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MANAGING MOBILITY OPPORTUNITIES FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS: THE CASE OF LITHUANIA

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ABSTRACT. The mobility of experienced scientists and young scientists has always been the top priority of the European agenda and still is, even though the financial opportunities were considerably cut due to the global economic slowdown in 2008. The focus of this paper is the opportunities for mobility of PhD students in Lithuania. Therefore, the aim of the paper is two-fold: firstly, to overview the European and Lithuanian opportunities for PhD students' mobility, structuring the ways of programmes and funds; secondly, to present the survey results from Lithuania on the trends in PhD students' mobility opportunities.

JEL Classification: M10, I21, I23, P2

Keywords: process management, analysis of education, higher education and research institutions, PhD studies, Lithuania.

Introduction

The mobility of scientists and researchers is a desirable feature in the modern education and study system. However, many obstacles for the mobility of scientists and researchers still remain in the European Union as well as Lithuania. The migration policy as well as the regulation of employment and social security of mobile scientists, researchers and their families vary across different countries and for this reason, it is important to acquire exhaustive, concrete and reliable information about the country, where scientists or researchers are going to work and live with their families (Foltean and Feder, 2009; Deem *et al.*, 2007). In order to get employed in a foreign country a scientist or a researcher requires reliable information on the work and living conditions there (Hussey and Smith, 2010). In 2004-2005, the European Commission initiated the foundation of the network of *European Researchers' Mobility Centres* that now operates in 37 countries[1], where more than 200 researchers' mobility centres actively participate (EURAXESS Service Centres, 2011). *Their main mission* is to provide scientists and researchers with practical information on legal systems, employment, visas, issue of residential and employment permits, conditions for financial support from state institutions and funds, etc. of the country they are coming to. Scientists and researchers are also provided with individual help in foreign countries: the representatives of mobility centres personally show them to migration department or health care institutions, assist in filling necessary forms or provide with translation services.

[1]Referred on 12/09/2011 at http://www.euraxess.lt/index_lt.php

Researchers' Mobility Centres are established in different institutions of the network countries; their representatives may be available at universities, agencies or scientific research institutes, where foreign scientists and researchers are employed, or where they may require relevant information and assistance with employment and integration in that country. This way the goals of EURAXESS initiatives are more effectively achieved, which enables getting closer to the mobile scientists and researchers by providing them and their families with help in solving the issues of living and employment until they are settled abroad[2].

The mobility of PhD students gives an opportunity to improve their knowledge not only in the research institution, but also in other educational institutions of the same or different country during their doctoral studies (Gürüz, 2008). Mobility enables students to analyse their research subject in greater detail by studying different approaches and in this way avoiding restricting themselves to a single viewpoint advocated by a certain institution (Kazlauskaite and Buciuniene, 2010; Bilan, 2008). The mobility of doctoral students is relevant to both the students and educational institutions, because some time spent studying in another institution expands the students' horizon and improves their knowledge, which, in turn, determines a greater academic potential of the educational institution (Zaharia *et al.*, 2009; Salmi, 2009; Kopycińska *et al.*, 2009; Kunaz, 2009; Knust and Hanft, 2009; Bernat *et al.*, 2009).

Currently, PhD students at the Lithuanian universities have various possibilities of placements in national and foreign educational centres and institutions through both programmes established by the EU and handled by state institutions as well as cooperation agreements concluded by individual universities.

The focus of this paper is the opportunities for mobility of PhD students in Lithuania. Therefore, ***the aim of the paper is two-fold***: firstly, to overview European and Lithuanian opportunities for PhD students' mobility, structuring the ways of programmes and funds; secondly, to present the survey results from Lithuania on the trends in PhD students' mobility opportunities. The logic scheme of current research is presented in *Figure 1*.

