

Dear participants – both online and onsite,  
honoured invited speakers and panellists,

In my capacity as Vice-Rector for Research, I very warmly welcome you to the 7th national doctoral education day.

It is the first time that the University of Lapland organises this event. So, today is particularly significant for our university here at the Arctic Circle. We are honoured to organise this event.

The University of Lapland is the northernmost university in the European Union and together we are a community of 4,500 students and around 680 staff members. We have around 650 doctoral researchers. Our doctoral degrees are at 30 per year. Some are doing their PhD full-time while some have found other solutions. There is a vital research community here.

Although ours is a small university, located far away from the world's big cities, it has a clear benefit: the Arctic is a special viewpoint, an aspect, that we live with every day. We have also harnessed this aspect in much of the research that we do here. Our areas of expertise include Arctic research, art and design, tourism, law, education, and the social sciences. Also, our state-of-the-art research facility, the Arctic Centre, conducts internationally recognized, cutting-edge research on the interactions between people and the environment in the Arctic. We are an active player in the field of Arctic policy dialogue. Our university deeply values quality and the impact it makes.

The University of Lapland is a leader in the area of arctic research and competence both nationally and internationally, with a particular focus on global Arctic responsibility, sustainable tourism, future services and reachability.

Our university is well networked and has partners all over the world. The Arctic Five is an alliance we have with close partners from Luleå, Umeå, Oulu, and Tromsø. The UArctic is a wider network of over 200 universities, colleges, research institutes, and other organizations concerned with education and research in and about the North. We are home to the permanent, international secretariat of the UArctic network.

The mission of the University is to produce new knowledge and competence from the arctic perspective so that life in the Arctic can continue to thrive in the future: we strive to ensure prosperity and well-being in this area as both individuals and communities are encouraged to take responsibility. Our global networks focused on arctic issues are harnessed to benefit our strategic aims.

I am looking forward to listening to Dr Hasgall's keynote to learn about how we as universities and doctoral schools could best equip future top researchers and highly-skilled knowledge workers for their careers. What we can do as institutions, matters. No doubt also what we can do as supervisors, matters. And of course, how we talk about career planning in the research community, matters.



Vice-Rector for Research  
Osmo Rätti

What will doctoral education look like in ten years? Future prospects of doctoral education will be discussed in the morning panel, moderated by Research Professor Kamrul Hossain from the Arctic Centre, part of our university. Good communication pathways will be discussed in the afternoon panel, moderated by Service Manager Minna Söderqvist from Aalto University.

Doctoral education is the foundation of future research and innovation ecosystems. Therefore, this day where we come together to co-think about how we can support good development of doctoral education at Finnish universities, is highly necessary.

The Doctoral School of the University of Lapland supports our four faculties in organising doctoral education. The Doctoral School does this by offering courses open to all doctoral researchers of the university. It also implements externally funded projects, and produces guidelines and organises workshops for all faculties, for example. Our new, thematic multidisciplinary doctoral programme The Arctic in a Changing World is also up and running – with support from the Doctoral School. The doctoral programme will soon celebrate its second anniversary. It is based on our University's current research profile, but it was made to last time. The Arctic in a Changing World doctoral programme looks ahead – to the future.

The University of Lapland appreciates immensely the national doctoral education network. It is an advantage to be a member. In addition to establishing this National Doctoral Education Day seven years ago, the network has continuously worked together to improve doctoral education in Finland. The way I have become to understand what academic citizenship is, the national network is a fine example of that: collaboration, openness and mutual respect characterise their work. Also, internationalization is an important concept for doctoral education, and I have heard their interest is in part focused on internationalization as well.

The professionals who are in the network seem to be quite agile in crossing traditional boundaries. The network and the local organisers have set up this event that attracted around 110 registrations – a fine turnout! We have here today professors, doctoral researchers, directors, managers, administrators and developers, and other stakeholders who are all – for different reasons – interested in future development of doctoral education. These different stakeholder groups should indeed meet, exchange views, and learn from each other, regularly. Therefore, the annual Doctoral Education Day has a well-justified place in the academic annual calendar for us all.

There are many ways to organise and implement doctoral education, but the core idea that we all share is in the foundation of a doctorate: it is an original contribution to research. This is what all Finnish universities seem to regard as the core idea, and I fully agree with this view.

In addition, there are various skills and mindsets that a doctorate develops. It may seem obvious that soft skills – both implicit and explicit skills – are developed along the PhD path. How these soft skills are written out at curriculum-level, varies. Perhaps this could be one development suggestion for curriculum work for the future? Again, a new task for us!

Because the environment changes all the time, also the expectations that doctoral schools and doctoral education services at Finnish universities face have become increasingly varied. There is indeed need for discussing their role in light of emerging expectations. This day is an opportunity to help shape the future of doctoral schools and services in the spirit of openness, internationalization, and accountability that thematise the day.

*Welcome address on the National Doctoral Education Day by Vice-Rector for Research,  
6 October 2022, University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland*

On behalf of the Rectorate of the University of Lapland, I would like to conclude my speech with the following message: I hope that this day will be inspiring. I also hope that it will pave way for more collaboration across traditional boundaries, to keep us away from silos. I wish everyone a successful, safe and fruitful day.

Thank you!