The pathway to PhD entry via a coursework masters

Margaret Kiley
CEDAM
The Australian National University

Introduction

• Growing literature on research education and change e.g. Pearson, Evans, & Macauley (2008)
  – mean age of commencing doctoral candidates in Australia is 34
    • 16-74 years in the Natural and Physical Sciences,
    • 17-78 years in Management and Commerce and
    • 21-70 years in Society and Culture.
Introduction (cont)

• At any one time 20% of doctoral candidates changing enrolment status from full-time to part-time or vice-versa
• Almost 40% of Australian doctoral candidates commence their candidature in part-time mode
• Increasing number of students entering with a coursework Masters degree...so this study set out to ask....


Questions for discussion

• What is the variation in coursework masters programs?
• What might this variation mean for possible:
  – doctoral entry, and
  – successful completion of a doctorate?
Variation of programs in terms of...

- Research project requirements?
- Provision of research education courses and modules e.g. research methods?
- Extent of supervisor training and support, and the approach to supervision?
- Extent of research training support for students, e.g. access to research skills workshops?

For discussion and debate

- Only coursework masters programs that meet the following criteria should be accepted for entry into a doctoral program:
  - Two years, and/or
  - Where there is a research thesis, and/or
  - Where the thesis receives a grading of Credit or higher, and/or
  - The program has included formal research training, e.g. research methods.
Disclaimer

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