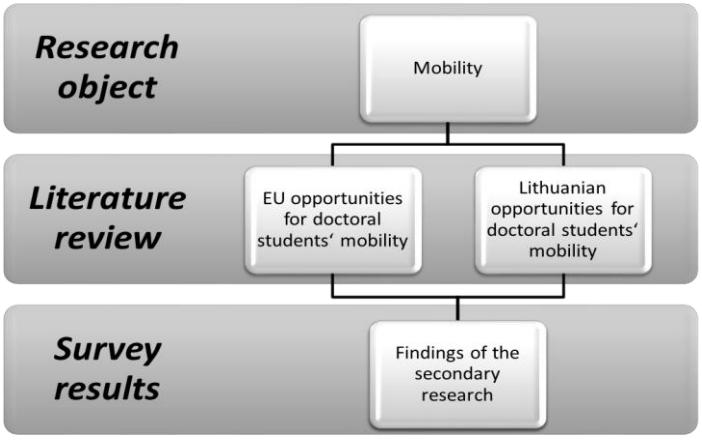

Figure 1. The Logic of the Current Research in Lithuanian Doctoral Students' Opportunities for Mobility

The *research object* of the paper is mobility; the *research field* is PhD students' mobility and their opportunities. The paper is broken into three sections, where *Section 1* represents the trends in the European practice and opportunities for doctoral students' mobility within a presented framework of EU funding. *Section 2* overviews the structural process for managing doctoral applications for potential mobility opportunities: initiated by a

[2] Referred on 12/09/2011 at http://www.euraxess.lt/index_lt.php

PhD student and validated by his/her research institution, the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Lithuania or the Lithuanian Council of Science. *Section 3* gives insights into the secondary survey on PhD students' mobility potential.

1. Overview of Opportunities for Doctoral Students' Mobility within the EU Programmes

The mobility of doctoral students in the EU educational institutions is possible through the following programmes:

- Marie Curie Actions in the Framework Programme for Research;
- Erasmus LLP programme;
- Second stage of Erasmus Mundus programme.

1.1. Marie Curie Actions in the 7th Framework Programme for Research

In the 7th Framework Programme for Research, Marie Curie Actions were re-grouped, intensified and attributed to the part of the programme referred to as *People*. The budget of this part of the programme for 2007-2013 consists of more than EUR 4.7 billion. The following activities are planned in the Marie Curie Actions programme (see *Figure 2*):

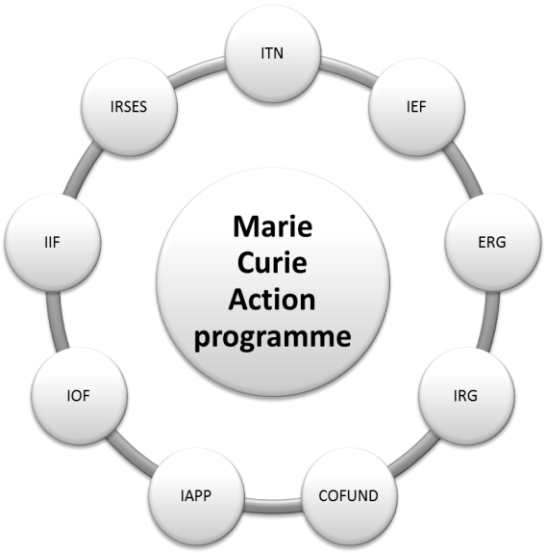

Figure 2. Marie Curie Actions Programme and its Branches
Source: compiled by the authors.

1. Marie Curie Initial Training Networks (ITN);
2. Marie Curie Intra-European Fellowships for Career Development (IEF);
3. Marie Curie European Reintegration Grants (ERG);
4. Marie Curie International Reintegration Grants (IRG);
5. Marie Curie Co-funding of Regional, National and International Programmes (COFUND);
6. Marie Curie Industry-Academia Partnerships and Pathways (IAPP);
7. Marie Curie International Outgoing Fellowships (IOF);
8. Marie Curie Incoming International Fellowships (IIF);
9. International Research Staff Exchange Scheme (IRSES).

Doctoral placements in foreign educational centres are possible through the first and, to a certain extent, through the fifth activity; further, they are shortly overviewed.

Marie Curie Initial Training Networks (ITN). The scheme is intended for improving and structuring training for beginner researchers on the European level, promoting scientific career and expanding the career possibilities by teaching necessary skills (in both private and public sectors). The first activity direction, Marie Curie Initial Training Networks (ITN) of Marie Curie Action programme determines a condition that three participants (universities, research centres or companies), having joint together in a network and submitted a clear initial training curriculum, are eligible for the ITN support from the Framework Programme. The funding, received from the Framework Programme, may be used for the employment of researchers who are in the first five years of their career. For instance, they may be researchers, seeking for a degree (doctoral or its equivalent), or trainees in the initial post-doctoral studies. ITN programmes may be funded up to four years. For early-stage researchers, the support may be allocated for 3 to 36 months, whereas for experienced ones for up to 24 months.

