. It also reflects the need for a generic framework that can address the needs of students from a range of professions, and meet the needs of the School's concerned.

[16] QAA (1998), A Consultation Paper on Postgraduate Qualifications, November

Module code	Module title	Credit value	Credit level
	Stage 1		
	Masters	**180**	**M**
	Stage 2		
	Advanced Research and Development Methods	**40**	**D**
	Independent Study	**20**	**D**
	Contemporary Issues in Professional Practice	**40**	**D**
	Dissemination for Research and Practice	**20**	**D**
Module code	**Module title**	**Credit value**	**Credit level**
	Literature Review	**20**	**D**
	Learning Framework and Rationale	**40**	**D**
	Stage 3		
	Project(s)	**180**	**D**

This structure was presented to the Chief Executive Officer of the National Health Service University (6 February 2004) and to the Network of International Business Schools (14 May 2004).

Management Development by Work-based Learning for Health and Social Care
(Presentation to Professor Bob Fryer, CEO NHSU)

David Johnson & Trevor Montague
6 February 2004

Postgraduate Work-based Learning

Len Bird, David Johnson & Trevor Montague
NIBS Conference 14 May 2004

The proposed structure was welcomed at both forums and only one amendment was suggested and that was to change "Thesis" at Stage 3 to "Project(s)" in an attempt to differentiate it from the PhD and use a term familiar to professional practice.

Discussions have also been held with the Fire Service College and an interest in working with the University in developing this Professional Doctorate has been expressed.

The proposed structure is designed to meet the learning outcomes detailed in the QAA (2001) descriptor for qualifications at doctoral level, namely that on completion of the programme students will be able to demonstrate achievement of the following learning outcomes:

- The creation and interpretation of new knowledge through original research or other advanced scholarship of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication.
- A systematic aequisition and understanding of a body of substantial knowledge, which is at the forefront of an academic diseipline or an area of professional practice.
- The general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems.

- A detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

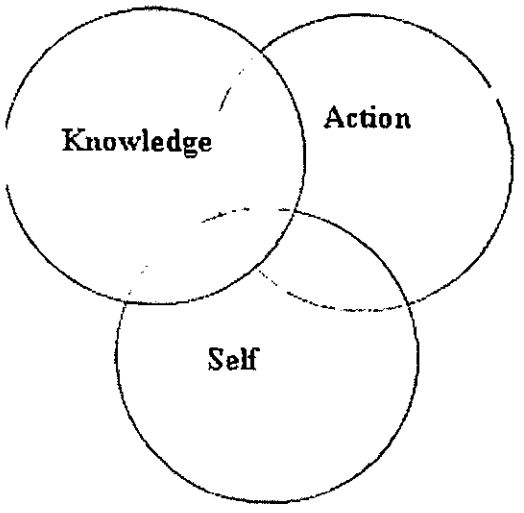
The relevant slide from the power-point presentation is given below:

Programme Structure for Doctor of Professional Practice

Module Title	Credit Value	Credit Level
Masters	180	M
Advanced Research and Development Methods	40	D
Independent Study	20	D
Contemporary Issues in Professional Practice	40	D
Dissemination for Research and Practice	20	D
Literature Review	20	D
Learning Framework and Rationale	40	D
THESIS	180	D
Total	540	

The above learning outcomes were discussed in Volume 1 and are applicable to both Professional Doctorates and the PhD and are therefore a useful tool for demonstrating equivalence.

The curriculum is therefore based on three domains:



The first domain is "Knowledge", representing those components of the curriculum that are based on professional and discipline specific knowledge. The second domain represents "Action" which refers to those competencies associated with practice, and the third domain is "Self" representing the personal and professional identity in relation to an area of work. The three domains are indicative of Mode 2 Knowledge as defined in Volume 1. The significant contribution to practice occurs where the three domains intersect, and that represents the doctoral-level work of the student.

Stage 2 contains the "taught" modules, representing 180 credits at D-level. The proposed modules are:

- Advanced Research and Development.
- Independent Study.
- Contemporary Issues in Professional Practice.
- Writing for Research and Practice.
- Literature Review.
- Learning Framework and Rationale.

These modules have been selected as a result of looking at what other providers include in their doctoral programmes and the views of those discussants I have met

with both inside and outside the University, and are consistent with a generic programme.

The key point about the Research and Development module is the "and development." There is a danger, as discussed in Volume 1, that a Professional Doctorate could be dominated by academe to the extent that it becomes to all intents and purposes a PhD. Academics are predominantly interested in the "research" aspect of the doctorate and appear to be much less interested in the application or "and development" aspect of the work.

The assessment on the above module would be the production of a proposal for a piece of work to be conducted in the Independent Study module. The student would identify an area of study and give the rationale for that choice, indicating its relationship to the eventual project(s).

Independent Study modules are already used on the Business School's Postgraduate Work-based Learning Programme in this way.

The inclusion of a module entitled Contemporary Issues in Professional Practice will be effectively a Master Class, providing opportunities to make use of guest speakers or "gurus" and the assessment would be the student's reflection on the application of what they have heard to their own professional practice.

The module Dissemination for Research and Practice is included to meet the learning outcome "make an original contribution to the field of professional practice." Dissemination would encompass both conference presentation and publication. Given the timescales involved in getting a paper published, in both academic and professional journals, students will not be expected to have achieved publication. It would be sufficient for a student to have an article accepted by a publication.

The University could simulate the publication process by having the student's work refereed by both academics and professional practitioners or alternatively it could

consider the production of a research journal itself in which a student's work could be published, allied perhaps to an annual conference. This would have a number of advantages:

- Shorter timescales.
- A tangible output from a learning community.
- Act as a marketing tool.
- Still maintain rigour in the process.

When this issue was looked at in Volume 1, it became apparent that although there are counter-arguments the audience for the publication of the student's research findings is the professional practice arena. The student therefore will be asked as part of this module to give a rationale for their choice of publication and for their proposed article to meet the following criteria:

- Does it address an issue that is of importance to other practitioners?
- Does it make a significant contribution to practice in its field?
- Is it expressed in a language appropriate to professional practitioners?
- Does it strike a balance between methods and results that is appropriate for a practitioner journal?
- Does it identify implications for the development of professional practice and make clear and worthwhile recommendations?

The Literature Review module would be allied to the above module, and would form the basis of the conference presentation or publication. As such it would link with the last of the taught modules namely the Learning Framework and Rationale. Students would be expected to initially attend conferences as an observer before attending to present a paper. The presentation could also be made jointly with an academic, leading to the publication of a joint paper. The conference could be organised and held at the University itself to assist students to disseminate their work.

The Learning Framework and Rationale module is where the student would set out their proposal for Stage 3, the project(s). The design of the doctorate must allow for a

student to submit either one all encompassing project or a number of smaller projects as discussed in Volume One. This would also be the module where students define and justify the focus of their award.

It may be that following consideration by the course team, students will in fact be allowed to submit a number of smaller projects rather than one all encompassing piece of work. Other universities seem to require either one project or up to three smaller ones and the three projects could be differentiated as follows:

Problem Based: the student identifies a problem in their workplace and develops a solution appropriate to that work context.

Practice Based: the student identifies an issue concerning their own professional practice and develops ways to change this.

Project Based: the student develops a research question concerning their own professional practice or that of others that will enable them through appropriately conducted research to make an original and significant contribution to advance professional practice in their field.

For students who have entered the course having completed a Masters that contained a research element, the problem based project will not represent a significant step-up in terms of prior work but for others this could be viewed as a useful levelling up assignment. I am now of the opinion that the course should allow students to have the option of doing either one all encompassing project because that is what they and their employer want, or three smaller projects. The projects could be of differing sizes with the final project based piece of work being the largest of the three.

A further advantage of having three smaller projects is that it would be better for students who may find themselves changing jobs either within their existing organisation or with another. A single project in those circumstances would possibly be a liability for the student. This is also an argument for the three projects not necessarily being linked. The submission of three projects will allow for the student to receive formative feedback on each, which will then help with their subsequent work.

The course will have an emphasis on action research because this is research that is focused on resolving a defined problem within an organisation and contributing as a result to the stock of knowledge available to other professional practitioners. Action research covers a range of methodological approaches. If a student can make an acceptable case for an alternative research approach this would be acceptable provided it led to the resolution of a defined problem and contributed to the stock of knowledge available to others.

