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A Report on Varieties of Postgraduate Study of English in Europe

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This paper presents an outline survey of the structure of postgraduate study of English in selected countries of Europe. One must be aware from the start, however, that the term 'postgraduate study' varies from country to country. In many countries the undergraduate programme ends with the BA degree (or equivalent), so that postgraduate study begins with the MA programme. On the other hand, there are countries, like Germany, where there is no BA degree, only a uniform undergraduate course leading directly to the MA (or a degree more or less equivalent to the MA). In certain other countries, such as Poland, some universities have begun to award BA degrees, while others follow the German model. On the other hand, in France even the basic undergraduate course, the equivalent of the BA course elsewhere, is in two parts.

The survey necessarily begins, then, with a brief sketch of undergraduate programmes in nine countries, referring the reader to section 2 (on the MA degree) where necessary. We shall begin with England (and Wales), and Denmark—the countries which have a two-tier BA + MA system—and then pass on to France, which has a system of its own. Finally we shall have a look at Germany, and the countries which follow—or, until recently, used to follow—the German model: Portugal, Spain, Poland, Hungary, and Russia.

1. Undergraduate programmes

England and Wales

The undergraduate course lasts three years and leads to the degree of Bachelor of Arts. There is no research component. The course ends with an honours degree or a pass degree. An honours degree can be in one of three classes: a first class degree (colloquially, a first); a second class degree, which is split into two levels, usually referred to as II. 1 and II. 2; and a third class degree (colloquially, a third).

Denmark

A three-year undergraduate course leads to the Bachelor degree, consisting either in one subject, or two years in a major subject and a year in a minor. All students have to do a BA project, but original research is not expected.

France

The undergraduate course is in two parts. The first two years lead to the Diploma of General University Studies (*Diplôme d'Études Universitaires Générales: DEUG*). In exceptional circumstances a student may be allowed to take more than two years. This is followed by another year's study, leading to the *Licence* (more or less an equivalent of the BA degree). There is no research component.

Germany

There is no equivalent of the BA degree, or a two- or three-year course leading to it. The university course leads straight either to the MA degree or the 'state examination', the *Staatsexam für das höhere Lehramt* (see section 2).

Portugal

The undergraduate course lasts four years and leads to the *Licenciatura em Línguas e Literaturas Modernas*: a joint honours degree in English and German/French/Portuguese. There is no research component. Holders of the *licenciatura* are referred to as 'Dr. So-and-so'. They may apply for a place in a course leading to the MA degree, or for permission to work on a doctorate. Under the old system—that is, between 1957 and 1978—there was a three-year course leading to the *bachelorlato* (seen as equivalent to a BA) and a *licenciatura* course, which took five years and ended with a dissertation. The dissertation, however, became optional by the end of the 1960s. Holding an old style *licenciatura-cum-dissertation* (which was generally regarded as equivalent to an MA) makes a difference when one wishes to undertake doctoral studies (see section 3).

Spain

The system of undergraduate study resembles that of Germany. The standard four- or five-year university course leads straight to the equivalent of the MA degree (see section 2 below). There is, however, an alternative to this: a three-year course leading to the *Diplomatura de Maestro, especialidad lengua extranjera (inglés)*. Holders of the *Diplomatura* are entitled to teach only in primary schools.

Poland

Until the early '90s, in Poland, as in Germany, there was no such thing as a first degree equivalent to the BA. The undergraduate course lasted five years and led to the degree of *magister*—more or less an equivalent of the MA. A fairly substantial dissertation was required, but no original research.

The system is now changing. Most departments of English still follow the old practice, but some have introduced a three-year undergraduate course, leading to the degree of *licencjat*—an equivalent of the BA. The new system has its roots in the network of teacher training colleges set up in the early '90s to prepare teachers of foreign languages. The college course lasts three years and leads either to a diploma or, after two or three additional examinations, to the *licencjat*. A short project report is required, based on the candidate's teaching practice. Graduates of colleges who hold the *licencjat* may join an English department and after two or three years of study obtain the MA.

This system—a three-year course for the *licencjat* degree plus two years for the *magister* degree—has now been applied by some departments of English to their own undergraduate students, and may in time become the norm in Polish universities. The

content of the course in English departments differs, however, from the pedagogically oriented course in teacher training colleges: it has a more academic character. Subjects leading to a teaching qualification can, however, be taken as part of the course (see section 2).

Hungary

The Hungarian system resembles the German. There is no first degree equivalent to the BA (see section 2).

Russia

The situation in Russia resembles that of Poland. There are two parallel systems in operation. In the traditional system there is no degree equivalent to the BA, and all undergraduates take a five-year course. A fairly substantial dissertation, based on research, is required (see section 2). Some universities (e.g. Moscow Pedagogical University) have lately introduced a two-tier system of studies, leading first to the BA and then the MA. The BA course usually lasts four years, and the MA component another two or even three years. Some universities (e.g. St. Petersburg) run courses of both types. Some (e.g. Voronezh) have experimented with the BA + MA system but have decided to go back to the old practice.



2. The MA degree (or a first postgraduate degree of another name)

England and Wales

Students entering an MA programme will have obtained a good initial degree. Masters' degrees are generally awarded for completion of a structured course plus a dissertation, which does not have to be based on extensive original research. The course may last only one year; often, however, it lasts longer, and completion of the whole programme usually takes two years. In some universities a Master's programme involving research leads to a degree called the MPhil—to distinguish it from taught MA courses (usually shorter) ending with an examination. Graduates of old universities—such as Oxford and Cambridge—can get a master's degree by examination; in some colleges it is called the MPhil.