Marie Curie Co-funding of Regional, National and International Programmes (COFUND). For this programme, the applications may be submitted by public and private organizations that are responsible for fellowships and research training programmes. These may be ministerial research academies and agencies, international organizations and other organizations with a public mission. Co-funding is allocated for the existing or new regional and national fellowship programmes that focus on researchers' training and career development as well as provide for at least one form of international mobility, for example, outgoing and incoming mobility or reintegration of researchers into European research environment. This programme may also provide support for the existing and new international programmes. After the application is validated, a two-year funding agreement is signed with the European Commission.

1.2. Erasmus LLP programme

Erasmus used to be a separate EU programme in the field of higher education. The students of the first (undergraduate) and second (postgraduate) study cycle mostly participated in the individual mobility and placement activities of this programme. The student mobility allows the students of higher education to spend a period of integrated studies, lasting from 3 to 12 months, in a different country taking part in Erasmus programme. The aims of such mobility are the following:

- to help the students receive educational, linguistic and cultural benefits from studying experience in other European countries;
- to promote the cooperation among institutions and enrich the educational environment of the accepting institutions;
- to contribute to the expansion of database of highly-qualified, liberal and foreign-experienced young future specialists;
- to facilitate the transfer of credits and acknowledgement of foreign studies by applying European Credit Transfer System and an appropriate credit system.

Moreover, doctoral students can also take part in this individual student mobility. Research placements (practice) for doctoral students may be carried out in the activity of Foreign Placement Companies, Educational Centres, Scientific Research Centres and Other Organizations. The duration of practice is from 3 to 12 months.

Every student selected by contest to participate in Erasmus programme has an opportunity to receive an Erasmus scholarship for covering additional costs of mobility, such as travelling expenses and cost of living (e.g. hostel charges). A share of scholarship is

covered by the European Commission and the other comes from the national budget. During the period of studies, every student has a right to receive one scholarship for the mobility of studies and one for placement. The total duration for receiving scholarships cannot exceed 24 months. Minimal and maximal Erasmus scholarships for Lithuanian students are determined and divided into four groups according to the standards of living of a particular country. Placement scholarships are larger than study scholarships since students are not provided any help from the accepting academic institution.

1.3. Erasmus Mundus programme

EU Erasmus Mundus programme provides financial support for institutions and scholarships for individual persons. It was initiated by the EU aiming to promote institutional cooperation in the field of higher education among the EU and Third Countries through a mobility programme. The programme is intended for student and academician exchange in the fields of studies, teaching, learning and scientific research.

Erasmus Mundus II includes three actions, namely:

- *Action 1*. Joint Master Courses (Action 1A) and Doctoral Courses (Action 1B) also includes individual scholarships for participation in these programmes.
- *Action 2*. Cooperation Partnerships.
- *Action 3*. Promotion of European Higher Education.

An exceptional feature of Erasmus Mundus II programme (2009-2013), which seeks to promote institutional cooperation through international mobility among the EU and Third Countries in the field of higher education, is that it also encompasses doctoral studies. These placements are available through two Erasmus Mundus II actions out of three, that is *Action 1* Joint Master Courses (*Action 1A*) and Doctoral Courses (*Action 1B*) including individual scholarships for participation in these programmes and Action 2 Erasmus Mundus Cooperation Partnerships. *Activity 1* is, in fact, broader because its *Part 1B* supports high-quality joint doctoral programmes offered by a consortium of European and possible Third-Country higher education institutions. Doctoral placements in foreign research centres are planned in *Activity 2*.