As discussed in Volume 1 there would be a Subject Assessment Board (SAB) to consider the results achieved in each module. The University's usual quality assurance procedures would apply with external examiner(s) involved looking at samples of work and attending the Board. Students who successfully move on to Stage 3 of the programme could take up to two or three years to submit the project (s), the results of which, together with Stage 2 achievement, would then be considered by a Programme Assessment Board (PAB) which would be the awarding body.

The result of the project(s) would have been determined by the internal and external examiners appointed for the purpose. This mix of examiners for the taught modules and the project(s) "represents a particular challenge." (UKCGE, 2002[17]). I strongly recommend that the University uses external examiners drawn from professional practice with the routine use of an independent chair.

I propose that the project(s) is itself treated as a module, the results of which would then be considered at the SAB. The PAB would then have two purposes namely to decide that a student should pass and proceed to Stage 3 and to make awards to those who pass Stage 3.

This then raises a further interesting point in that dealing with student results in the above way could enable a strong performance in Stage 2 to possibly influence the Board in the student's favour if the project(s) was thought to be border-line in terms

[17] UKCGE (2002), "Professional Doctorates", Dudley, p.51.

of reaching the required standard. This holistic view of a student's performance is not an option available to PhD students.

A further regulatory issue to be considered is where the students' learning frameworks will be formally approved. At the moment Coventry require all PhD dissertation proposals to be formally approved by the Research Degrees Committee (RDC). There would seem to be the following options:

- Learning Frameworks for Professional Doctorates go to the RDC for approval along with PhD proposals. This may be a benefit in terms of demonstrating equivalence to the Committee but on the other hand they may end up being judged against PhD standards.

- The RDC has a sub committee to consider learning frameworks for Professional Doctorates and make recommendations as to their approval to the committee itself. This would allow the sub committee to have a membership that understands Professional Doctorates.

Each school would need to then determine its approval processes that will then feed in to the RDC.

On the Business School's M.A in Management, a student's learning framework requires the following signatures:

- The student – to signify that it meets their professional development.
- The employer - to signify that the employer sees a value in and will support the project.
- The Programme Manager– to signify that the proposed work meets the requirements of the programme.

This process should therefore apply to the Professional Doctorate so that when the learning framework is presented to the RDC or its sub-committee it can see that it has been signed off by the three parties.

The course will need to recognise the type of candidate who will want to study for a Professional Doctorate, and the likely intervention of "life events". This will require some flexibility as to the period of study allowed and the introduction of exit awards, such as a Master of Professional Practice. To receive such an award a student would need to met the requirements of a Masters level award. It should not be viewed as a compensation for not achieving success in the doctorate.

Alternatively the University may consider a different approach, by recognising that if students on entry already have a Masters degree then they may not be in need of another. Given the likely seniority of the students involved and the course requiring participants who are self-motivated and directed, then they would have enrolled with the sole intention of successfully achieving the doctorate, and anything less will not be of interest to them.

No matter how self-motivated and directed they are, life events will intervene and therefore the University should consider as an alternative the introduction of stage statements. These statements could be issued at the successful completion of a stage, and would specify the student's achievements in terms of the learning outcomes involved. A student could then use them as examples of continuous professional development in employment or promotion arenas, or who need to complete their studies at another university.

The course will be designed to facilitate normal completion in a period of four years through part-time study. If the normal completion period is not four years then students will be more susceptible to non-completion.

It is this structure that will now form the basis for a Programme Specification for a Doctor of Professional Practice.

It is not the purpose of this project to produce the Programme Specification or the module descriptors, firstly because I do not have the expertise in all the areas concerned to do this and quite rightly it should be for the course team to develop

these, a process in which I will assist. It will also be necessary for the course team to produce a set of operating documents:

- A student handbook.
- A workplace mentor's handbook.
- A project supervisor's handbook.
- A programme specification.

The detail of the module content, assessment strategy and the operational detail of the programme will need to demonstrate the doctoral level of what is proposed.

Chapter 7 - Does the Proposed Structure Address the Key Issues?

The table below is a checklist of the major challenges and considerations for the designer(s) of a Professional Doctorate and was first produced in Volume One. It has been reproduced here as a means of evaluating the proposal for a Professional Doctorate at Coventry University.

Key Issue	**Reference within this project.**	**Has this issue been addressed in the Coventry University design?**
1. Have the identified weaknesses of the Professional Doctorate been addressed?	Page 26. (McWilliam et al, 2002:10)	Yes – but see below.
2. Does the course encourage close links with employers?	Page 25. (McWilliam et al, 2002:ix-x)	Yes
3. Can the course demonstrate equivalence with the PhD?	Page 27. UKCGE, 2002:62)	Yes, as much as any Professional Doctorate can.
4. Is the course about research and development?	Page 30. (Cranfield University,2003:2)	Yes
5. Does it meet the QAA descriptor?	Page 35. (QAA, 2001)	Yes
6. Are the learning outcomes clearly stated?	Page 37.	These will be addressed within the course documentation.

Key Issue	Reference within this project.	Has this issue been addressed in the Coventry University design?
7. Is the project(s) credit rated?	Page 46. (UKCGE,2002:31)	Yes
8. Have the regulatory issues been addressed?	Page 45.	Yes
9. Does the design of the course facilitate recognition of what constitutes D-level?	Page 42.	Yes
10.Are the resources, both academic and administrative, available?	Page 43. (UKCGE,2002:26)	This has still to be addressed.
11. Does the course demonstrate a clear vision as to what constitutes originality?	Page 49. (Middlesex University,1999:8)	Yes
12. Does the course demonstrate a clear view as to its expectations of the dissemination of students' work?	Page 52.	Yes
13. Does the course provide for interim or exit awards?	Page 65.	Yes

In the above table, Key Issue number 1, deals with the flaws in Professional Doctorates identified by McWilliams et al (2002) and these are considered below in relation to the proposed course at Coventry:

.

A lack of definitional clarity. The University has to be very clear about why it wants a Professional Doctorate and how it fits with its portfolio of postgraduate provision. The acid test will be whether or not it is possible to clearly demonstrate the course's equivalence to a PhD yet also what sets it apart.

The structure proposed has the potential I believe to produce a course that will be equivalent to, yet different to a PhD. The course must seek to provide the highest level and highest quality in terms of professional development for the student and their sponsoring organisation otherwise there is little point in taking it to the market.

It is to be hoped that this Professional Doctorate, informed as it is by the thinking and experiences of other universities, will meet the needs of all the stakeholders concerned.

Widespread rumours of dumbing-down. It has to be accepted that academics will have concerns about the academic rigour and standards of Professional Doctorates. A strategy adopted with the Business School's Postgraduate Work-based Learning programme has been one of encouraging such colleagues to drop in at any of the workshops, residentials and other events as they want and to involve them in second marking. By making the programme transparent in this way progress has been made in overcoming these concerns.

Concerns that critical thinking is a casualty of pragmatism. The proposed structure does provide opportunities for students to demonstrate critical engagement with the literature and an understanding of advanced research methods. The wider academic community needs to accept that the Professional Doctorate has a different purpose to a PhD, although the literature as discussed in Volume 1, shows how little progress seems to have been made in this regard.

However rather than perceiving research as an end in itself, the Professional Doctorate places research at the service of the development of professional practice and the development of professional practitioners.

Domination of the award by universities, accompanied by professional/industry apathy. The Professional Doctorate proposed actively seeks deep engagement with the professions, and will utilise professional practice supervisors in the workplace and as examiners.

If the aims of the Professional Doctorate are to be achieved, then it will not be sufficient for students to only communicate their findings to academics. In order to bridge the gap between research and practice students will need to develop the capacity to communicate research results to fellow practitioners.

Professional part-time students who are often time-poor and stressed. The Professional Doctorate proposed is aimed at senior professional practitioners and they, no more than other part-time postgraduate students, will be juggling responsibilities and therefore time and are liable to be affected by life events. A flexible approach to the length of periods of study, the ability to suspend study and realistic exit awards will help address this concern.

Non-traditional assessment putting quality assurance at risk. The concern that some academics have about the academic standards and rigour surrounding Professional Doctorates has already been discussed. The answer is to make these programmes open to colleagues to sample activities and to get involved in the assessment of work.

A PhD is based on a single research investigation whereas the Professional Doctorate is based on one or more projects, reflecting the broader range of learning outcomes involved. If the student chooses to do a number of smaller but linked projects then they will receive the benefits of feedback on each of the preceding ones before tackling the final project.

