



**universität  
wien**

Research Services and  
Career Development



# Professionalizing Doctoral Education

**HERE seminar „ Status of doctoral candidates EEC/  
WBC vs EU or wider“**

**Rectorate building University of Montenegro  
November 19, 2018**

## Outline

We talked already about our understanding of high quality doctoral education?

We discussed necessary ingredients.

I would like to share ideas about:

- What can we do better and more professional in our local environment?
- What can be managed and/or professionalized?
- Where are opportunities for interventions?



## Summary

- Doctoral education is highly complex and challenging task.
- Its quality benefits significantly when support structures are in place and professionally managed by skilled staff.
- Quality enhancement requires a strategy for continuous professional development of all people involved in the doctoral process(es), from policy makers to supervisors and professional administrators.
- Professionalization contributes to transparency and results in sharing tasks and responsibilities to the benefits of all.



## Providing high quality training of doctoral candidates is at the heart of the mission of every university.

### Objectives:

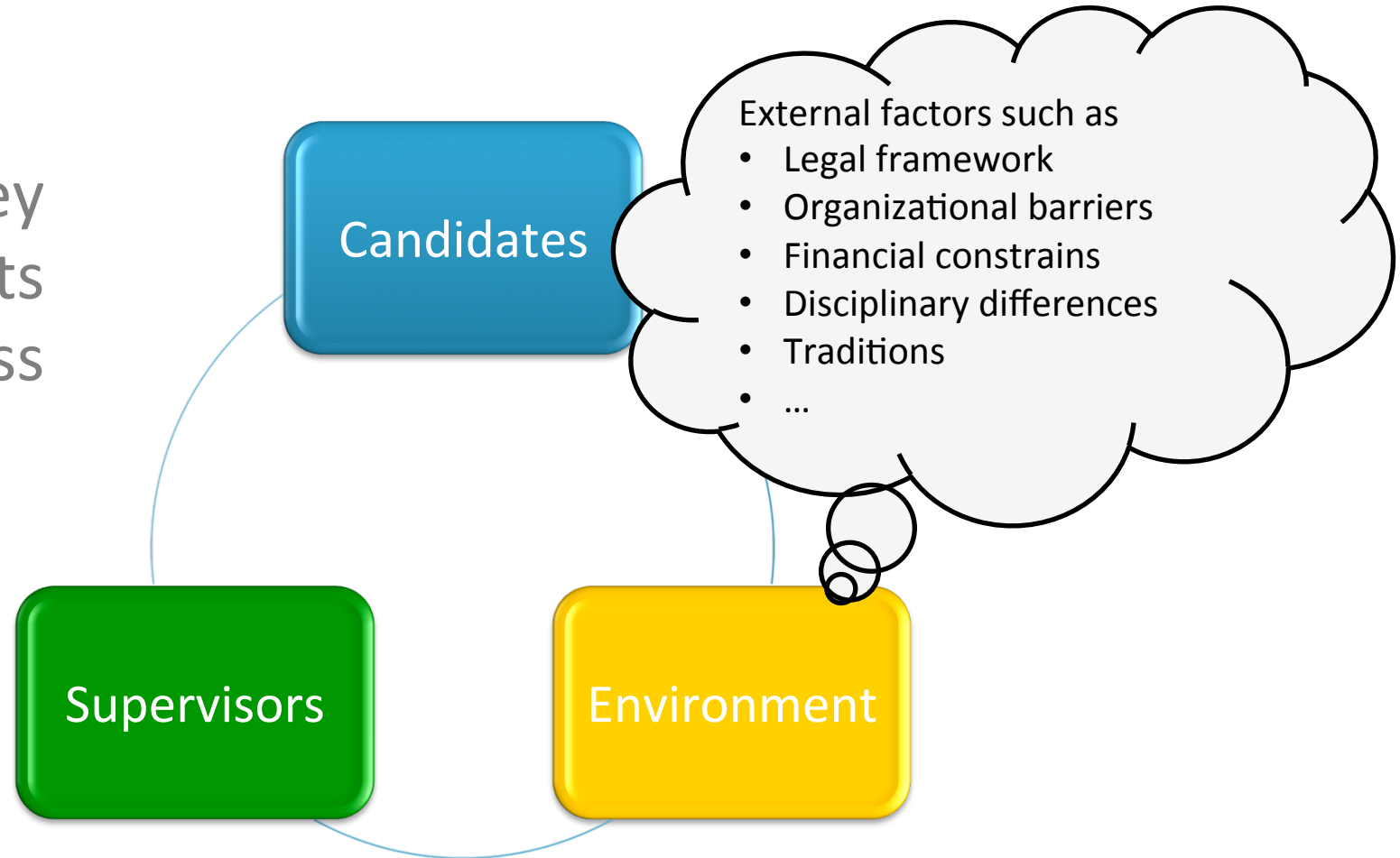
- train the next generation of researchers to the highest skill levels in order to become creative, critical and independent intellectuals and thinkers who will push back the frontiers of research;
- provide training also for roles beyond research and higher education, i.e.