Masters' curricula vary hugely, and may be specialised, interdisciplinary, or fairly random. Since in literary studies a master's degree need not necessarily have career value, and is usually taken by someone who has saved up money for it, there has been a tendency towards more permissive curricula. The main area of growth has been MAs in Creative Writing, which are almost by definition permissive.

In the UK, English Studies manifest a high level of monolingualism. Such requirements as knowledge of Latin or a modern language belong to another era.

MA courses are quite expensive. British subjects can apply for a grant from public funds, but state funds for masters' degrees have lately become almost non-existent. Fees for foreign students are very high. A few students obtain grants from the British Council, some from their own governments; but a large percentage of MA candidates have to pay for their studies out of their own pockets.

A considerable number of MA students are teachers of English—for whom possession of a graduate degree (MA in English or in TEFL) is often a condition of success in developing their careers.

Denmark

After their third year students (possessing the BA degree) can continue for a further two years and obtain the equivalent of the MA

degree, called *cand. mag.* The BA + *cand. mag.* course consists overall of either four years in a major subject and one year in a minor one, or three and a half years in a major subject and one and a half years in a minor one. The structure of the course depends on the structure of the BA course taken by the student. There is a compulsory substantial dissertation; one semester is allotted to writing it. Students can choose their own dissertation topic; the majority of students specialise in cultural and literary subjects. To find a supervisor, a student has to approach a full-time member of the academic staff in the relevant area. The language of the dissertation is English or Danish. The degree is awarded on the basis of examinations and the dissertation. There is no formal graduation ceremony.

To finance their studies, Danish students are entitled to a 5-year state grant. Few students, however, complete the course in five years.

Since the BA degree is a recent innovation and one that employers are not yet familiar with, students wishing to have a good start for their professional career take the full five-year course and obtain the *cand. mag.* degree. The traditional career for English graduates is teaching in a *gymnasium* (secondary school).

France

The first postgraduate degree is called the *maîtrise*. The course leading to it is open to holders of the *licence* and takes at least a year to complete. Students are required to take courses amounting to four hours a week and choose two seminars. A dissertation is required; its subject is discussed with the supervisor, who is chosen by the candidate. The language of the dissertation is mostly English, sometimes French. The text is assessed by reviewers, and the degree is awarded on the basis of the dissertation and a positive result of the final examinations.

There is no specific system of helping candidates finance their studies. The social and professional advantages of holding a *maîtrise* are not substantial: the degree does not automatically entitle one to any career.

A *maîtrise* is a prerequisite for applying for doctoral studies; but a doctoral candidate cannot begin work on the dissertation until he or she has obtained another postgraduate degree: the *Diplôme d'Études Approfondies* (DEA)—see section 3.

Germany

The uniform course leading straight either to the MA degree or the 'state examination' (*Staatsexam für das höhere Lehramt*) takes, in theory, four to four and a half years to complete, but in the humanities the average is over thirteen semesters, with some students taking less time and some as many as twenty semesters (or even more). The structure of the course is not the same everywhere, but generally there are two major subjects for candidates for the state teachers' examination, and three for MA candidates. All students have to study both literary and linguistic subjects.

Two or more proseminars (each with a term paper) are required in each major subject. There is an intermediate examination at the end of the second year. After that the student takes one or two advanced seminars in each subject, with a substantial paper concluding each. In theory, a final examination should be possible after the eighth semester. However, students often take longer, either because they change their areas of specialisation, or because they have to work to keep themselves going, or for both these reasons.

There is a research component throughout the course of study, and particularly in the dissertation, which is a prerequisite for obtaining the degree. The supervisor is selected by the candidate, and the dissertation topic is usually negotiated between the candidate and the supervisor. The dissertation should be written in German or in Latin; exceptions, however, are made when English (or another language) is required for a career abroad.

The MA exams usually include three written essays (3-4 hours) in each of the three subjects and four half-hour oral examinations, one on each of the two aspects of the major field (linguistics and literature) and one on each of the subsidiary subjects. The MA degree diplomas are handed out by the dean of the faculty at a public ceremony. The state examination documents are presented, less formally, by the examination board.

Stipends are only awarded to exceptionally gifted students; therefore the majority of students have to earn money to finance their studies.

Completion rates vary greatly and are difficult to assess because many students move from university to university. The actual failure rate in the final examination is probably about 1% in the MA exams, and up to 35% in the state examination.

A university degree is required on entry to many professions. The state examination is obligatory for future teachers; the MA is a good qualification for many careers outside the state educational system.

Portugal

The MA degree (called *Mestrado*) was first initiated in the early eighties. The entrance requirements are: possession of the *licenciatura* with a minimum 14/20 average, and availability of places.

Obtaining a master's degree requires two years of work: one year of seminars and one year for writing a dissertation (50-150 pages). The seminars may be semestral or annual. In some universities, the taught component lasts three semesters, leaving only six months for the dissertation. The mix of seminars depends on the particular course. There is not necessarily a close relation between them. Most universities offer a choice of seminars in literature, culture, and linguistics, allowing for different specialisations within the same broadly conceived MA course. Specialisation in translation studies is also an option in some programmes.

The dissertation topic is generally chosen from amongst the subjects treated in the seminars taught by the various potential supervisors, in consultation with the latter. Joint supervision is also possible. The language of the dissertation is Portuguese.

The dissertation is assessed by a board of three specialists, which consists of the supervisor, the Director of the MA (the professor responsible for the administration of the MA course), and an assessor from another university. The degree is awarded on the basis of the dissertation, which is subject to an hour's oral discussion.