When the modules and assessment strategy are finalised it might be the case that the course team will be recommending the assessment of portfolios or other artefacts.

Trial and error organisational logic. The concern here is the focus on Type 2 Knowledge rather than Type 1 which is the focus of a PhD, and again comes down to concerns about academic standards and rigour and how these are addressed by the course team.

Lack of inter-institutional partnerships. This was discussed in Volume 1 and the idea of a coalition of equal partners was considered. It has been the biggest disappointment of the project that collaborative partnerships, external to Coventry University have not materialised.

Fierce competition within a shrinking market. Leaving aside a debate as to whether this is a shrinking market, nevertheless there are many universities offering Professional Doctorates, so if the Coventry University version is to be successful it will need to gain a reputation for something that will set it apart from its competitors. I believe that if the Professional Doctorate can achieve the same positive reputation as the Postgraduate Work-based Learning Programme for student support, the quality of the formative feedback given to students, and its innovative assessment then it will be differentiated from its competitors.

Lack of data on completion rates. The absence of data on completion rates nationally will be an issue at any course approval event.

Lack of responsiveness to non-traditional student needs. The University must ensure that the academic and support staff resources are available for the delivery of a Professional Doctorate. There will also be a need to address the regulatory issues such a course involves.

The Professional Doctorate proposed here, has been developed in accordance with the QAA doctoral level descriptor and will operate in accordance with the University's Academic Regulations and its quality assurance processes.

Does the proposed structure deal with the interests and concerns of the stakeholders as identified in Volume 1?

Stakeholder	**Interest**	**Does the proposal for a Professional Doctorate at Coventry University address this?**
Government	Dissatisfaction with the narrow, academic career focus of the PhD.	The proposed programme is for senior managers, with a focus on their professional practice.
QAA	The need for the Professional Doctorate to meet the descriptor for qualifications at doctoral level.	The proposed programme fully complies with the QAA descriptor for qualifications at doctoral level.

Stakeholder	Interest	Does the proposal for a Professional Doctorate at Coventry University address this?
Employers	Looking for relevance as the PhD is seen as too academic.	With its focus on professional practice the proposed programme will be relevant and through the student(s) project(s) achieve some impact in the workplace.
Universities	Responding to the criticism of the PhD by the introduction of innovative doctoral programmes. This is balanced by a desire to maintain the position of the PhD.	The proposed programme will be demonstrably different to the PhD, but will through meeting the QAA level descriptor be able to show equivalence.
Coventry University	Balance innovation with the maintenance of standards.	The proposed programme although innovative will demonstrate academic rigour and the maintenance of academic standards.
Research Councils	Welcome the introduction of the Professional Doctorate but cautious due to concerns around variability of programmes.	The concerns can be overcome by demonstrating that the programme in terms of content, expectations and level is operating at doctoral level as defined by the QAA.
Academics	Traditional academics doubt the rigour and standards of a Professional Doctorate. Others recognise the need to change.	The proposed programme will be totally transparent and open to all staff. Staff outside of the course team will be invited to become involved if only in terms of second marking enabling the quality of the students' work to be appreciated.
Students	A doctoral programme that is not focused on research training for future academics.	The proposed programme is for senior managers with a focus on their professional practice.

The experience gained from the delivery of the Business School's Postgraduate Work-based Learning Programme applied to the Professional Doctorate provision will help to overcome many of the concerns outlined above.

Sceptical academics were invited to attend any of the events in the Programme and were involved in the second marking of work. Consequently academics now ask to be involved either as project tutors or as members of the course team.

The programme has been able to demonstrate its quality in terms of content, level and expectations, to which can be added academic rigour and standards, in the following ways:

- Consistently good external examiner reports.
- Consistently good feedback from employers.
- Consistently good feedback from students.
- Positive feedback from QAA audits.
- Securing programme re-approval with few if any conditions attached.
- Securing delivery to corporate cohorts with subsequent repeat business.
- Successful franchising of the programme to a college in the south west of England.

There is therefore a successful track record in the delivery of part-time, post graduate work-based learning programmes, which from their outset had to satisfy a similar group of stakeholders, to use as the basis for this development.

Chapter 8 - Dissemination of My Work.

I have taken a number of opportunities to disseminate my work through publication and presentation of papers at conferences throughout the duration of my Professional Doctorate, and these represent outputs from my studies. The full details of the articles published and the papers presented at conferences are given below:

1. Johnson, D.L. (2000) "The use of learning theories in the design of a work-based learning course at Masters- Level", *Innovations in Education and Training International*, 37 (2) May, ISSN: 1470-3297.

2. Johnson, D.L. (2001) "The opportunities, benefits and barriers to the introduction of work-based learning in higher education", *Innovations in Education and Teaching International* , 38 (4) November, pp. 364-368, ISSN: 1470-3297.

3. Johnson, D.L. (2005) "Assessment Matters: some issues concerning the supervision and assessment of work-based doctorates", *Innovations in Education and Training International*. 42 (1) February, pp 89-94, ISSN: 1470- 3297

The above three papers are relevant to the design of a Professional Doctorate for the following reasons:

- Paper1 – this is relevant because it demonstrates an understanding of the learning theories underpinning work-based learning, particularly at postgraduate level.
- Paper 2 – Demonstrates an understanding of what the introduction of work-based learning course will mean for the three significant groups of stakeholders, namely the students or learners, the employers and the university.
- Paper 3 – addresses the issue of supervision and assessment of Professional Doctorates.

I have also contributed a chapter to the following book:

Johnson, D. L., (2003), "How will the main stakeholders, the learners, the employers and the university, view the introduction of work-based learning courses?" in "Progress in Education", edited by Nata, R., Nova Science Publishers Inc, New York, USA.

I have presented papers at the following conferences:

Bird, L., Johnson, D.L. and Montague, T. (2002) Barriers and blockages to work-based learning, *The Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education Annual Conference 2002*, 26-28 June, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh.

Johnson, D.L. (2002) The operation of an MA in Management where the mode of study is by work-based learning, *Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 12-15 June, McMaster University, Canada.

Johnson, D. L. (2004), Postgraduate Work-based Learning Developments at Coventry Business School, *Network of International Business Schools*, May 14th, Coventry University.

Johnson, D. L. (2004), Assessment Matters: some issues concerning the supervision and assessment of work-based doctorates, *ELATE Conference*, June 24th, Coventry University.

The presentation of the above papers has in every case led to an article, or the one book chapter, being published. Those publications have been enriched by the comments received and the questions asked.

The Opportunities Benefits and Barriers to the Introduction of Work-based Learning in Higher Education.

Summary.

This paper sets out to provide checklists for those involved in the introduction of work-based learning courses. The author's experience at Coventry University where he has successfully introduced an M.A. in Management, is that these courses will attract students who would not otherwise have come to the university. The introduction of such courses does involve change and so prior knowledge of the opportunities, benefits and barriers must inevitably be helpful.

Introduction.

The author has run two staff development workshops for academics, at Coventry University, which have sought the views of participants on the opportunities, benefits and barriers to the introduction of work-based learning courses in Higher Education.

The feedback from the discussion generated in the workshops is given below, and in turn produces a checklist for those involved in the introduction of such courses.

The workshops started with a definition of work-based learning and a conceptual model as follows:

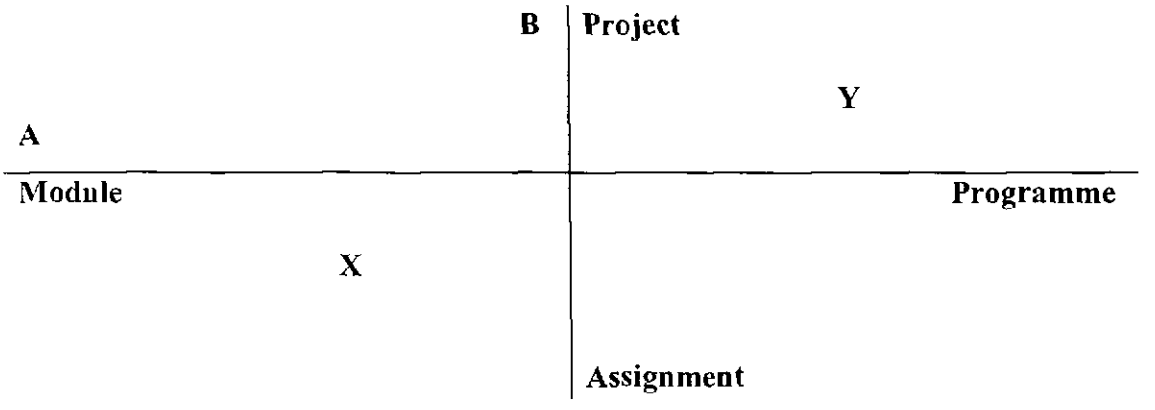
Work-based Learning.