**How can management and professionalization measures help to achieve these objectives?**

- the university;
- assure efficiency with respect to high completion rates in a reasonable time.



# Three key components influencing success





## Candidates

are equipped with sufficient theoretical background and methods to perform independent research, are curious and highly motivated with high levels of frustration tolerance, are persistent, are focussed and open minded, ...

## Supervisors

are excellent researcher, but also fully aware of their multiple roles related to supervision, are skilled to motivate candidates, overview their candidates' projects, give encouraging feedback, are available when needed, connect the candidates with the international community, prepare them for future careers....

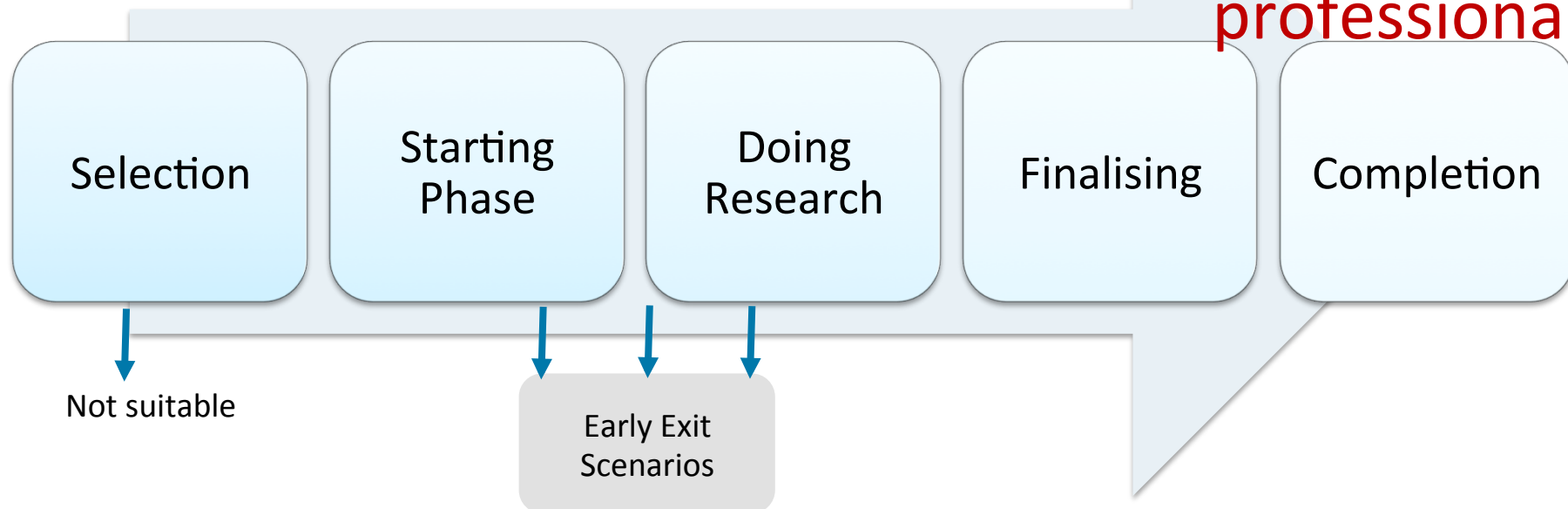
## Environment

encourages doctoral candidates and their supervisors to tackle challenging problems, provides the necessary infrastructure, offer trainings when needed, clarifies the standards that are expected, offers clear and transparent procedures, offers easy accessible information for doctoral candidates, ...



