

Concept Note – Second Doctoral Design Workshop, February 4-6, 2019

1. Background

PASGR has commenced designing a new doctoral initiative with a multidisciplinary focus on public policy as well as social science research methods. The design process was informed by the findings of a scoping study on doctoral provision on the continent undertaken by PASGR in 2016¹. The doctoral initiative will fulfil the following five strategic objectives:

- Build competencies that enhance the quality and output of social science research that contributes evidence for policy;
- Promote excellence in delivery of teaching and learning experiences in short research methods trainings as well as graduate training programmes;
- Develop leverage, and share the adaptive capacities and resources of partner higher education institutions to manage and deliver an innovative and impactful doctoral programme and short research methods trainings;
- Enhance integration and networking of African higher education and training systems as well as various stakeholders such staff, students and research and policy actors across diverse cultural, linguistic, and academic contexts;
- Advance internationalization of education through North-South- South collaborations.

2. First Design Workshop

The doctoral design workshop was held on September 5-7, 2018 in Nairobi. The workshop brought together about 30 participants from various collaborative Master of Research and Public Policy (MRPP) partner and non-partner universities²; Robert Bosch Stiftung; and, PASGR to brainstorm preliminary ideas for programme design. The aim of the workshop was to deliberate and build consensus on key aspects of the doctoral training program and this was achieved.

The workshop began with big picture presentations on the overall purpose of the workshop. This was followed by presentations from various guest speakers and universities on doctoral education and research across Africa. The presentations confirmed that there was phenomenal unmet demand for doctoral training and affirmed the need for a doctoral programme in public policy. During the three-day workshop, participants worked in groups to generate ideas on key features and content of the doctoral program. It was agreed that graduates of the doctoral programme in public policy should be able to:

- Articulate and apply fundamental methods, underlying principles, theories and concepts in research and practice of public policy;
- Demonstrate research leadership, scholarly publication and communication of public policy;
- Contribute to the formulation of evidence-based policies for economic development and social transformation;
- Establish functional networks with different stakeholders;
- Enhance gender awareness, diversity and equity in public policy;

¹ http://www.pasqr.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Constructing-innovative-doctorates_Scoping-evidence-on-doctoral-structure-and-practices-from-six-African-countries.pdf

² University of Botswana, University of Dar es Salaam, University of Ghana, University of Ibadan, University of Lagos, University of Jos, University of Nairobi, Egerton University, Maseno University, Mzumbe University, Uganda Christian University, Uganda Martyrs University, University of Sierra Leone, University of Pretoria, British University in Cairo, Makerere University

- Demonstrate leadership in pedagogical practice.

It was indicated that structural issues such as admission criteria, duration of field research, the thesis; programme coordination, host department and assessment, credit weighting, and graduation requirements would assume a flexible framework that harmonized agreed quality standards with partner university regulations, norms and practices. The proposed program structure would therefore accommodate course work as well as seminars and intensive readings. It was also suggested that the programme would integrate some core programme-wide activities that would be provided centrally by PASGR to enhance the quality of the programme. These would include: research methods courses as well as joint supervision and likely pedagogical training. Linkages with industry – that is, policy think tanks, public and private sectors as well as civil society as well as collaboration with African diaspora academics were also emphasized as key to quality. It was further agreed that academics to teach on the doctoral programme should possess doctoral qualifications as well as publications in relevant disciplines. The programme would also stress gender and inclusivity in content and delivery.

A committee of 8 Deans of post graduate studies with representation from universities in East, West and Southern Africa was designated to support the process at the university. It was decided that the Deans would address any overlaps of the new programme with existent programmes and help to fast-track the doctoral process.

Further deliberations covered the capacity of partner universities to deliver the programme and it was agreed that the programme would be launched in a few universities that demonstrate the requisite capacity. It was also agreed that the process of designing, accrediting and launching the programme in the selected universities should be fast tracked. It was indicated that there should be a move towards piloting the doctoral training during 2019 and 2020 and this could involve the staff mobility. The issue of funding was also addressed and the importance of scholarships emphasized.

3. Second Design Workshop

The workshop planned for February 4-6, 2019 in Nairobi will bring together 25 participants from partner universities. The main purpose will be to use the ideas generated from the first design workshop to develop a concrete doctoral programme in public policy that can be launched for accreditation at selected partner universities. The workshop will therefore fulfil the three specific objectives highlighted below:

- Develop a comprehensive doctoral programme (structure and content) in public policy;
- Design a quality assurance framework for the doctoral programme in public policy;
- Prepare a work plan for accreditation and launch of the pilot doctoral programme in public policy.

A. Indicative Approach

Design work will be undertaken in a participatory manner involving group work, guided presentations, plenary discussions and consensus building. Deliberations on the structure of the programme are expected to generate structures that accommodate all the features and quality standards of the collaborative doctoral programme while observing the integrity of university regulations.

Further, discrete remote work undertaken on various contents of the doctoral programme by content experts from partner universities will be presented. The presentations will show how the selected content builds on and reinforces what was offered in relevant MRPP courses. This will generate discussion and agreement on the content of the new doctoral programme.

Attention will be paid to quality assurance in the doctoral programme. Lessons will be shared on the experiences of various universities in quality assurance with a view to enhancing the quality assurance framework in tandem with emerging knowledge, and global norms, practices and trends. The experiences and quality standards of cutting edge collaborative programmes will also inform these discussions.

B. Expected Outputs

It is envisaged that by the end of the 3-day design clinic, the design team will have produced:

- A comprehensive doctoral programme in public policy;
- An innovative quality assurance framework for the doctoral programme in public policy;
- A work plan for accreditation and launch of the pilot doctoral programme.

C. Next Steps

The comprehensive doctoral programme will be discussed by the PASGR Board of Directors by March 2019 and inputs used to finalize programme design.