The University for Industry Limited (1999) has the following definition for work-based learning:

> 'The term negotiated work-based learning is used to describe independent learning through work. It is a self managed process supported by learning contracts, higher education and work place mentors and various types of learning and guidance materials. It leads to a family of Continuing Development Awards (certificates, diplomas, initial and postgraduate degrees depending on the level) in the national qualification framework.'

The model shown in figure 1, is designed to help those involved in the development of work-based learning to define where this learning process is to be located.

Figure 1.



Continuum A, shows that work-based learning can be adopted as the mode of learning in an individual module through to a complete course. Continuum B, looking at assessment methods, shows that work-based learning seeking the synergy between academic knowledge and workplace application, can be the focus of individual

assignments located in a module, through to a dissertation. The model has an x in the bottom left hand quadrant. As an example of this, Coventry Business School offers a postgraduate module called Personal Effectiveness, where the assessment is a negotiated assignment that links the learners personal development to the workplace. The letter y in the upper right hand quadrant represents the School's M.A. in Management, where the assessment is a dissertation focusing on a workplace issue or problem agreed by the learner, their employer and the university. (Johnson, 2000)

There is also a further continuum, which can bisect either or both of the other two. This one tries to demonstrate that it is possible to adopt work-based learning but have it at one end controlled by the tutor, tutor led, while at the other end, typically at Masters level and above, the learner's learning is self directed and largely autonomous, learner led.

Coventry University has adopted this approach to demonstrate progression through its suite of postgraduate work-based learning courses.

Opportunities and Benefits.

Participants in the workshops were asked to identify the opportunities/benefits that would flow from the introduction of work-based learning courses for the following groups:

- learners
- university staff
- employers

The results were as follows.

Learners.

1. Courses would be seen as relevant, up to date and focused on their practice.
2. The learning would be learner-led and so the learning would have impact and would last. This would be deep learning as outlined by Morton and Saljo, 1984.
3. Courses would be marketable as they would combine education, training and application.
4. The flexible attendance such courses allow, together with the opportunity to incorporate on-line access and delivery, combined with the perceived relevance, is more likely to secure employer funding.
5. Limitless but relevant learning. Work-based learning is in step with the concepts of continuous professional development and lifelong learning.

University Staff.

1. New and innovative courses, that put the emphasis on learning rather than teaching.
2. Offers opportunities for the use of C&I.T.
3. Opens up the catchment area. With a flexible pattern of attendance and the use of C&I.T. the catchment area can be local, regional, national and international.
4. Provides the drive to update staff knowledge and skills. With the emphasis on learning rather than teaching staff will be involved in facilitating learning, including the use of action learning sets.
5. Staff will be working with self motivated learners.

6. There will be opportunities for research and consultancy spin-offs.
7. The university will be working closely with its corporate partners.

Coventry Business School offers a work-based learning M.A. in Management and over 80% of the learners on that course are individuals who would not otherwise have come to Coventry for their Masters degree if that course had not been available.

Employers.

1. With flexible and reduced patterns of attendance, there will be less disruption in the workplace.
2. There will effectively be free consultancy from both the learner and tutors. As students of the university, there will be on-line access to the library and extensive databases.
3. Relatively low investment, with the potential for some significant returns.
4. Work-based projects can produce real benefits and impact in the workplace.
5. Can produce credit for employer-based staff development.

Again using the M.A. as an example, one learner as a result of their project identified savings of £100,000 for their employer on the back of course fees of £2000.Who can say that for the employer the course did not represent a good investment and on top of the savings there is an employee who has been through a personal and professional development process and as a result will have changed?

BARRIERS

Again using the three groups identified the following barriers were identified.

Learners.

Some prospective learners will be concerned about the credibility of such courses. This is potentially a hig issue. Coventry Business School has adopted a set of generic learning outcomes for its postgraduate courses. Therefore students on the M.A. in Management have exactly the same learning outcomes as those on the part-time M.B.A. it is just that the learning process is different.

1. The courses with their very different patterns of attendance and delivery may not meet the social needs of some learners. The use of action learning sets will help to overcome these concerns.
2. Individuals need to be committed, self motivating and self directing. Work-based learning will not suit everyone and for them a more traditional course providing more structure and imposed discipline will be required. Of the fifty-four students enrolled on Coventry's M.A. in Management, in the period 1998-2000, only one has withdrawn citing the need for more structure and has transferred to a more traditional Masters in the Business School.
3. There may be concerns, coupled with (1) above, about a lack of peer support.

Peer support is an important aspect of any course but it is crucial on any work-based course where learners may otherwise feel isolated. An important aspect of a work-based course is the action learning involved and this should be recognised by the use of action learning sets which will then provide the peer support required.

University Staff.

Work-based learning needs to be properly resourced. The experience at Coventry is that these courses do not produce a saving in terms of staff resources. Although there are fewer lecture situations staff time is required to facilitate action learning sets, project supervision, residentials /extended workshops and support in the preparation of learning agreements.

1. There will be staff development issues that will need to be tackled, because these courses require a different approach to teaching and learning.
2. Any individual or course team looking to introduce work-based learning must expect to come up against academic snobbery because some colleagues having made an intellectual and personal investment in a more traditional approach, will view such developments as a threat.
3. University administrative systems are geared up for traditional courses contained in one academic year whereas work-based learning courses may span two academic years.
4. Work-based learning challenges the idea of academic progression through a subject. Instead the progression will, in terms of learning be from tutor to learner-led.
5. The challenge of moving from courses that are tutor-led to ones that are learner led.

Employers.

1. There may be some concern about the credibility of such courses. This can be overcome by careful explanation, presentations, articles in professional journals and involving employers in the development of such courses.
2. If learners are undertaking work-based projects, there may be some concerns about the confidentiality of workplace issues and data. Assurances on this point can be built into course documentation.
3. There must be an employer commitment to the provision of a workplace mentor. This is important as this individual can carry out aspects of supervision beyond the scope of an academic tutor.

CONCLUSION.

The interest and benefit of these lists for a course team or individual looking to introduce work-based learning, is that they provide a checklist of the issues that will need to be addressed.

Looked at in terms of a forcefield analysis, the barriers or resisting forces will need to be dealt with first. To take one example, academic snobbery, this is unlikely to be ever fully eradicated but it can be reduced. Again using the example of the M.A. in Management, the course team have adopted a strategy of making the course as transparent as possible. All work submitted is first marked by the course team but other staff are then asked to second mark. This has had the effect of letting them see the content and standard of the work, kindled some interest and volunteers to join the course team have come forward.

The opportunities and benefits of introducing work-based learning courses are clearly shown in the lists above and it is those that make overcoming or reducing the barriers so worthwhile if challenging.

David Johnson

Teaching Fellow

Coventry Business School.

Coventry University.

References.

Johnson, D (2000) The use of learning theories in the design of a work-based learning course at Masters level, Innovations in Education and Training International, volume 37, no. 2, May 2000.

Marton, F and Saljo, R (1984) Approaches to learning, in Entwhistle, N and Hounsell, D (eds), The Experience of Learning, Scottish Academic Press.

Conference Paper for STLHE 2002.

The Operation of an M.A. in Management, Where the Mode of Study is by Work-based Learning.

David Johnson
Subject Head for Management and Organisational Behaviour
Coventry Business School
Coventry University
United Kingdom

Abstract.

This paper deals with the operation of an M.A. in Management, where the mode of study is by work-based learning. The vehicle for learning is an inquiry-driven, workplace project that brings together the two strands of *professional practice* and *academic theory.*

The course is about *professional capability* and *impact,* and its focus is on *student learning* rather than the *academic teaching.*

The paper will give an overview of the development and operation of the course, using the work of a student who completed his M.A. in September 2001 as an illustration.His project was entitled: *" The Development of an Out of Hospital Parenteral Antibiotic Service"*, will save his hospital trust $ (£700,000) per annum.