2. Overview of the Lithuanian Experience in Doctoral Students' Mobility

2.1. The second part Placements for Doctoral Candidates in Foreign Research Centres of the Project Promotion of Students' Scientific Activities implemented by the Research Council of Lithuania

The objective of the project is to support doctoral students going to foreign research centres to carry out research related to the doctoral programmes studied in Lithuania[3]. Providing support for doctoral students, the Research Council of Lithuania holds that the principal aim of exchange is active experimental or analytical research that will make a solid contribution to PhD students' competence, quality of the dissertation and establishment of new cooperative connections with foreign research centres. The Research Council of Lithuania encourages people, who wish to acquire new competences and use scientific research infrastructure and resources that are not available in Lithuania yet, to make full use of the possibilities of the programme. Since the project is for funding scientific research, it finances neither educational placements nor courses, nor trips to conferences.

[3] Referred on 12/09/2011 available at http://www.lmt.lt/lt/pradzia.html

The total support budget for covering the cost of living, including rent, amounts to LTL 1.053 million[4]. A fellowship of up to LTL 7020 per month may be allocated for one doctoral student. Actual costs of economy-class air transport or second-class railway (bus) may be additionally covered according to the submitted travel documents. In total, funds are going to be allocated for 150 doctoral students for placements of X months[5].

In order to receive support for research placements, doctoral students have to: a) clearly formulate the aims of the research, b) submit a scientific project of the placement, c) ground the necessity of the visit and d) demonstrate their competence. The support is allocated only if doctoral students present an official consent for the placement of the accepting institution for the planned period of time together with their application. Written consents must also be given by the supervisors of doctoral students.

When applying for support, Lithuanian PhD students together with their accepting supervisors of the dissertation and placement have to prepare a research programme and duration (in months) for its implementation. The principal criterion for the consideration of the application is the scientific maturity of the project and experience of the applicant. The principal criteria of selection are the following:

1. *Scientific and/ or technological quality of the research project* (hereinafter – "project") of the placement:
   - Scientific and/ or technological aims of the project, including (multi) disciplines or newly developing areas;
   - Scientific quality of the project and knowledge about the up-to-date scientific/technological level;
   - Appropriate research methodology;
   - Originality, innovative aspects or potentially transformative conceptions of the project.
2. *Quality of the placement* (its influence on the improvement of the student as a person and specialist):
   - Acquisition of research experience (depending on how the intention to acquire new knowledge is presented in the application, the aim is to master innovative methods of research, i.e. observation, experiments, raise of hypotheses and their verification; acquiring competences that are inaccessible in Lithuania due to the lack of necessary conditions);
   - Clarity of the aims of the placement (not only the research project of the placement) to the doctoral students themselves; conformity with the theme of the dissertation;
   - Appropriateness and quality of the placement as additional preparation for the further activity; acquisition of additional skills and competences in communication, ethics, management, entrepreneurship, research policy, etc.
   - Conformity of PhD student's previous activity and the theme of the dissertation with the activity indicated in the application.
3. *Preparation of the PhD student*:
   - Student's results of the stage of doctoral studies (knowledge of the language of the country of the accepting institution or another language widely used in that country, relevance and evaluations of the subjects studied in the doctoral course);
   - Student's scientific experience and results (publications, reports in conferences, patents, etc.), experience of teaching the students of lower degree;
   - Independent thinking and leadership qualities;

[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.

- Potential of acquiring new knowledge and professional maturity.

4. *Implementation of the placement*:
   - Conformity and accessibility of facilities (equipment and infrastructure) of sending and accepting institution for the aims of the research project of the placement;
   - The quality of the group/supervisors of the sending and accepting institution and their experience in the field of the concerned research;
   - Practical and administrative preparation in the sending and accepting institution for the organization of work indicated in the application for the placement by establishing appropriate living conditions for the student; preparation of these institutions to co-finance the visit of the student;
   - Reliability and feasibility of the tasks planned for the placement, executability of the work plan.
5. *Effect of the placement*:
   - An opportunity to obtain new scientific results and acquire competence that will improve the quality of doctoral studies (new scientific publications, higher quality of the dissertation, mastering of new research methods, renewal of scientific infrastructure or rise of reasons for such renewal in the institution of the doctoral student);
   - Perspectives of professional maturity of the student;
   - Contribution to the career development of the student;
   - Contribution to the development of the international scientific contacts of the sending (Lithuanian) institution.