Fees vary from university to university, but are generally relatively low. Secondary school teachers (the majority of MA students) can finance their own studies and may apply

for paid leave of absence for one year to follow the MA course (but obtaining such leave is not easy). There are also state scholarships for MA candidates, but few are awarded to students of English. Junior university staff, i.e. 'trainee lecturers', have to obtain an MA in their first four years of service, and are exempt from paying fees. Completion rates are fairly high nowadays.

The degree is a prerequisite for the post of university lecturer. It is also worth two years service increments for a secondary school teacher.

Spain

Under the current system, the standard university course takes four or five years, depending on the university, and leads directly to the degree of *Licenciatura en Filología Inglesa*, considered to correspond to the MA (but see also the description of the *Diplomatura* course in section 1 above). Candidates for admission are secondary school leavers, holders of the *bachillerato*, who pass the university entrance examinations, comprising such subjects as Spanish, mathematics, etc., and also English (but not as a special subject for candidates for English studies).

Studies are in two parts. The first part lasts two (or three) years and is conceived of as a kind of initiation into the degree. Seventy to eighty per cent of the time is devoted to English studies, the rest to other subjects. The second part takes two years and is more specialised. In all universities students have to be provided with courses allowing them to collect 300 credits (a credit corresponds to 10 hours of classes). In every university, a little over 1/3 of the total number of credits have to be won for 'core' studies: English language, the history, culture and literature of the English-speaking countries, as well as historical, theoretical, and applied linguistics (including teaching English as a foreign language). The courses leading to the remaining credits are organised differently in different universities, depending on the structure and interests of their English departments, with emphasis, usually, either on linguistics (theoretical, historical, or applied) or on literary studies: English or American literature.

The degree is awarded at the successful completion of the whole course of studies. No

dissertation is required. Many universities, although not all, organise graduation ceremonies.

Study for the *Licenciatura* is paid for by the students. They can, however, obtain state stipends and scholarships which cover the total cost (or part of the cost) of the studies. Between 60% and 70% of the undergraduates complete their studies within five, or sometimes six, years.

Holders of the degree usually find teaching jobs in secondary schools, both public and private. Others find employment in administration, banks, international companies, etc., as translators and interpreters. For these kind of jobs, however, they now have to compete with graduates of studies in translation and interpreting now being offered by a number of universities in the country. A small minority of *Licenciatura* holders apply for courses leading to the PhD degree.

Poland

The traditional undergraduate programme—still followed in a number of universities—lasts five years and leads straight to the degree of *magister* (MA). Prospective students have to sit a competitive entrance examination. In Warsaw, for example, they take two written tests: a test of proficiency in English (comprehension of the spoken word, reading and writing), and a test (in Polish) of general ability to study for an arts degree.

The structure and content of the programme varies from university to university. Generally, there is a uniform curriculum in the first year (or the first three or four semesters, depending on the university), including an introduction to linguistic, literary, and cultural study. After that, students are expected to collect a prescribed number of credits for courses at different levels of sophistication.

In the second or third year (depending on the university) students choose a specialisation in which they will eventually have to produce a dissertation, varying in length between 50 and 150 pages, or more in exceptional cases. In Warsaw, the majority of students specialise in literature or in cultural studies. Among those specialising in linguistics, some choose theoretical linguistics, others applied linguistics (mostly language acquisition or language teaching methodology).

At the beginning of the fourth year a student has to join an MA seminar in his or her area of specialisation. The lecturer in charge of the seminar (holder of a PhD or a higher degree) becomes the supervisor of the student's dissertation. The topic of the dissertation may be suggested by the supervisor or formulated by the student him/herself. The language of the dissertation is always English. The degree is awarded on the basis of the student's overall performance, his/her dissertation, and the result of the final examination. There is no special graduation ceremony. The completion rate among full-time students is high.

In Warsaw all students have to take two basic courses in language teaching methodology, but those who wish to add teaching qualifications to their degrees have to collect credits for an additional five courses in language acquisition and language teaching, and do supervised teaching practice (150 hours). In some universities, courses leading to teaching qualifications are compulsory for all students.

Graduates of teacher training colleges who hold the *licencjat* degree (see section 1 above) can continue their studies for another two or three years, write a dissertation, and obtain the MA degree. Whether they take two or three years depends on whether they study full time or part time. The final requirements are the same as in the case of the uniform five-year programme, except for the teacher training ingredient which is built into the *licencjat* course.

The completion rate is not as good as in the uniform five-year course. Most *licencjat* holders are teachers, and many soon find combining their teaching duties with university work too much of a burden. Another reason for the relatively low completion rates is that *licencjat* holders have to pay for the MA programme. Teachers in full employment who are not fully qualified and thus wish to obtain the MA degree are usually awarded a grant. The best students are exempted from paying fees. In spite of these measures the drop-out rate is still fairly high.

Possession of the MA degree is required of all applicants for a teaching job in a secondary school. It is also expected of candidates for better jobs in the civil service, in commerce, banking, finance, the media, etc.

Hungary

The programme lasts either four or five years, depending on whether or not the student wishes to take the teacher training course. It leads to a 'University degree' (usually translated as the MA): either the 'English arts degree' (after the four-year programme) or the 'High school teacher of English degree' (after the five-year programme). In some universities, both single-major and double-major programmes are available.

Prospective students are required to take a competitive written and oral examination in English. The programme of studies comprises linguistic, literary, historical, and cultural courses. The final two years are spent on preparing a thesis, based on research, no less than forty pages long.

Russia

The traditional undergraduate programme, still followed in a number of universities, lasts five years and brings students—more or less—to the MA level. The structure and content of the programme is pretty much the same everywhere: four or five years of intensive training in the use of English, several courses in linguistic disciplines, courses in cultural studies, and a thorough course in the history of West European and American literature. This is the traditional curriculum; some universities, however, have lately introduced certain changes.