The paper will also examine the emancipatory pedagogy underpinning the course, and will outline the work underway, applying the course philosophy to the design of a work-based learning doctorate degree.

Background

Why work-based learning?

Higher Education is changing in a world of continuous professional development, lifelong learning, knowledge based and learning organisations. It used to be the case that education was something done to you, rather than with you, and was concerned with the traditional teaching of a pre-determined academic curriculum.
Times though are changing. Many students and their employers are of the view that the Higher Education curriculum is too prescriptive, dated, ungrounded, delivered by inaccessible modes and at inaccessible times, and assessed against irrelevant criteria and through inappropriate methods.

Increasingly postgraduate students are becoming more strategic in their studies for occupational or career reasons, rather than out of a love of learning.

Employers, in supporting their employees in their learning are looking for a positive and almost immediate impact in the workplace.

Higher Education therefore needs to achieve a fundamental mind-shift away from seeking to export and impose its curriculum on others, to a realisation that significant learning is taking place in organisations and being willing to import the workplace curriculum and map it against desired learning outcomes.

This has led to an interest in, and growth in, the development of courses where the mode of study is wholly or in part work-based learning.

What is work-based learning?
The definition used at Coventry University is as follows:

"The term work-based learning is used to describe independent learning through work. It is a self-managed process supported by learning contracts, Higher Education, workplace mentors, and various types of learning and guidance materials. It leads to a family of continuing development awards (certificates, diplomas, initial

and postgraduate degrees, depending on the level) in the National Qualification Framework."

University for Industry, 1999.

Characteristics of Work-based Learning Courses at Coventry University.

Traditional, conservative academics are worried by the concept of work-based learning and its rigour. But there is a body of learning theories that underpin and provide the pedagogy for work-based learning, which will be briefly covered below.

Surface learning is concerned with memory or habit, such as the ability to recall, repeat, quote, describe and where the student can make the correct response. There will be instances where such learning is important but at Masters level, the learning strategies must focus on deep learning, encouraging the student to:

**read widely*
**relate the unfamiliar to the familiar*
**reflect on relationships within the topic or subject matter, and between subjects*
Marton and Saljo, 1984.
Boydell (1976), refers to discovery learning:
"...the principal content of what is to be learned is not given but must be discovered by the learner."

This means that the student has to be active and points to the need for an empty curriculum model, providing a process for learning and its academic recognition.

Confusion is part of the learning process and without it there is no problem to be solved and hence no insight can take place. Therefore work-based learning must adopt a problem-based approach. Coupled with this must be autonomous learning - self-directed and self- managed. The degree of autonomy will increase with the level of the award.

Consideration of deep learning also leads to consideration of experiential learning, where the learning is achieved by the student sorting out and re-structuring perceptual experiences and hence gaining insights and learning. Cusins (1995) sees experiential learning as a sequenced process involving:

**definition of the problem*
**analysis and understanding of the problem*
**generation of possible options to solve the problem*
**choice of the most appropriate option*
**implementation of the chosen solution*
**evaluation of the result*

To achieve the above, Cusins makes the point that even though it is work-based learning and addresses the curriculum of the workplace, the student must ensure they acquire and apply appropriate and relevant knowledge.

In dealing with a real workplace problem or issue, and being the individual charged with its solution, the student will inevitably be part of their own research, (Watson, 1994), and will adopt an action learning approach. Action learning seeks to provide both a formalised learning opportunity and a means of developing the student's learning abilities.

Cusins states that action learning involves four activities:

**experiential learning*
**creative problem solving*
**organisation of relevant knowledge*
**co-learner group support.*

The vehicle for action learning is the learning set, where students discuss their own particular issues with their peers, leading to an agreed set of action points to be dealt with by the next meeting.

The work-based learning courses at Coventry University are based on the following characteristics:

**a work-based project*
**action learning sets*
**independent study*
**self reflection*
**critical reasoning*

These will each be explored in more depth as the paper progresses.

The Structure of the M.A in Management.

The course was approved in May 1998, and the first students were enrolled in September 1998. The Business School always felt confident about the potential for the course, given the types and sizes of organisations operating in the region and sub-region. This confidence has been vindicated, and by November 2001, the fiftieth student had graduated.

A stated objective of the course is to attract students, who would otherwise be unable or unwilling to come to Coventry University for their Masters degree, and indeed 80% of those enrolling have not previously studied there

The structure of the M.A is shown in the diagram below, together with the supporting Postgraduate Certificate and Diploma courses, which will not be discussed here. Each of the components of the M.A will be looked at, and will use the work of a student, Carl, who completed his degree in September 2001 as an illustration.

MA in Management			84 CATS Points
Action Learning	Independent Study	Methods of Management Research	Project 48 Points
Postgraduate Diploma			**48 CATS Points**
Action Learning	Double Independent Study Module		Organisational Analysis & Development
Postgraduate Certificate			**48 CATS Points**
Action Learning	Management of Professional Practice	The Organization in its Environment	Organisational Theory & Practice

Figure 1. Programme Overview.

The formal attendance requirement is to attend three one-night residentials and ten action learning set meetings, that meet for half a day every four weeks. The course is supported by a course web, which gives the students access to course materials, discussion forum, on-line databases and the University library.

The Business School has generic learning outcomes for all its Masters degrees, therefore the M.A. has the same learning outcomes as the M.B.A. namely:

**apply advanced business and management techniques to real problems and tasks*
**conceive, plan, cost, resource and manage complex projects*
**demonstrate higher level competence in analysis and research, through the completion of an in-depth project*
**demonstrate personal qualities of leadership, teamwork and communication skills*
**manage their own learning and development, and evaluate their own experience*
**be missionaries for change within their organisations*

The Masters Project.

The students are required to submit a 12,000 word project. The course can be completed in one calendar year, but at least 25% defer submission in to a second year.

The project is the vehicle for the student's learning and represents the end of a coherent and student defined course of learning.

Carl chose to do a project entitled:

"The Development of an Out of Hospital Parenteral Antibiotic Service - an evaluation of the costs and benefits."

The aim of the project was to evaluate the costs and benefits of providing an outpatient and home parenteral antibiotic programme for the treatment of suitable infections.

In terms of objectives, Carl proposed researching the current level of activity and cost implications for this group of patients, and to develop and implement a programme to treat this traditionally inpatient group of patients as outpatients or at home. He stated that the success of the project would be measured on:

**number of patients treated with various infections*
**impact on drug costs*
**impact on inpatient bed days*
**assessment of the acceptability of the service to patients and/or carers*

Clearly Carl, and his employer, are looking for a positive outcome to this project.It should however be borne in mind that as far as the M.A. is concerned, a project that does not succeed will still be acceptable as long as the student can analyse and reflect on why it has not achieved its stated outcomes.

Finally the project is summatively assessed by the course team, with the benefit of formative feedback from the employer on its impact and applicability to the workplace.

Methods of Management Research.

In undertaking a business or management related project, students will need to have an understanding of research methods, and to be able to critique their chosen approach.

This module is assessed by the student submitting a 3000 word project proposal that, amongst other things details:

* *the terms of reference*
**methodology*
**personal learning outcomes*
**identification of new knowledge*
**background to the proposal*
**advantages to the employer*
**identification of the resources and support needed*

There are a couple of things to say about the above. Stephenson (1998), in his model of: *"A Way of Looking at the World of Actions."*, talks about the enhanced learning that is derived if students do projects that involve unfamiliar problems in an unfamiliar context, what he calls *"quadrant Z "*.

Students on the M.A. are encouraged to operate in quadrant Z, and this inevitably will require them to identify a new area of knowledge that they will need to acquire in order to work on their project. This in turn clearly links to the learning theories outlined earlier.

The project proposal asks students to not only identify the project deliverables such as, in Carl's case a new patient service, but also their personal learning outcomes which he detailed as follows:

* *undertaking qualitative research- being from a scientific background my previous experience has always been with quantitative research*
**acquiring the skills to produce, conduct and analyse to Masters level, semi-structured interviews*
**to deliver this project into the Trust in its entirety. I intend to pursue a Masters level module on change management. This will give me the necessary skills to take the staff and the organisation forward and to introduce this new service.*
**produce a self-reflective learning log ,documenting my experiences and feelings as the project has progressed.*
**generally develop the skills and maturity to function as a more effective manager.*

The project proposal has to be signed by the student (in terms of their personal development), the employer (in recognition that the value of the project is recognised and will be supported), and the University (the proposed work is seen as being at a Masters level).