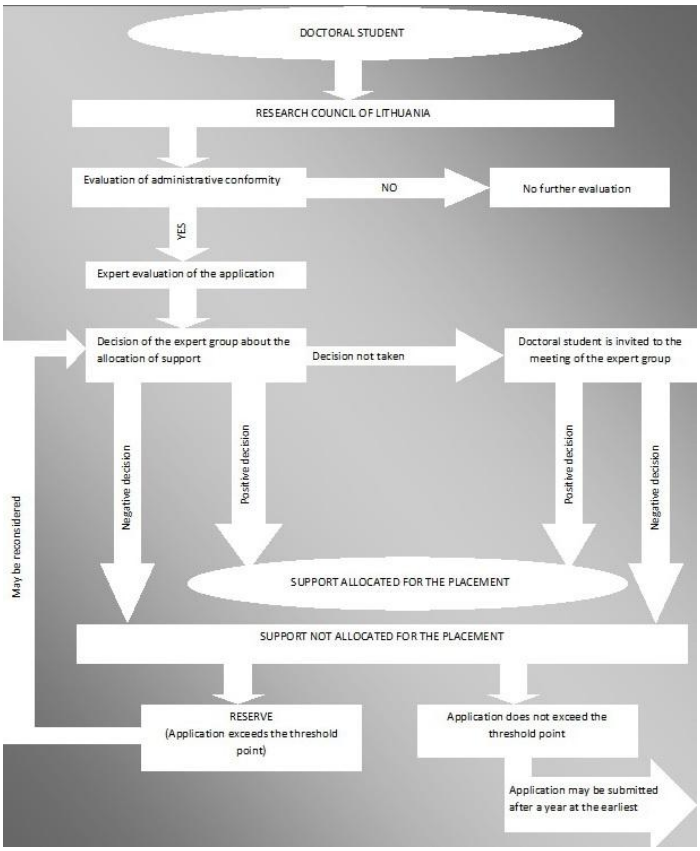

Figure 3. Model of the Placements for Lithuanian Doctoral Candidates in Foreign Research Centres of the RCL project Promotion of Students' Scientific Activities
Source: compiled by the authors after ISM (2010), National development institute (2010).

All applications for the placement are evaluated on the basis of three stages: a) evaluation of administrative conformity, b) expert evaluation of the application, and c) session of an expert group that makes the decision about the allocation of the fellowship for the placement (see the scheme of application and decision making in *Figure 3*). PhD students who have received support for the placement have to submit interim (depending on the length of the placement) and final reports. The final report has to be presented in 3 weeks after the end of the placement.

2.2. Support of the Research Council of Lithuania for the foreign trips of teachers, research workers and other researchers

This programme is intended to enable the Lithuanian researchers to participate in scientific conferences, placements, meetings concerning the preparation of research projects, meetings of editorial colleges of international scientific publications, taking place abroad or collecting material for research in the archives of a foreign country or expeditions, teaching or carrying out scientific research. Doctoral students in the fields of science and art are also considered as researchers.

Support is allocated to fund the following trips of the researchers:

- to a scientific conference taking place abroad;
- to a research placement in a foreign research and higher education institution;
- to teach in a research institution (if the trip is not financed by other institutions);
- to participate in scientific activity organized abroad;
- to collect material for research in the archives of a foreign country or expeditions;
- to carry out research using equipment in the foreign research institution;
- to participate in meetings concerning the preparation of research projects;
- to participate in meetings of editorial colleges of international scientific publications.

The application must be submitted by the researcher together with the sending institution (higher education institution or scientific research institute). Support is allocated for the citizens of the Republic of Lithuania.

Trips are financed on the basis of the following criteria:

- importance for the concerned research and its scientific application;
- scientific level of the event or research centre where the researcher is going;
- the results of the scientific activity of the researcher during the past three years;
- perspectives of applying the experience and knowledge that the researcher is seeking to acquire for his/her scientific activity.

2.3. International scientific cooperation and exchange programme of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences

Lithuanian Academy of Sciences (LAS) aids in organizing scientific cooperation of Lithuanian and foreign research centres with individual researchers by supporting the relations of Lithuanian researches with foreign research academies and other institutions by invoking foreign members and organizing international events of scientific importance[6].