In their third year students choose the field in which they want to specialise, and take a number of special courses in this particular field. In the fourth year they have to write a 30-35 page 'course paper' and submit it for discussion at a meeting of the whole department. In their fifth year students produce a 50-100 page dissertation (called 'diploma paper'), based on original research. It is reviewed by the supervisor and another reviewer (or two reviewers) and then defended before the 'state examination commission' chaired by a professor from another educational institution. Graduates are awarded a diploma, but no degree or title. In some cases, the examination commission recommends publication of parts of the diploma paper.

3. The PhD degree

In this section two more countries are included in the discussion, namely Norway and Romania.

England and Wales

Theoretically, doctoral programmes are open to all holders of a good BA degree (a first or a two-one). In practice, candidates are encouraged to enrol on a lower-level programme first: an MA or MPhil. Those who show ability for research can then move on—or, sometimes, transfer before completing the programme—to PhD studies.

A full-time doctorate requires a minimum of three years' work, but in practice very few doctorates in English are completed within this period of time. The candidate has to produce a dissertation based on original research. There is no curriculum, but many universities offer introductory courses on conducting research and writing a thesis.

British subjects can apply for state funding, but state funds are scarce and a very good first-class degree is necessary for obtaining a grant. Fees for foreign students are very high. Both MA and PhD candidates are in the same position: some few students obtain grants from the British Council, some from their own governments, but a large percentage of candidates for doctoral studies have to pay the fees with their own money, which makes participation in an doctoral programme largely a function of private wealth.

PhD work in English studies is usually undertaken by people interested in an academic career. However, entry to the academic profession (other than as cheap casual labour) depends more on publications than on possession of a higher degree.

Denmark

The entrance requirement to the doctoral programme is possession of a *cand. mag.* degree or its equivalent. Most candidates are students who have recently obtained a degree. No professional experience is required.

The candidate has to approach a tenured member of the academic staff, present the subject selected for research, and ask for supervision. To be admitted, the candidate has to present a detailed plan for the

dissertation. The doctoral programme lasts three years. The candidates are expected to spend time corresponding to one semester's work on teaching. Over the remaining four semesters they work on the dissertation, which is expected to be based on original research. There is no stipulated length for the dissertation. It can be written in Danish or in any of the main foreign languages: English, German, French. It is worth noting that a collection of papers can be accepted as a basis for granting the degree.

Students are expected (but not obliged) to spend some time in the research environment of another university, usually in another country.

Progress is assessed every six months; candidates are encouraged to present their work regularly in seminars. The degree is awarded on the basis of a positive assessment of at least two elements: the dissertation, and the result of a public defence before a committee of three scholars (two of whom must come from other universities) and an audience. Some universities include a third element: two presentations given by the candidate—one on a topic chosen by the committee and one on a topic of his/her own choice.

Doctoral degrees are not graded, only assessed on a pass/fail basis.

A number of candidates obtain state scholarships; some finance their studies out of their own funds. Many candidates extend their studies beyond the three-year limit. Most candidates undertake doctoral study because they want to pursue an academic career: one cannot obtain a university post without a PhD.

Norway

The basic requirement for admission to the PhD programme is possession of the degree of *Candidatus/Candidata Philologiae* (*Cand. Philolog.*) or *Magister Artium* (*Mag. Art.*). Other qualifications are subject to individual evaluation. Candidates also have to present an acceptable project and obtain funding.

The PhD course is a three-year programme. Its structure is more or less the same in all the universities, so that students can move freely

between the universities during the programme. Indeed, candidates are expected (but not obliged) to spend some time in the research environment of another university than their own—not necessarily in Norway.

The major part of the programme—two and a half years—is devoted to work on the dissertation. There is also a training component, lasting half a year.

An applicant for the PhD programme must submit a project description for the dissertation, as well as approach a member of the academic staff with a doctoral degree or equivalent qualifications whom he/she would like to act as supervisor. Generally, a candidate has one supervisor, but in the case of interdisciplinary projects a secondary supervisor is not unusual. Progress is assessed every year: candidates are encouraged to present their work regularly in seminars. In some programmes, this is a requirement.

The dissertation is assessed by a committee of three scholars, two of whom must come from another university (often from another country). If it is accepted, the candidate has to defend it by presenting a public lecture (or two lectures), followed by a session of questions from the committee and the public. Taught doctoral programmes lead to the degree of *Dr. art.*, in which case the defence involves only one public lecture. In the old system—with no grant and no supervision—the study leads to the degree of *Dr. philos.*, and the defence involves two public lectures. Doctoral degrees are not graded, only assessed on a pass/fail basis.

Candidates for doctoral programmes can apply for doctoral degree fellowships from the university of their choice or from the Research Council of Norway. Fellowships are advertised once a year. Obtaining a fellowship is tantamount to admission to the programme. For those research fellows who are given a post in one of the universities the duration of the programme is four years, of which one year is compulsory service for the unit to which one is affiliated. This service should, as far as possible, be relevant to work on the dissertation. At the University of Bergen the research fellowship is for three years for those who manage to get a grant from the Norwegian Research Council, and four years (including work for the department) for those who receive a university grant.

Applicants who are already employed at academic institutions, such as the college sector, may apply for admission to the research programme with 'own funding'. The conditions are that the research project must be 'clearly worthy of support', and a realistic time schedule as well as a funding plan, certified by the employer, must be submitted. The programme then usually runs for five years, with three years of net research time.

Complete funding for the entire research period makes it possible for doctoral candidates to devote all their time to research and related activities. Consequently, a relatively high percentage of students complete their work within the three- or four- year period.