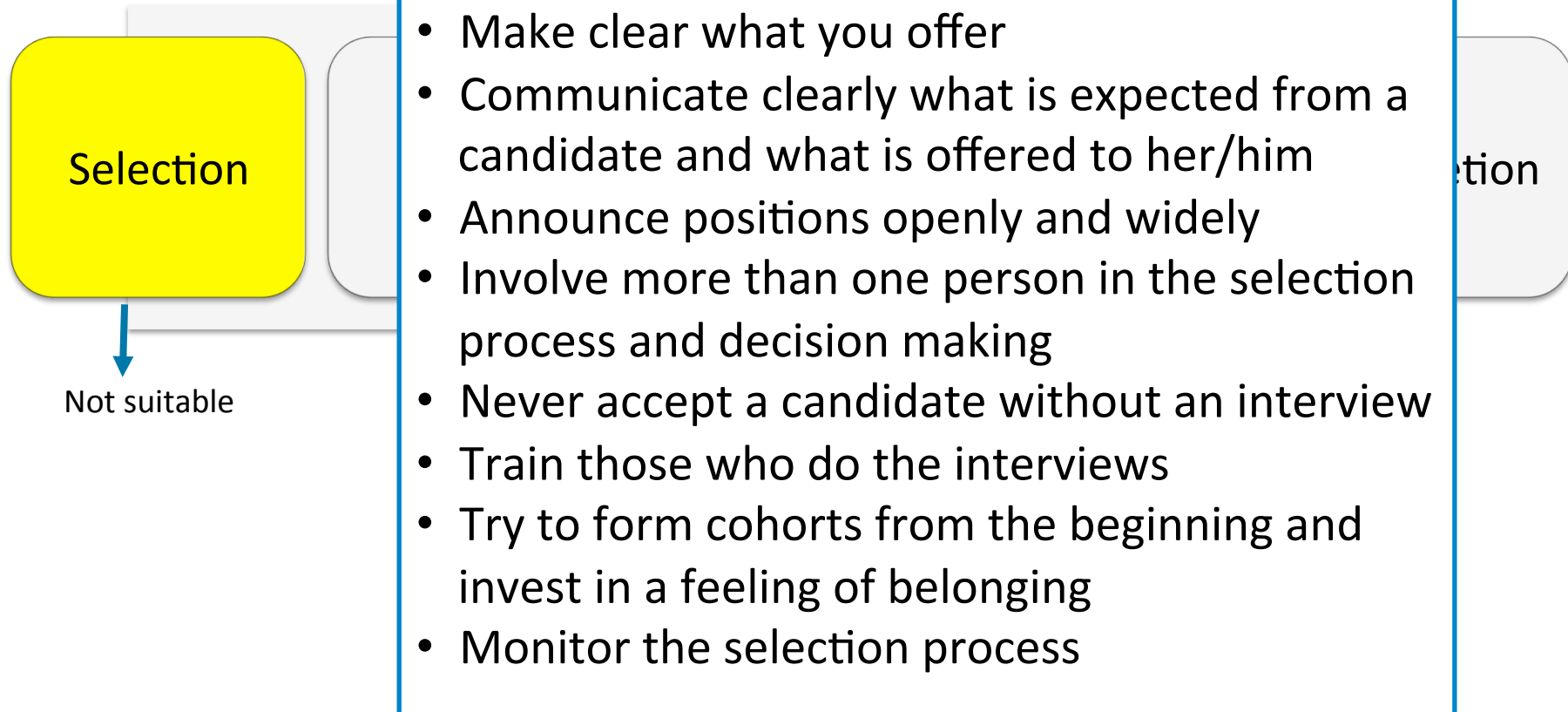
## The doctoral process: who does/supports what?

What can be better managed? What can be professionalized?





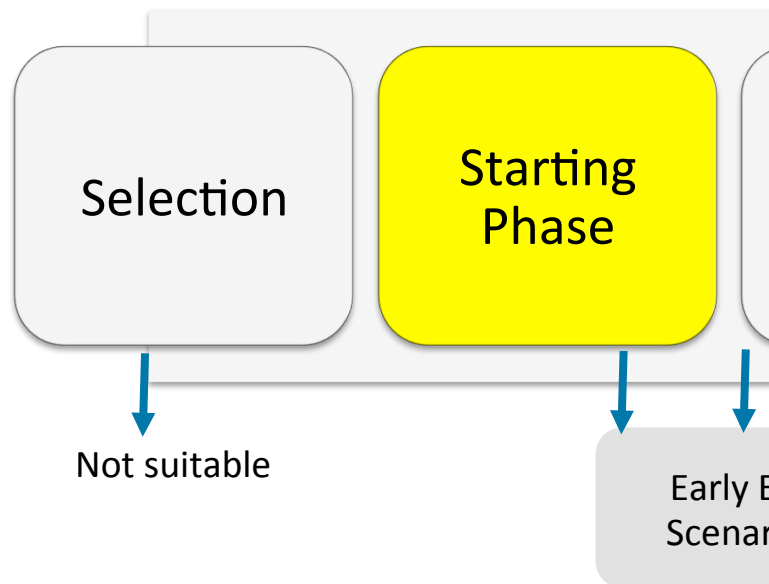
## The doctoral process: who does/supports what?