LAS represent Lithuanian science in many international organizations, including All European Academies (ALLEA), International Council for Science (ICSU), European

[6] Referred on 08/09/2011 at http://lma.lt/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=107&Itemid=138&lang=lt

Academies Science Advisory Council (EASAC) and International Academic Partnership (IAP). LAS actively participates in the work of these organizations and spreads information about their activity in Lithuania.

Lithuanian Academy of Sciences actively supports and finances international mobility of researchers by cooperating with foreign academies under bilateral agreements. LAS has already concluded agreements with 25 foreign educational institutions: Austrian, Belarus and British Academy, Council for the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting and Fund of Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting at Lake Constance, the Royal Society of London, Estonian, Latvian, Polish and Norwegian academies of exact sciences and humanities, Russian agrarian academy, Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Finnish, Swiss and academies of other countries.

International scientific cooperation agreements facilitate the mobility of the researchers. The possibilities of researchers exchange provided by these agreements are accessible for the representatives of all Lithuanian research and higher education institutions. It is an exceptional opportunity for the Lithuanian researchers to work in international research centres, acquire knowledge and experience abroad, accept foreign partners and carry out joint projects.

Organizational order of scientific visits. Scientific cooperation is implemented on the basis of annual quota limits determined in the agreements. The right of priority is granted for the members of LAS and researchers who carry out research and projects relevant for both contracting parties. An official invitation from the foreign research institution is obligatory.

Researchers who wish to participate in the international scientific cooperation and exchange programmes must submit applications to the Group of International Relations of LAS. The following documents are necessary for application (see *Table 1*).

Table 1. Application documents for International Relations Group at LAS, Lithuania

Name/title/nature of a document
1. Letter of application to the President of LAS
2. Official invitation from the foreign research institution
3. Filled-in special LAS application where related information must be provided: • background facts (*education*) • work experience (*and achievements*) • research activities (*past, current and future prospects*)
4. Programme of the scientific visit/ placement
5. Recommendation from the sending research or higher education institution
6. Letter of application to the President of LAS

Source: compiled by the authors from Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, http://lma.lt.

The received applications are considered in the respective LAS departments. The final decision is taken by LAS presidium. Then, the submitted documents are sent to the foreign research institution. After having received a confirmation from the foreign partners, other organizational issues related to the scientific visit are arranged.

3. Findings of the Secondary Survey in Lithuania

Lithuanian Researchers' Mobility Centre, established in the *Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education* (CQAHE), not only provides practical information about financial support, fellowships, employment of foreign scientists and researchers, but also organizes informative events for scientists, researchers, doctoral students, administration workers at research and higher education institutions as well as science policy coordinators

and makers. The Centre actively cooperates with Lithuanian universities (see *Table 2*), and their coordinators, research institutes, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, Research Council of Lithuania, Education Exchanges Support Foundation, Agency for Science, Innovation and Technology and other institutions.

Table 2. Lithuanian universities responsible for international relations on the institutional level

University in Lithuania	*Department responsible for international relations*	*Responsible people and their positions*
Vilnius University www.vu.lt	**Office of International Programmes and Relations** Tel. (8 5) 268 7250 E-mail: trs@cr.vu.lt	**Raimonda Markevičienė** Head of Office of International Programmes and Relations raimonda.markeviciene@cr.vu.lt
Kaunas University of Technologies www.ktu.lt	**Office of International relations** Tel. (8 37) 300 035 E-mail: tarpt.sk@ktu.lt	**Doc. Daiva Dumčiuvienė** Head of Office of International relations daiva.dumciuviene@ktu.lt
Vytautas Magnus University http://www.vdu.lt	**International Office** Tel. (8 37) 327 986 E-mail: office@trt.vdu.lt	**Zinaida Baltrėnienė** Director of International Office, institutional coordinator of LLP/Erasmus programme Tel. (8 37) 327 986
Vilnius Gediminas Technical University www.vgtu.lt	**International Relations Office** Tel.: (8 5) 274 4958 E-mail: urd@vgtu.lt	**Dr. Asta Radzevičienė** Director of International Relations Office asta.radzeviciene@vgtu.lt
Mykolas Romeris University www.mru.lt	**International Relations Office** Tel.: (8 5) 271 4621, E-mail: inter@mruni.eu	**Gedrutė Račienė** Head of International Relations Office giedre@mruni.eu
Klaipėda University www.ku.lt	**International Relations Office** Tel.: (8 46) 398 950	**Nora Venslovaitė** Director of International Relations Office nora.venslovaite@ku.lt
Šiauliai University www.su.lt	**International Programmes and Relations Office** Tel.: (8 41) 393 042	**Regina Karvelienė** Director of International Programmes and Relations Office intern.projects@cr.su.lt