France

Doctoral study consists of two stages. To enter the first, the candidate, who has to hold a *maîtrise*, must present a report on his/her previous studies and a research project, which is then discussed in an interview. Successful candidates enter a course of studies leading to the *Diplôme d'Études Approfondies (D.E.A.)*. This usually takes a year, and comprises elements of methodology of literary and linguistic research, and a survey of the civilisation, language and culture of anglophone countries. Aside from that, the student must present a general outline of the proposed area of doctoral research (with reports on background reading) and write a 50 page essay analysing one point in detail. The language of these presentations must be French. The *Diplôme* is awarded on the basis of examinations; the minimum pass mark is 10/20.

The second stage consists of individual work on a dissertation, under the guidance of a supervisor. This usually takes three to four years; some candidates, however, take five or six years to complete their theses. Original research is expected. The dissertation must be written in French and is usually 350-500 pages long. There is no publication requirement. The dissertation is reviewed, and then defended before a board of three (sometimes four or even five) professors, two of whom must come from other universities (they send their reports in before the defence).

Most candidates for doctoral study are already professionally engaged (it is for that reason that the *Diplôme* courses are usually in

the evenings and/or on Saturdays). Such candidates cover the cost of studies themselves. However, a very limited number of stipends are available (*allocations de recherche*). Doctoral study is mostly undertaken by people wishing to apply for university teaching jobs.

Germany

The chief prerequisite for anyone wishing to work towards the PhD is a first degree: a state examination or an MA. There are no particular entrance requirements, nor is formal registration required. Previous professional experience, however, is an advantage when it comes to finding a supervisor.

There are no courses as such leading to the PhD. However, aside from presenting a dissertation, the candidate has to pass a final examination, consisting of four parts: his/her main field and three other disciplines. This necessitates taking an advanced seminar in each of the disciplines not covered adequately in the work undertaken for the previous degree. Both literary and linguistic subjects are normally included in the final exam.

The candidate chooses a supervisor, who may agree or refuse to take up supervisory duties. The topic of the dissertation is then negotiated. The dissertation must be a report on original research. It is usually 200 to 400 pages long, and should be written in German, with Latin as a second choice. There is a publication requirement (at least 130 bound copies), and the candidate may obtain permission to publish the work in another language, usually English or French. Completion rates are difficult to establish. A certain number of candidates never manage to complete their work. Outright failure, however, is as good as unknown.

Holding a doctorate confers prestige. The title becomes a legal part of the name (it has to be given in the passport, for instance). In the worlds of government, education, administration and business it is often the key to a good position and further advancement.

Portugal

The entrance requirements for a candidate for doctoral study is a *licenciatura* mark of 14/20, and acceptance by the Faculty Council, based on the assessment by the prospective supervisor. Previous research experience is not required. The applicants are mostly university lecturers, since possession of the

PhD degree is a necessary condition for promotion to the post of assistant professor and thus obtaining job security. In theory lecturers lose their position if they fail to obtain a doctorate within 6 to 8 years.

There are no taught PhDs, so far. The degree is awarded for a dissertation containing an element of original research. The topic is usually formulated by candidates in consultation with the prospective supervisor. The dissertation is usually written in Portuguese. There is no upper or lower limit on the length; generally, dissertations are 350-500 pages long. There is no publication requirement.

The dissertation is assessed by reviewers, and accepted (or not) by the examination board proposed by the relevant faculty council. If accepted, the candidate has to defend it in a public discussion with the examination board (consisting of up to five members). There is an overall time limit for the examination, with an 'equal time of reply' rule.

University lecturers can be granted three years' paid leave to work on their doctorates. Most of them manage to get their degree before the end of the statutory employment period (see above). Obtaining a doctorate leads automatically to promotion to the post of assistant professor at the university, provided that the candidate has been a lecturer for at least five years.

While the first degree, the *licenciatura*, entitles the holder to use the title of 'Dr' before his/her name, possession of the doctorate allows one to write the title in full, as 'Doutor'. Outside academe, the doctorate is rare, and hence has *kudos*, but does not earn one anything.

Spain

The entrance requirements depend on the university. Usually, however, only holders of a good *licenciatura* degree are accepted.

Doctoral study consists of two parts. In the first year candidates have to complete 200 hours of courses in specialist subjects—which means 4-7 courses of 30 to 60 hours each. Departments are free to offer courses in their areas of special interest, and the candidates usually choose to work in the area which is particularly strongly represented in the department. In the second year the candidates write a research paper of 30,000 to 50,000 words. First, however, each candidate

approaches a prospective supervisor, who must be a member of the faculty of a Spanish or foreign university and hold a PhD degree. If the supervisor agrees, he/she has to be officially appointed by the department. The topic for research (and the small dissertation) is selected by the candidate and/or the supervisor, and must be accepted by the department. Original research is not required. The research paper is examined by a board of three reviewers (usually members of the department), one of whom is normally the supervisor. Positive assessment of the 'small' dissertation is a precondition of starting work on the PhD dissertation proper—that is, the second part of the doctoral programme.

Division of PhD study into two parts: a preparatory stage and the stage of research proper, is reminiscent of the French system, and even more of the Hungarian system, in which the preparatory stage (leading to the *absolutorium*) lasts as long as three years (see below).

The procedure of selection and official confirmation of the topic of the PhD dissertation is the same as in the case of the 'small' dissertation. This time, however, original research is required. The normal length of a dissertation in English studies is between 75,000 and 90,000 words, but longer texts are also acceptable. The language of the dissertation is English or Spanish (or any other official language of Spain: Catalan, for example). There is no publication requirement.

