Issues in Research Training: An ARC Perspective

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ARC’s Mission in Research Training

"promote the conduct of research and research training of the highest quality for the benefit of the Australian community"

Two objectives:

- "to ensure that the research and research training it supports are of high international standard"

- "to ensure that an adequate number and range of research training and research career opportunities are available."

ARC Referred Programs

- APAs
  - 1550 pa
  - $79.1 million
- OPERS (now International PKS)
  - 300 pa
  - $15.7 million
- APA(I)ds
  - part of SPIRT
  - 233 awarded in 1998

Other Support

- Research Training Component (RTC)
  - $450 million pa (West Clee)
- HECS Exemption Scholarships
  - approx 21500 pa
- universities’ own resources
- Large ARC Grants,
- SRCs and CRCs
- NIMRC and the R&D Corporations and
- industry and business.

Issues

- number of p/g research students
- field of research distribution
- quality of supervision and the research training environment
- mobility
- internationalisation
- allocation/selection of APAs and OPERS
- balance between APAs and APDs
PhD Enrolments 1979-97

Distribution of APAs by FOR 1996-98

Mobility of APAs (1998)

Geographical Distribution of OPRS (1998)

Distribution of OPRS by FOR (1998)

Allocation/selection of research students: Possible factors
- Academic merit and potential of student
- Quality and significance of research topic
- Quality of research training environment
  - Quality and capability of supervisor
  - Availability of infrastructure
- Programs to enhance generic skills
- Employment opportunities and needs
Strengthen ARC’s Research Training Role

- Revise objectives
  - develop highly trained personnel in sufficient numbers and with the skills necessary to fill the range of research roles within the National Innovation System by supporting research training of the highest quality
  - ensure that Australia’s research training is internationally competitive and fulfilling Australia’s international research collaborators.

Maximise Quality of Research Training Environment

- Develop a quality assurance framework
  - incorporate into APRA allocation
- Improve available information
  - sponsor a national website
- Allocate a number of APAs in conjunction with large grants, of SPRIT

Align Research Training and Employment

- Carry out study of PhD career destinations
- Establish a university/employer forum to discuss the content of PhD programs
- Balance of funding for research training
  - APAs vs APDs
  - APAs vs OPRE
  - APAs vs APA(Us)

Internationalisation of Research Training

- Involve p/g students in ARC international exchange programs
- Develop a specific p/g exchange program within UMAP
- Role of OPRS scheme
  - change allocation formula
  - balance between major research and emerging developing research communities

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