Source: compiled by the authors from Vilniaus University www.vu.lt; Kauno University of Technology www.ktu.lt; Vytautas Magnus University http://www.vdu.lt; Vilnius Gediminas Technical University www.vgtu.lt; Mykolas Riomeris University www.mru.lt; Klaipėda University www.ku.lt; Šiauliai University www.su.lt.

3.1. Secondary Research: Introduction

For the research purposes of location-based and hospitality marketing, and the mobility of doctoral students, the study *Placements for Doctoral Candidates in Foreign Research Centres 2010*, which encompassed 560 respondents (doctoral students and their supervisors) of all scientific directions, was employed. This study was prepared following a bottom-up approach: Lithuanian doctoral students and their supervisors were surveyed,

including students who were on a placement during their doctoral studies and the ones who were not, as well as their supervisors (who accepted foreign students and who did not).

The overview of this research was prepared on the basis of ***one main subject*** – the aims and benefits of foreign placements for doctoral students.

3.2. Research: Structure and Methodology

Two separate questionnaires for doctoral students and their supervisors on the doctoral placements in foreign research centres were used for the research, which is overviewed here. At the moment, there are about 2700 doctoral students and 1200 researchers, who supervise students, in the Lithuanian higher education institutions (excluding post-graduate students of arts). Doctoral students in research institutes are not analysed separately in this research as they are ascribed to the higher education institution having joint doctoral studies with the institute in question. Questionnaires were filled by 434 (16.1%) doctoral students and 126 (10.5%) supervisors (76 of them supervised 380 doctoral students who have already defended their dissertation, whereas 50 of them currently supervise for the first time). *Tables 3* and *4* present the distribution of doctoral students and supervisors' answers according to higher education institutions and scientific fields.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents According to Lithuanian Universities

University in Lithuania	***Respondents***		***University in Lithuania***	***Respondents***	
	Doctoral students (%)	***Supervisors (%)***		***Doctoral students (%)***	***Supervisors (%)***
KMU	7.9	12.1	MRU	7.4	1.6
KU	1.4	1.6	VGTU	8.3	4.0
KTU	21.1	28.2	VDU	5.8	4.9
LŽŪU	3.5	4.9	VU	44.7	42.7

Notes: KMU – Kaunas Medical University (*currently* Lithuanian University of Health Sciences); KU – Klaipeda University; KTU – Kaunas University of Technology; LŽŪU – Lithuanian Academy of Agriculture (*currently* Aleksnadras Stulginskis University); MRU – Mykolas Romeris University; VGTU – Vilnius Gediminas Technical University; VDU – Vytautas Magnus University; VU – Vilnius University.
Source: secondary research data from *Placements for Doctoral Candidates in Foreign Research Centres*, 2010.

Table 4. Distribution of Lithuanian Respondents According to Scientific Fields

Respondents	***Humanities (%)***	***Social sciences (%)***	***Physical sciences (%)***	***Biomedical sciences (%)***	***Technological sciences (%)***
Doctoral students	16.9	31.3	10.9	24.5	16.4
Supervisors	16.8	18.4	12.8	28.0	24.0

Source: secondary research data from *Placements for Doctoral Candidates in Foreign Research Centres*, 2010.

Questionnaire consisted of 27 questions, including 3 introductory (institution of the doctoral student, field and direction of studies, higher education institution that the doctoral student graduated and field of studies for Master degree). 16 questions were addressed to the supervisors, including four introductory questions (workplace, field and direction of research,

number of supervised PhD students who have been granted a Doctoral degree and number of currently supervised doctoral students).