## The doctoral process: who does/supports what?



Get momentum and keep it:

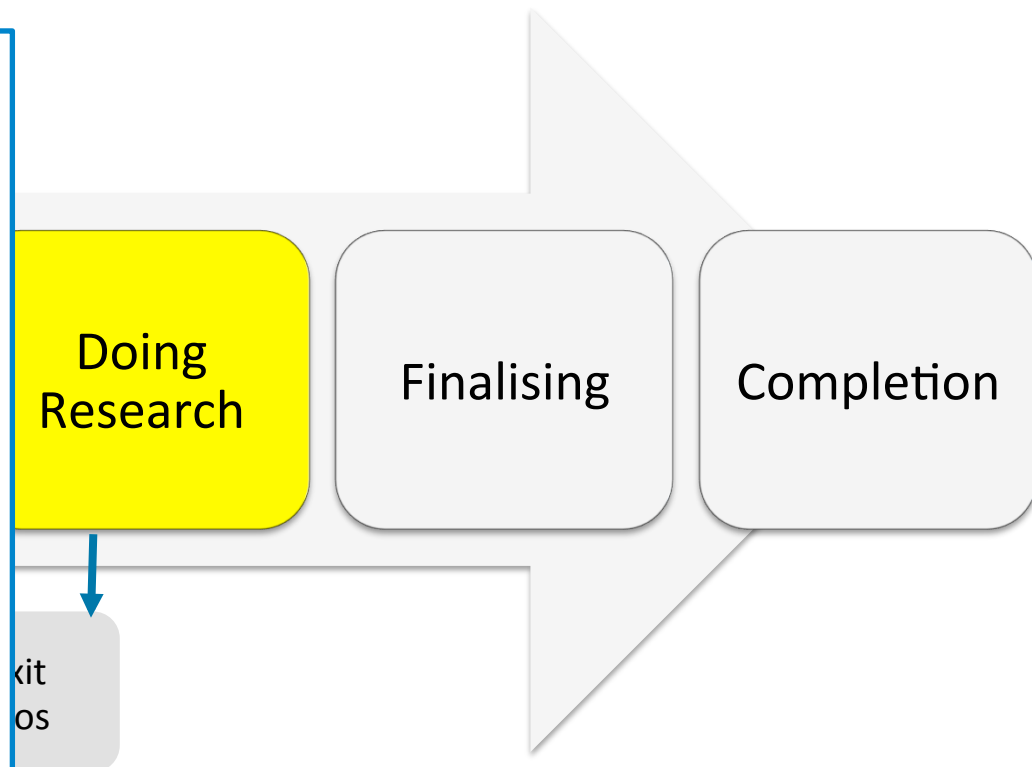
- Identify learning needs, agree on goals and how to reach them
- Provide training when needed
- Set up short and long term plans and revisit both periodically
- Encourage the candidate to take ownership of her/his development
- Provide regular and structured feedback
- Have clear procedures in place in order to allow and be able to react to complains
- Initiate clear reporting lines



## The doctoral process: who does/supports what?

Keep candidates on track:

- Make sure that candidates have access to relevant infrastructure
- Encounter training needs
- Have clear communication about requirements to complete the PhD
- Revisit and refine short and long term working plans periodically
- Continue regular and structured feedback
- Monitor the process on individual and programme level





## The doctoral process: who does/supports what?

### Keep momentum:

- Provide special support in the writing up phase
- Communicate thesis submission procedures such that they are easy to follow
- Monitor and communicate completion rates and time to degree on programme level
- Reward timely completion
- Keep track of your graduate' placements

Se

Not

Finalising

Completion



# Effective Supervision

Supporting the candidate's research project and his/her professional development, but also managing expectations, and relationship



## Management and Professionalization

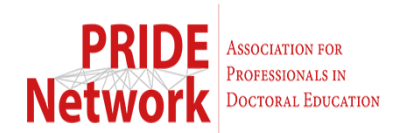
- Structural and administrative aspects of doctoral education: probably best managed at the university level.
- Addition training offers: transferable skills training can be best provided on university level
- Internal and external communication: is an ongoing task starting before the recruitment and continues after graduation
- Monitoring, feedback and reporting: on programme level with a degree of independence, but overseen at institutional level.
- Supervision: its quality is an institutional responsibility. Various management tasks are related to supervision and can be professionalized.





universität  
wien

Research Services and  
Career Development



Lucas Zinner  
**Head of Research Services and  
Career Development, University of  
Vienna**

W: <http://forschung.univie.ac.at>

**Association for Professionals in  
Doctoral Education**

W: <http://www.pride-network.eu>

Berggasse 7  
1090 Vienna, Austria