Driver’s Seat – Industry-Sponsored Doctorates and Research Integrity
EUA PUBLICATIONS 2009

COLLABORATIVE DOCTORAL EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY-INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS FOR ENHANCING KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

DOC-CAREERS PROJECT
By Lidia Borrell-Damian
Benefits

» Various types of cooperation/industry sponsorship

» Industrial doctorates in a narrower sense: candidates employed in industry, doing research there

» Mutual benefits; from university perspective: funding and extramural relevance/application

» Particular importance in STEM subjects
General Risks

» Sometimes the impression is created that the major (only?) problem of university-industry cooperation is that there is not enough of it, or that employability is all that matters.

» Financial carrot and stick brought to bear to have academia accept determining role of industry.
Transparency Issues

» Culture of publication vs. business/trade secrets

» Non-disclosure agreements and IPR restrictions regarding results and their further exploitation
  ▪ Papers, Patents, Posters impeded
    (in itself problematic for academic career of candidates)

» Extravagant expectations of non-disclosure …

» … even after patent registration or with none pending, with no expiry date or process

» In extreme cases, even the supervisors themselves get no access to the complete research results
Open Access / Data / Science

» Move towards Open Science welcome …

» … but may be exacerbating conflicts of interest
Supervision and Career Issues

» Derived from transparency
» Three-party contact sometimes unsystematic
» Changes in research agenda sometimes not communicated to university; no clear liaison and/or no scientifically qualified liaison with university supervisor
» Cases of supervisor acting as paid consultant for firm simultaneously – confusion of roles
» Competing demands in general

» Resulting conflicts create risks for doctoral researchers
Agenda-setting

» Agenda driven by industry, not university
» Impression created of bilateral agreement between doctoral candidate and firm according to conditions set by firm
» Recruitment completed by firm without consultation of university: topic is there, employee-candidate is there – the university can merely sign off
» In short, university often merely an afterthought
» One intervention characterizes such procedures as “cuckoo’s egg” PhDs
Complaints, appeals, admissions

» German Association of University Professors and Lecturers (DHV), 2016

» TU9 German Institutes of Technology, 2017

» German Chemical Industry Association (VCI), 2017

» Such texts demonstrate the nature and extent of the problems
Interventions

» University solutions

» No specifics in good-practice guides

» German Research Foundation (DFG)

» All European Academies (ALLEA)