The dissertation is submitted, with the supervisor's approval, to the department. The university appoints a committee of ten members, seven of whom must review the dissertation. If the reviews are not positive, the dissertation is returned to the candidate with suggestions for re-submission. If the reviews are positive, a public viva exam takes place. First the candidate presents an outline of the dissertation and its merits, and then five members of a specially appointed committee ask questions. Two members of the committee usually come from the university which awards the degree, and three from other universities, Spanish or foreign. The supervisor cannot be a member of the committee. After the exam the committee awards marks to the dissertation: A, B, or C. An outstanding dissertation can be awarded the mark of *A cum laude*.

Some students pay for their studies; others (those with a good academic record) obtain scholarships. A few may get a part-time temporary teaching job in the department. There are no completion statistics; it seems, however, that only a minority of candidates who start their PhD courses complete the dissertation and are awarded the degree. Holders of the PhD degree generally pursue an academic career. The degree entitles them to hold permanent senior positions at the university.

Poland

In principle, any holder of an MA can start working towards a doctorate, provided he or she finds a supervisor who agrees to take them on. No professional experience is required. To agree, the prospective supervisor has to be confident that the candidate and his/her subject will find favour with the supervisor's faculty council.

Initially, the contract between the candidate and his/her supervisor is of a private nature. After the candidate has explored the subject, collected the relevant bibliography, and done part of the research—documented in the form of a paper presented at a conference and/or an article (or articles) in a learned journal—he/she can write to the faculty council asking them, first, to open official proceedings leading to the doctorate and, secondly, to appoint a supervisor. The latter action is nearly always just a formality, amounting to granting official sanction to the professor who has guided the candidate's work so far.

In practice, doctoral study is usually undertaken by two categories of candidate: members of the academic staff working as lecturers, who are legally bound to obtain a doctorate within eight years; and recent graduates wishing to follow an academic career. Candidates from both categories can apply for a place in a regular doctoral course and for a scholarship. In return, they undertake to obtain a doctorate in four years, and to teach undergraduates for four hours a week—usually a course (or courses) expanding their knowledge of English. Critics of this arrangement allege that one of the reasons why universities promote doctoral study is that it is a way of solving the problem of shortage of teachers.

The content of the doctoral course varies from university to university. In some it is highly structured and involves high-level seminars in several disciplines related to the candidates' area of study, as well as lectures in philosophy and in methodology of scholarly research. In others it is structured loosely and involves mostly a seminar in the candidates' discipline, broadly conceived—be it literature, cultural studies, theoretical linguistics, applied linguistics, and so on—and tutorials with the supervisor. Knowledge of another foreign language is mandatory, as is an examination in philosophy or logic.

The dissertation is expected to be based on original research. Its length varies greatly; in formal linguistics the text can be fairly short—around 100 pages—in literary and cultural studies it can run to several hundred pages. The language of the dissertation is almost always English. There is no publication requirement, but a fair number of PhD theses do get published.

The dissertation is assessed by two or three reviewers appointed by a commission of the faculty council, at least one of whom usually comes from another university. If the reviews are favourable, the candidate has to take a *viva voce* exam in the discipline of his/her research (the examiners are the supervisor and the reviewers), and defend his/her dissertation in a public debate, in which questions are asked by members of the audience as well as by the reviewers. The results of the exams and the defence are presented to the faculty council, who award the degree in a secret ballot.

Doctoral diplomas are handed over in an elaborate ceremony (usually some months later), in which several newly-created PhDs take part. Completion rates are high, but a number of candidates overstep the four-year limit. Until recently, most graduates pursued an academic career. Some worked towards a higher degree (*habilitacija*—a kind of upper doctorate), which is a prerequisite for obtaining a professorial post (see section 4 below). Lately, however, doctoral courses in English studies have become so popular that many graduates will have to look for careers outside academia.

Hungary

Candidates for the PhD course have to hold an 'excellent' or 'good' university degree (the upper two grades in the five-grade system), present their degree thesis, submit a four- or five-page outline of proposed research, and suggest a supervisor. Certified knowledge of another foreign language at an intermediate or advanced level is also required. Having complied with all these requirements, the candidate is interviewed. No previous professional experience is required.

The PhD programme comprises two years of course work and a year of guided research (with tutorials). After that the student obtains an *absolutorium* and has three or four more years in which to publish two or three essays or articles related to his/her subject, take the doctoral examination, produce the dissertation, and defend it. Those who fail to comply with these requirements lose the *absolutorium*.

This procedure applies to young candidates, mostly recent graduates, who wish to become academics. Older people, usually ones with an established academic reputation, can apply for 'individual studies', which means that they work with a supervisor but are exempt from the two-year course work. Such cases, however, are rare.

In English studies the dissertation topic is usually formulated towards the end of the first year (unlike in the natural sciences, where it has to be stated right at the beginning of the project). This, however, varies from university to university. The topic has to be approved by the programme council; the same applies to the choice of the supervisor. The dissertation should be based on original research, and is expected to be no less than 150 pages long (not counting the documentation). Some universities penalise extra-long theses (by charging high procedural fees). The language of the dissertation can be Hungarian or English. A dissertation written in Hungarian stands a better chance of publication in Hungary.

The results of the doctoral examination and the public defence of the dissertation are subject to confirmation by the doctoral council of the faculty and the university. The degree is then officially awarded by the rector in a public ceremony. Doctoral candidates finance their studies either by teaching in the

department which runs their doctoral programme, or from grants and scholarships (or in both ways). Some candidates pay for their studies out of their own funds.

The PhD programme described above is relatively novel; it is therefore too early to assess its success in terms of completion rates. A doctorate is important for an academic career. Its importance for a career in administration, industry, business etc. is not obvious.