Independent Study.

The Independent Study module is where the student demonstrates their mastery of the new area of knowledge identified in the project proposal.

At the outset of the module the student completes a learning framework where they give the rationale for their proposed work and how they intend to acquire their new knowledge and demonstrate their mastery of the subject concerned. Typically students will at the end of the module submit a 3000 word paper.

This is probably the most academic part of the course, as students will normally undertake an extensive literature review. There is at this stage no requirement for students to demonstrate application to either their workplace or the project itself.

At Masters level students should be expected to critique the academic literature. A failing is that sometimes students can be depressingly uncritical and too accepting of

what they read. However academic writing by students is a very iterative process and by encouraging them to submit drafts of their work and providing them with formative feedback as a result this can be overcome.

In his project proposal, Carl had identified change management as the new area of knowledge that he wished to study and in his learning framework he gave the following rationale for his work:

" I plan to introduce a completely new way of treating this group of patients and as such I need to identify who the stakeholders are in this process, some of whom may not want to see this change in practice take place. I intend to research the change management principles, before applying my new learning to my project."

Carl carried out an extensive literature review and critically evaluated the key texts, theories and models, placing the ideas of the different gurus next to each other and comparing and contrasting their approaches.

Action Learning

The work in the action learning set is what glues the course together. The set meets for half a day every four weeks, and is facilitated by a tutor. The tutor is concerned with the process of action learning and is not there as a subject expert.

Action Learning, based upon the work of Revans (1971), is the process of learning through action and is therefore different to action research, which is a research method. Each student will agree, following discussion and reflection with the set on the issues they themselves have raised, action points to be dealt with before the next meeting.

It perhaps should be said that if the set starts to feel for the participants like a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous, then the tutor is not facilitating the set properly. The protocol for the set that has been adopted by the Business School, is as detailed in the work of McGill and Beaty(200).

This module is assessed in two ways. Firstly each action learning set organises its own student conference where each student in turn presents a paper based on some aspect of their M.A.

The conference is attended by those members of the course team assessing the students, other M.A students (past, current and future), the managers of those students presenting papers, the external examiner, and other academics. It is a celebration of the students' work.

The second assessment requires the students to submit a self- reflective journal. If the Business School has a philosophy of management education it is one that links being an effective manager with being a reflective practitioner.

Students will of course have engaged in reflection but few will have written that reflection up in an analytical way- and we are here talking about more than just diary keeping! The journal comprises:

**a c.v.*
**a personal analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats*
**a minimum of twelve learning episodes*
**a summary of personal learning and development*

The learning episodes are based on the idea that significant learning can occur at any time and in any arena of the student's life and by analysing these, using the framework of a learning cycle, improved practice will result. The students are encouraged to use learning episodes from all aspects of their life and thereby seek to transfer learning from one facet of their life to another.

Carl was a sceptic about this aspect of the course but by the end his views had changed:

"The biggest change and perhaps the greatest shock is that I am becoming more of a reflector. Anybody who saw me at Certificate level hit the reflection brick wall when

we were asked to complete a reflective journal would never believe this, and neither would I have. Reflection was something that I admired in the mirror. I spent months trying to get my head around what I was supposed to write and several times came close to packing it all in. Yet here I am having completed another batch of entries, which I experienced no problems in producing. In fact I had so many that I could have written a journal twice over. I find I will now sit back and ponder on an experience before acting, where as before I never looked before I leapt and consequently had a few nasty falls."

Summary.

The M.A. presented in this paper is underpinned by a raft of learning theories, and at its core is about a problem based, inquiry driven approach to learning in the workplace.

As a course it has exceeded the Business School's expectations in terms of recruitment and retention, completion rates and student development and achievement.

Carl, who has been the working example throughout this paper sums up his experience as follows:

"I have derived a huge amount from this course both academically and developmentally, and my thanks go out to the tutors, supervisors and fellow students for an invaluable experience."

His project demonstrated that medical care for the group of patients that he had identified, is both safe and effective when transferred from an acute inpatient environment to an out of hospital environment. As a result his project produced the potential for his Trust to release a minimum of 2,700 bed days, producing a saving of S (£700,000) that could then be reinvested in providing hospital care for more patients. The project identified that this type of service is very acceptable to patients, as it allowed them to return to their homes and families while continuing treatment, and had the added advantage of keeping infective conditions out of hospital where they could spread to other patients, with the associated mortality and morbidity risks.

The Director of Human Resources for the Trust concerned said:

"...and how pleased I am at what has been achieved by these students in undertaking an organisational change project. If I had any doubts about the relevance and usefulness of an M.A. then these have been dispelled."

Where next?

Coventry University would like to extend its work-based provision to include a professional doctorate. There is now a eritical mass of students who have gained their M.A from Coventry University but would have to go elsewhere for a doetorate.

Could a professional doctorate embrace the same characteristics as the other postgraduate work-based learning courses? At this stage there are no answers just a desire to design such a eourse. If there are any fellow travellers on the work-based learning road who would like to work collaboratively with Coventry University then please get in toueh.

References.

Boydell, T. (1976)," Experiential Learning", Manehester Monograph 5.

Cusins, P. (1995), "Action Learning Revisited", Industrial and Commercial Training, vol.27, number 4, MCB University Press.

Marton, F. and Saljo, R. (1984), "Approaches to Learning", in "The Experience of Learning", Marcon, F., Hounsell, D. and Entwhistle, N.(eds), Seottish Aeademic Press.

McGill, I. and Beaty, E.(2001), "Action Learning: a Guide for Professional, Management and Educational Development", Kogan Page.

Revans, R., (1971), "developing Effeetive Managers", Longman

Stephenson, J.,

Watson, T. (1994), "Managing, Crafting and Researching:Words, Skill and Imagination in Shaping Management Research", vol.5., British Journal of Management.

Assessment Matters: some issues concerning the supervision and assessment of work-based doctorates.

(This is an article that will be published by Innovations in Education and Training International in 2005, and was the subject of a paper delivered at the ELATE Conference, Coventry, in June 2004.)

Abstract.

Since 2000, I have been working towards a Professional Doctorate at Middlesex University, and I am also working to introduce a work-based doctorate at Coventry University. This paper looks at the issues of supervision and assessment for work-based doctorates, which, I believe, are key to the design of such a programme and affect both the output and outcome of a candidate's work.

The paper is based on a review of literature and discussions with academics from a number of universities.

It appears that work-based doctorates, and I include here professional doctorates and Doctor of Business Administration, are subject to the same supervision and assessment processes as a PhD.

My contention therefore is that if supervision and assessment of a work-based doctorate mirrors what happens on a PhD, then candidates will produce work that is indistinguishable from a PhD, in which case why have a different doctoral award?

As such this paper represents work in progress towards my doctorate, where I am a candidate, and the introduction of a work-based doctorate at Coventry, where I am the curriculum designer. It therefore is designed to raise points of concern rather than supply answers.

Introduction.

There are many issues that need to be considered when determining the supervision and assessment regime for a work-based doctorate – how many assessments and in what form; the possible use of portfolios; the need to publish and the originality of the work.

This paper however will look only at the supervision and assessment of the candidate's final submission, assuming that this takes the form of a dissertation.

For the purposes of this paper a work-based doctorate could be a professional doctorate, or a DBA but not a PhD.

The Differences between a PhD and a work-based doctorate.

A doctorate is the highest level of academic award that an individual can achieve. The Quality Assurance Agency (2001:2) gave the following definition of a doctorate:

> " Doctorates are awarded for the creation and interpretation of knowledge, which extends the forefront of a discipline, usually through original research. Holders of doctorates will be able to conceptualise, design and implement projects for the generation of significant new knowledge and understanding."

The PhD has been a feature of Higher Education for a relatively short period of time following a recommendation made at the United Kingdom Universities Conference in May 1917. Since the early 1990's universities have begun to introduce work-based or professional doctorates, and this, according to Bareham, Bourner and Ruggeri-Steven, 2000:401):

> "represents the coming of age of work-based learning within the higher education curriculum."

A work-based doctorate is a research-based degree, but unlike the PhD, the vehicle for research is a topical, applied issue or problem, based in a candidate's workplace and/or professional practice rather than an academic research question. The outcome of the research is designed to provide valuable insights to the sponsoring organisation, in addition to contributing to knowledge in the field of practice. In this form of doctorate therefore research is a tool in developing professional practice. It is the applied nature of the research that is the key element in work-based doctoral programmes and what differentiates it from the PhD.