A large amount of doctoral students are employed: 82.3% of respondents have a permanent job and more than a half of them work full-time. *Table 5* demonstrates the distribution of employed and unemployed doctoral students according to the scientific fields. It is unlikely that such great part of the employed makes no negative impact on the quality of doctoral studies. Questionnaires were prepared in such a way so that the questions gradually lead the respondents to the essence of doctoral placements in foreign research centres.

PhD students were asked for their opinion regardless if they were on a placement abroad or not. At the beginning of the questionnaire, students were asked to express their opinion about their present doctoral studies. The same question was addressed to the supervisors. Further, the evaluations given by doctoral students and supervisors about the doctoral studies they take or supervise will be presented.

Table 5. Distribution of Employed and Unemployed Doctoral Students According to Their Scientific Fields

Scientific Fields	***Unemployed, %***	***Part-time employment, %***	***Full-time employment, %***	***Students not wishing to currently study abroad, %***	***Students that were on a placement abroad, %***
Humanities	16.4	50.7	32.9	19.2	16.4
Social sciences	8.2	31.1	60.7	24.4	13.3
Physical sciences	21.3	57.4	21.3	10.6	19.1
Biomedical sciences	5.6	30.8	62.6	18.7	9.3
Technological sciences	18.3	39.4	42.3	26.8	12.7

Source: secondary research data from *Placements for Doctoral Candidates in Foreign Research Centres,* 2010.

3.3. Research: Aims and Benefits of Foreign Placements for Doctoral Students

According to the data of the research, both doctoral students and their supervisors give high evaluation for the possibility to acquire new scientific and cultural experience abroad. Although only 13% of doctoral students had an opportunity to be on a foreign placement and 20% of students would not like to go at the present time due to different reasons, answers to the further questions show that only 6% of students do not intend to go on a placement at all. Students who currently do not intend to go on a placement give family status and threat to loose the present job as the main reasons. The data in *Table 5* demonstrates a rather linear correlation between the doctoral students who are unemployed and were on a placement.

A very small part of doctoral students' supervisors (3%) think that foreign research placements are not necessary for the students. Moreover, doctoral students expressed such expectations before a research placement abroad:

- to acquire professional experience unavailable in Lithuania (72%);
- to fundamentally improve the quality of studies, especially the preparation of the dissertation (61%);

- to collect data and carry out research that were not possible to collect or carry out in their own research institution (60%).

The point of view of the supervisors is a little different: they hold that the placement is most beneficial because of the following reasons:

- Doctoral students become flexible and more tolerant by communicating with foreign people (64% of supervisors, but only 32% of students);
- Doctoral students acquire skills for integration into new work situations (64% of supervisors and 46% of students).

Only one third of supervisors are confident that while working abroad doctoral students contribute to the research of their supervisors.

To summarise, it may be stated that expectations of doctoral students before the placement are oriented towards more specific issues related to their preparation as specialists. In contrast, students' supervisors see the benefits of the placement in a wider cultural context: in education of public spirit, communication and integration into new situations. However, the opinion of doctoral students who have been on a placement is different, i.e. more similar to the evaluation given by the supervisors. In the same way as before the placement, these students give high evaluation to the opportunities for their preparation as specialists, but an even higher for the general cultural experience acquired during the placement.

Concluding remarks

Research placement abroad during doctoral studies is highly valuated by the supervisors and less highly by the doctoral students themselves. This is related to the fact that many doctoral students work and some of them do not want to loose their job due to the placement.

The value of research placement must be analysed in the context of the general purpose of doctoral studies. If doctoral degree is needed because of personal or cultural growth and as the first step in academic career, then the experience acquired during the placement is especially important.

A different case is when doctoral student is not integrated enough into the research carried out by his department and mostly functions as a technical worker rather than a future researcher capable to individually formulate up-to-date scientific issues and solve them. In such case, research placement abroad may have a negative influence: some time is lost because the placement does not provide additional career opportunities; moreover, there is a threat that the students may loose their jobs and more than a half of those who have a job (even 82.3%) work full-time.

Thus, these are the students who most often do not find research placement abroad valuable. The scope of students' work out of education time is not appropriately legally restricted in any of the study stages at the Lithuanian academic universities. The fact that such a great number of students work, especially full-time, must have negative influence on the quality of doctoral studies. Moreover, students who work do not have enough time to properly prepare for the placement abroad.

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