Romania

A candidate for the doctoral programme has to present his/her c.v., a list of publications, an outline of the research project (with the relevant bibliography and the name of the prospective supervisor), and a letter of application to the rector of the university, asking to be admitted to the programme. Supervisors have to be full professors. In theory the candidate does not need to contact the prospective supervisor beforehand; in practice candidates approach a professor of their choice, ask him/her to supervise their work, and discuss their research project with him/her. Once a year all the candidates are interviewed, in the presence of all the supervisors of doctoral programmes and other academics working in the same field. The candidates have to present their projects as well as the research they have already done, and argue for the importance of the doctorate for their career. The number of places in doctoral studies is limited, chiefly because of shortage of qualified supervisors. Preference is given to candidates who work in research institutes or are young and promising academics. Each candidate is given a mark on a scale of 1 to 10; the minimum mark for admission is 7.

The doctoral programme lasts six years. The first two are spent studying prescribed subjects and taking exams, of which there are two or three. The lowest pass mark is 7. The next two years are spent on the writing and presentation of two or three essays (which may subsequently be incorporated into the dissertation). Before presentation the essays are read and assessed by a commission of five academics. The presentation is followed by discussion in which any members of the academic staff may take part. Essays are assessed on a pass/fail basis. If a candidate

fails an essay, he/she is given a second chance. The third stage of the programme is the writing of the dissertation proper, for which the candidate has a year. The sixth year is set aside for the submission and defence of the dissertation, and the confirmation of the title by the Ministry of Education.

The dissertation is submitted to the supervisor's university and read by a committee of five reviewers, at least four of whom have to accept it for the candidate to be allowed to defend it in a public discussion. If the defence is considered successful, the committee awards the title, which then has to be confirmed by the Ministry of Education.

The dissertation can be written in Romanian, but if the field of research is modern languages, candidates usually write in the language they study. There is no publication requirement, except when the candidate seeks academic promotion.

Doctoral candidates who work in a university are not exempt from teaching, but they usually teach a reduced number of hours, and can expect to be allowed sabbatical semesters. For anyone working in a university, obtaining the doctorate within a prescribed period of time is mandatory. Until recently it was rare for people from outside the academic world to enter doctoral studies. Now, however, more and more holders of PhD degrees can be found in the world of politics, business and administration.

Russia

The names of higher degrees in Russia sound confusing to the Western ear. The equivalent of the PhD is the degree of *kandidat* of philology, while the degree of *doktor* of philology corresponds to the 'upper doctorate' (*habilitation*).

Applicants for doctoral studies have to write a paper (about 20 pages long) on the problems they intend to research. The paper is reviewed by the applicant's prospective supervisor and then the applicant takes entrance exams. If admitted, the applicant becomes an *aspirant*.

The prospective supervisor is first approached by the applicant. His/her agreement to take on supervision of the applicant's work has to be approved by the faculty council.

A full-time doctoral course lasts three years, and a correspondence course four years. In the first year the *aspirant* takes two examinations for the 'candidate's minimum': in philosophy and a second foreign language. Before the exam in the foreign language the *aspirant* translates a book from that language into Russian—usually one related to his/her field of study. *Aspirants* also have to obtain credits for courses in psychology and pedagogy. In the second or third year they take an examination in their field of research (also a part of the 'candidate's minimum').

The dissertation topic is usually selected by the supervisor and then approved by the department and the faculty council. Original research is an absolute requirement. Dissertations are written in Russian. The average length is 150 pages; the maximum 200 pages.

Before submitting the dissertation the candidate has to publish a couple of articles and/or several abstracts of his/her conference papers. Publication of the dissertation is not required, but a long abstract (20-22 pages) is published and sent to the country's major academic libraries and to prominent specialists in the field.

The finished dissertation is submitted by the supervisor for review by two or three professors, after which it is discussed at a meeting of the department. The text is either accepted or amendments and improvements are suggested. When the final version is submitted, a special dissertation commission of the faculty appoints two independent reviewers (no reviewer may be a member of the supervisor's department) and asks for a 'collective' review, which must come from a different university and be signed by the department head or the rector. If the reviews are positive, a public defence follows (which is usually quite an ordeal). The degree is awarded by the dissertation commission of the faculty, but the diploma is issued by the Highest Attestation Commission in Moscow. Completion rates are high: 80-90% of aspirants defend their dissertations.

Aspirants are paid monthly stipends by the state. If they are academic lecturers, their university can give them extra grants. Graduates are usually university lecturers. Holders of a *kandidat's* degree can earn two or even three times as much as other lecturers.

4. The 'upper doctorate'

In some countries there is a degree—or title, or diploma—higher than the PhD. It is usually only taken by university lecturers who wish to obtain a professorship.

Strictly speaking, description of this grade of the academic hierarchy does not belong in a discussion of varieties of postgraduate study, since there are no courses leading to it and, generally, no organised supervision of the candidate's work. This is because, in principle, obtaining this degree (title, diploma, etc.) is supposed to constitute proof of the candidate's ability to carry out academic research unaided. Yet a description of this rung of the scholarly ladder seems worth including in our survey, because in the academic systems in which it exists it is often treated as if it were simply a higher-class doctorate—but one that has to be won by independent, unsupervised research. In other respects it is like the PhD: the candidate has to submit a thesis, defend it, be examined,

and so on. In one country at least, candidates are even advised to have a kind of supervisor.

England and Wales

There is no degree higher than the PhD. Academic promotion depends primarily on research results, as attested by publications, and on one's standing in the academic world.