However the important point to hear in mind is that although a work-based doctorate is different to the PhD it is equivalent to and not a lesser version of the PhD.

Although universities have been creative in the design and delivery of work-based doctorates, they have been slow to innovate in terms of the final product of the doctorate and so it tends to look like a PhD thesis and be examined in the same way, giving little attention to the professional doctoral-ness of the candidate's work.

This is a major problem for work-based doctorates, because if the output ends up looking just like a PhD thesis then why have a different award, a point made by Maxwell and Shanahan (1998) when looking at EdD awards in Australia.

It is also hard to argue against the view that all the golden prizes in academia are held by the academics and so work-based doctorates tend to be assessed in ways that are familiar to, comfortable for, and acceptable to those from the traditional academic paradigm, once again leading to the adoption of the PhD examination process.

Universities that are prepared to be creative and innovative nevertheless are conservative when it comes to the issue of academic rigour and standards. Consequently work-based doctorates tend to be subject to more assessment, in terms of intermediate assessments, and a final PhD style final examination based on the traditional thesis, publication of papers and viva, because they are what the majority of academics understand and are comfortable with.

Phd examination process.

How satisfied should academics, students and society be with the rigours of the PhD? In the Guardian (September 17th 2002:35) John Wakeford stated that the doctoral examination was:

> " ..a rite of passage that has governed admission to the medieval guild of scholars for generations", that was about to be confronted by consumer rights, litigation and demands for compensation as "higher education collides with the culture of accountability, and as the government pursues quality assurance throughout Higher Education, making a reconsideration of the PhD examination inevitable."

There would appear to be a number of problems associated with the PhD examination process. Firstly in the current climate of quality assurance, total transparency of learning outcomes and their clear linkage to assessment criteria, can it be acceptable to find in a university's Academic Regulations the following, as is the case at Coventry University (2003:98)?

> "A candidate must not assume that the supervisor's agreement to the thesis being submitted guarantees a successful outcome of the examination or the recommendation for the award of the degree being sought."

According to Wakeford (and confirmed by a number of discussants for this research who are involved in PhD supervision and assessment) there are no universal, precise, or explicit criteria for a successful PhD. Wakeford says:

> "Examiners are not trained. Each is guided by the traditions of their own discipline."

There is he says no consistent protocol for the operation of a viva, an integral part of the assessment of the PhD.

Burnham (1998:46) had made the same point:

> "There is very little literature to guide either examiners or students through the viva process. The process is therefore governed more by intuition than any specific criteria."

Burnham (1998:46) states four criteria that examiners use during the viva:

- The basic layout and style of the thesis.
- The thesis must show satisfactory knowledge of primary and secondary sources.
- The candidate must demonstrate adequate knowledge of other cognate fields.
- The thesis must be at PhD level and demonstrate a significant original contribution to knowledge and whether it is publishable.

Each of the above is susceptible to a wide range of interpretations, which makes the process open to the charge of being highly subjective. The introduction of commonly agreed and understood learning outcomes would be of benefit here.

One academic spoken to in the course of this research said that too much power is vested in the single external examiner and this "in my view has led to many miscarriages of justice." Other discussants have voiced similar concerns and can recount stories to that effect.

In some universities there is a move to appoint an independent chair that will take no direct part in the examination of the candidate's work but instead will police the process. If adopted the question has to be asked, namely is this for the benefit of the candidate or to protect the university?

These points will need to be addressed before the intervention of court action by a disgruntled candidate, or possibly their employer, in the event that the advice of the supervisor(s) had been followed. Court action by a candidate is not likely to result in the court making an academic decision but a court it is likely to order a proper review or re-examination of the work because the process would not be seen as acceptable.

In Australia, PhD students have already threatened to take court action for negligent supervision when their thesis has been rejected.

Examination of work-based doctorates.

Put simply, a PhD is about research while a work-based doctorate is about research *and development*. The key word there is "*and*", and this needs to be considered further.

Traditionally Higher education is interested in the candidate's approach to their research while a sponsoring organisation will be interested in the developmental and application aspects of the work.

When Ruggeri-Stevens, Bareham, and Bourner (2001) researched DBA's, they found few references in course documentation to learning outcomes in the area of subject knowledge. At look at the course literature for those universities listed on the Association of Business School's web-site shows the emphasis is still on assessing the research per se and not the developmental and application aspects of the candidate's work.

On the one hand this is not surprising as an objective of a work-based doctorate is to give senior managers, and therefore their organisations an understanding of the positive benefits that good research can make to decision- making, but as Eraut (1996:9) says:

> "Leading edge professionals develop new knowledge in practice rather than through formally designed research."

It is this that differentiates the work-based doctorates as they are not just about the research per se. The subject content and its application also need to be viewed as important and therefore should be equally assessed. The issue is getting the right balance.

In order to do this there need to be examiners who are capable of assessing the developmental and application aspects of the candidates work, as well as the research itself, and that may mean involving practitioners from outside Higher Education and universities are reluctant to do this.

Despite having a PhD themselves, examiners, both internal and external, of work-based doctorates may not have any professional experience or understanding of the candidate's working context making assessment of the developmental and application aspects of the candidate's work difficult. It might also be the case that they do not understand the differences between a PhD and a work-based doctorate, making assessment even more problematic. Maxwell and Shanahan (1998) make the point that a candidate's work may need to be mediated on the basis that the candidate knows more about their context than the academic.

Involving suitable practitioners in the examination of work-based doctorates is essential for their award's credibility but it would involve academia making some room at the top table, representing a coalition of *equal* partners representing the stakeholders with an interest in the candidate's work.

Too often however assessment by practitioners outside academia is dismissed by academics as being too difficult to achieve and the results would be unreliable. However academic assessment is problematic as well. Academics like to give the impression that assessment is an exact science whereas as anyone who has ever attended a marking workshop or moderated the assessments of colleagues knows, it is an inexact art.

To return to a point made earlier, agreed learning outcomes, assessment criteria, operating documents, and examiner development workshops should help ensure that the assessment process is de-mystified to the benefit of all those involved.

Universities working with professional bodies could achieve the involvement of practitioners in the assessment process, as many of these have members who are familiar with assessment and may indeed have doctorates themselves. (A cautionary

note to bear in mind would be the need to ensure there were no conflicts of interest or problems with confidentiality.)

At the very least practitioners should be asked to provide formative feedback on the developmental or application aspects of the candidate's work but this does not really do justice to the very areas that differentiates this type of award from a PhD. For the credibility of the award, ways have to be found to involve practitioners in the summative assessment.

Supervision of work-based doctorates.

It therefore seems a mistake to not use supervisors from a candidate's sponsoring organisation, to help universities judge the appropriateness of the research being proposed, as they would understand the work context. This would add credibility to the process of assessing the originality and contribution to professional practice being proposed by a candidate as this is usually performed by academics.

Within organisations there will be individuals who have experience of managing multi-million pound projects who could provide competent supervision of the candidate in the workplace on a day- to- day basis.

A paper by Maxwell (2003:8), shows that co-supervision by industry partners is used by some Australian universities. He goes on to pose the following question:

"Given that academics apparently take a major supervisory role and publication is paramount, is analytical knowledge privileged at the expense of non-analytical knowledge?"

This is likely to be the case if the only supervision a candidate receives is from an academic. And the same issues that appear to surround examination of a candidate's work may also be affecting the quality of the supervision given. Gillingham (1999:36) states:

"One could argue that students learn about supervision from their supervisors but this assumes some quality control on supervision in the first instance for which there is little evidence."

It should be possible through the use of agreed learning outcomes, assessment criteria, operating documents, and supervisor development workshops to ensure that all parties, both academic and workplace, understand the supervision process.

The use of workplace supervisors would also help universities overcome one of the big problems faced by many doctorate programmes, namely the staff resource required for supervision.

Summary.

The points raised in this paper will increasingly exercise the minds of those in Higher Education who have an interest in or responsibility for doctorate programmes, and they can be summarised as follows in the form of questions:

1. Work-based doctorates are subject to the same assessment and examination regime as a PhD, leading to outputs that are indistinguishable from that of a PhD so how can work-based doctorates be differentiated from PhD's in terms of outputs?