Denmark

The 'upper doctorate' is called *dr. phil.*. The main requirement is completion and publication of a substantial thesis, which is then subjected to a public defence. If the result is positive, the degree is awarded in a public ceremony, usually as part of annual university festivities.

France

Holders of a doctorate can apply for a diploma called *L'habilitation à diriger la recherche (HDR)*. It was introduced in 1988,

replacing the old title of *doctorat d'État*. It is not considered a degree or a title; its function is to certify the applicant's ability to supervise research. It is only sought by candidates for a professorial post. Normally, the HDR cannot be applied for earlier than five years after the doctorate. It is considered advisable for candidates to have a 'director of research', helping them in their work towards the HDR. In this respect France differs from the other countries which have a degree higher than the PhD in their academic hierarchy.

The candidate has to present a book or a collection of articles (200-250 pages), a list of his/her publications, and a detailed description of his/her academic career (not less than 50 pages, preferably 80-100). The whole *dossier* is assessed by a committee of five professors. They present a report which becomes a document of decisive importance for obtaining a professorial post.

Germany

The degree is called *Habilitation*. It is a condition for obtaining the honorary title of *Privatdozent*, and also for standing as a candidate for a professorship. The requirements are: possession of a PhD degree, a set of publications, and submission of a major work of scholarship. The work is reviewed; if it is accepted, the author has to give a 30-minute lecture before the full faculty, and answer questions from the audience. Success is not guaranteed.

Portugal

Holders of a doctorate who have held the post of associate professor (the middle of the three professorial ranks) for at least five years can take an examination known as *agregação*, leading to the title of *agregado* (a title, not a degree), which is in most cases a condition of obtaining a professorship of the highest grade (*catedrático*).

A candidate for the title has to submit a history of his/her career as scholar, teacher, administrator, and member of the university community, as well as a report on a course he/she has taught (usually a somewhat idealised version). The proceedings extend over two days. On the first day there is a debate before the examining board, reviewing both the candidate's report and his/her career. On the second day the candidate

delivers an hour-long lecture on a subject related to the course report, to which a member of the board responds. The candidate then has half an hour for a rejoinder. The members of the board then vote in a secret ballot.

Spain

There is, formally speaking, no 'upper doctorate'. However, a candidate for the post of full professor (*Catedrático*), who must be a Senior Lecturer with tenure, has to submit a substantial piece of original research, which is seen by many as another PhD dissertation. This is assessed by a board of five full professors from different Spanish universities. A public exam follows, similar to the viva for doctoral candidates, during which members of the board comment on the dissertation and ask questions of the candidate. A positive result of the whole procedure does not lead to the conferring of a title or a degree, but is a condition of obtaining the position of *Catedrático*.

Poland

The 'upper doctorate' is called *habilitacja*. The usual requirements are a doctorate, a reasonably long list of publications, and submission of a recently published scholarly work—the *habilitacja* thesis—presenting results of original research. The faculty council then appoints a commission which, in turn, appoints at least three reviewers of the thesis, of whom one or two must come from other universities. If their verdict is positive, the faculty council admits the candidate to the final stage of the proceedings, namely the *colloquium*—an examination in front of the whole faculty council—and a lecture on a subject proposed by the candidate and approved by the council. Next, those members of the faculty council who hold the *habilitacja* degree vote to accept or reject the candidate's exam and lecture. If the result is positive (which it usually is, at this stage), the candidate is granted the degree—subject to confirmation by a special commission of scholars, elected by the academic community.

Possession of a *habilitacja* is a necessary (and in some universities, sufficient) condition for obtaining the post of an associate professor. Full professorship,

however, is only open to persons holding the title of professor (not to be confused with the post of a professor), which is the next, and final rung of the academic ladder.

Hungary

The requirements for the 'habilitation' are documented experience in teaching and research, and knowledge of foreign languages. The candidate has to teach a class and give a public lecture, based on research, before the 'habilitation' committee. Presentation of a shortened version of the lecture in a foreign language is also required. The results are assessed at the level of the faculty and the university. The degree is awarded ceremonially by the rector of the university.

In some universities, possession of this degree is a condition for obtaining the post of full professor. In some other universities, however, 'habilitation' only qualifies one for the post of associate professor. To become full professor one has to win the title of 'doctor of the Academy', the top rung of the academic ladder.

Russia

The name of the upper doctoral degree is 'doctor of philology'. The requirements are:

publication of a book and 15-20 papers. Unless the published book is of outstanding value, the candidate must also submit a dissertation. The work is reviewed by three senior professors, of whom one can be a member of his/her own university, but from a different department, and two must come from another university. A 'collective' reviewer is also required (see the text on Russia in section 3). A public defence follows, after which the dissertation commission of the faculty applies to the Highest Attestation Commission to award the degree.

Lecturers who hold a *kandidat's* degree may apply for *doktorantura*: two- or three-year leave of absence for research, often done at one of the central universities, under the supervision of a prominent professor. At the end of their *doktorantura* candidates have to produce a dissertation. The rest of the proceedings are as described above.

To become a professor one has to obtain the 'doctor of philology' degree, lecture for at least a year, and then present a report on one's teaching and other academic achievements. The documents go to the Highest Attestation Commission in Moscow, which awards the professorial title and issues a diploma.

Our survey does not embrace all the countries of Europe. We hope, however, that it does present all the major systems of postgraduate (as well as undergraduate) study of English existing on our continent, and thus can constitute the starting point for discussion of the problems and controversies in this area of academic life.

I make some suggestions towards this discussion in my article, 'Postgraduate study of English in Europe', in *The European English Messenger* VIII/2 (Autumn 1999), pp. 7-12.

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Jan Rusiecki
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