2. Would all doctorates benefit from the introduction of agreed learning outcomes?

3. In order to produce outputs that are distinguishable, are changes to the supervision and assessment of work-based doctorates needed?

4. Should the developmental and application aspects of a work-based doctorate be assessed and not just the candidate's ability to carry out an independent piece of research?

5. Should universities actively seek ways to engage with the professional community and get its involvement in the supervision and assessment process?

6. Will academics be prepared to accept non-academics as equal partners in the supervision and assessment process?

7. References.

Bareham, J., Bourner, T., and Ruggeri-Stevens, G. (2000), The DBA: what is it for?", Career Development International, volume 5, no. 7, MCB University Press.

Burnham, P., (1998), "The Phd viva.", UK Council for Graduate Education, Annual Summer Conference,15-16th July 1998, London.

Coventry University, (2003), "Academic Regulations, 2002-3.", Coventry University.

Eraut, M. (1996), "Developing Professional Knowledge and Competence", London, Falmer Press.

Gillingham, D.,(1999), "The Need for a New Doctoral Level Qualification.", International Higher Education, Journal of the T.E.X.T. Consortium, issue 7, November 1999.

Maxwell,T., Shanahan, P., (eds) (1998), " Professional Doctorates: Innovations in Research and Teaching.", Faculty of Education and Professional Studies, University of New England, Armidale.

Maxwell, T., (2003), " From First to Second Generation Professional Doctorate.", accepted by Studies in Higher Education 28, 3 (August)

Quality Assurance Agency, (2001), " The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.", Quality Assurance Agency.

Ruggeri-Steven, G., Bareham, J., and Bourner, T, (2001)," The DBA in British Universities: assessments and standards.", Quality Assurance in Education, volume 9, no.2, MCB University Press.

Wakeford, J. (2002), "what goalposts? To fail a Phd at the viva is devastating.", The Guardian,(September 17th)

Biographical Notes.

David Johnson is Subject Head for Management and Organisational Behaviour at Coventry Business School, Coventry University.

In 1998, he designed and gained University approval for the introduction of a work-based M.A in Management. He is now studying for a Professional Doctorate at Middlesex University.

His e-mail address is: d.Johnson@coventry.ac.uk

Chapter 9 – Conclusions and Recommendations.

Conclusions.

1. This project has demonstrated support from students, employers and academics for the introduction of a Profcssional Doctorate at Coventry University.

2. Coventry University is a conservative institution as shown in the following minute from the Research Degrees Committee:

> (Minute: 163/7.5d): "Although a traditional approach to offering such a qualification seemed an obvious and sensible way forward, Committee members felt that in order to make this qualification successful the Committee should think "outside the box"."

The Committee did acknowledge the need to think "outside the box", which will be essential for the successful development of a Professional Doctorate provision.

3. The Research Degrees Sub-Committee proposed a generic framework for a Professional Doctorate that should be flexible enough to meet the needs of the different schools. The proposed structure for the award given in this Volume is both generic and would meet the needs of any of the University's schools.

4. The award title proposed is Doctor of Professional Practice, and allows for the students to define the focus of the award.

5. Coventry Business School although it may aspire to offer a Doctor of Business Administration, in my view does not have the resources to do so. This is likely to be a position replicated in other schools. This may in reality prove to be a benefit as ownership of the Professional Doctorate by any one school may only serve to stifle development. The University needs to identify a centre that could host the Professional Doctorate, securing a multi-profession cohort drawing on staff expertise from across the University.

6. The Professional Doctorate, as a work-based learning degree, can be based on the characteristics of the Business School's Postgraduate Work-based Learning Programme. The one key characteristic that may not be applicable is the use of action learning sets given the likely geographical spread of students

7. The structure proposed must address the key issues identified in Volume 1 if the development of a Professional Doctorate at Coventry University is to be successful.

8. The University needs to consider why it wants to introduce a Professional Doctorate provision and how it will fit in to its portfolio of awards. The Professional Doctorate is an alternative to the PhD and will appeal to different candidates and a different market.

9. To be a credible programme the Professional Doctorate must have a deep engagement with employers and the professions, particularly in the areas of supervision and assessment.

10. Whether or not the University decides to introduce a Professional Doctorate, it will need to revise its PhD provision, as the literature review in Volume 1 has revealed a number of issues to be addressed. It is not the purpose of this project however to deal with the revision of the PhD.

Recommendations.

1. A Professional Doctorate should be introduced at Coventry University and the proposed course structure put forward in this project should be considered as the basis for that provision. It is a generic framework that will meet the needs of the different communities of practice and the University's Schools.

2. The University should consider whether a Professional Doctorate provision should be "hosted" by, for example, the Centre for Higher Education Development to get it of the ground, which is the recommendation of this project, or left to interested schools to offer separately.

3. For its Professional Doctorate provision to be successful the University must develop deep links with employers and professional bodies. The programme must utilise workplace supervisors and professional practice examiners. It is this that will make the Coventry University provision distinctive.

4. The University will need to identify a suitable course team to work the proposed structure up in to a set of course documentation that can be put before a course approval panel. In doing this the course team will need to involve employers and professional bodies either by co-opting suitable representation or through the presentation and testing of proposals at employer forums.

5. The University must be certain before offering a Professional Doctorate provision that it can resource the programme and provide the environment and level of support that the students will expect, otherwise it should not be attempted. The use of workplace supervisors will help overcome the resourcing difficulties.

6. The University will need to ensure that a full set of operating documents have been prepared for all course participants – students, academic staff, workplace supervisors/mentors, and examiners, and to run to run development workshops for all as required.

7. Whether or not the University introduces a Professional Doctorate it should review its PhD provision and revise it in the light of problems identified in this project and the wider literature.

8. It is vital that the University does not end up offering a PhD and a Professional Doctorate that are both flawed, insufficiently different, struggle to demonstrate equivalence and satisfy none of the stakeholders involved.

Chapter 10 - Reflections on Personal Learning Outcomes.

When I was researching work-based learning provision in the period 1996-98, I visited the National Centre for Work-based Learning at Middlesex University. I noticed a poster on one of the walls with a quote from an anonymous source that addressed the issue of experience:

> "There are three types of experience: the one you planned, the one you had, and what you learned from the difference between the two."

The experience I planned at the outset of this Professional Doctorate was to undertake a piece of work that sought to change professional practice at Coventry University through the formulation of proposals for a Professional Doctorate. It seemed straightforward enough at the time. It was also to be done in collaboration with others, and I thought I knew who they would be.

I needed to research the literature on PhD and Professional Doctorate provision and use that as a platform on which to base my proposals.

Was the experience I had planned the same as the one I had? No, it turned out to be a different experience because of the following:

- Collaborators fell by the wayside for a variety of reasons.
- Potential collaborators emerged but were operating to different timescales to my project.
- Coventry University has been slower in looking to introduce a Professional Doctorate than I had anticipated.
- I became more aware of the issues surrounding Professional Doctorates in the light of my research.

What have I learned from the difference between these two experiences? Firstly I believe doing one all encompassing project is very problematic. It is very tempting as a student to choose the one project option, but it then becomes absolutely essential to choose one that will sustain study over the duration of the course. With the benefit of hindsight I would have elected to do three smaller projects. Too much otherwise hinges on the one project and you do not get the same degree of formative feedback as would be the case with a number of projects.

Collaborators cannot be relied upon as they are subject to internal and external agendas that change and have their own timescales that do not accord with your project. This may be a product of the project I chose rather than collaboration per se but it does need to be borne in mind.

In writing up the project I decided that it would be 80% organisation and 20% inspiration. To avoid the mental anguish of thinking I have to write 40,000 words, I organised my notes and papers into files corresponding to the sections I was proposing for my project. I then retrieved the file I wanted, thinking I am only writing 2,000 words on this topic. Taking the rest of my life into account this was the only way to manage the task as I believe a professional practitioner would.

I started the project naively believing that Professional Doctorates were the way forward based on my support of work-based learning. The literature review and my own primary research have made me aware of the many issues surrounding Professional Doctorates and indeed the many problems associated with the PhD. I now feel that revising the PhD, even if Coventry University does not introduce a Professional Doctorate, cannot be avoided.

I believe the research methodology adopted has led to a worthwhile project that can add to the stock of existing knowledge available to others looking to develop or review doctoral provision in their universities. I believe I have added to this stock of knowledge through the articles that I have had published and the conference papers that I have presented to date and will present in the future.

It has been some journey!