

# *Beyond Labs and Libraries: Career Pathways for Doctoral Students*

## *Programme Change and Adaptation*

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# Context: Skills and Innovation Tropes

Conference Board of Canada working on proposal for national post-secondary strategy define skill as:

*A skilled person is a person who, through education, training and experience, makes a useful contribution to the economy and society.*

## Innovation

Numerous business and government policy documents rallying behind and privileging *innovation* for job creation and economic stability.

## Context: Graduate growth in Canada

- The percentage of Canadians with a university degree has doubled from 10.9% in 1990 to 22.2% in 2012
- Ontario educates the largest number of graduate students in Canada – more than one-third of Canadian graduate students are enrolled at Ontario universities
- Doctoral enrolments have doubled from 10,192 in 1999 to 19,000 in 2009
- Most of the graduate growth has been with a younger cohort from 22 to 24

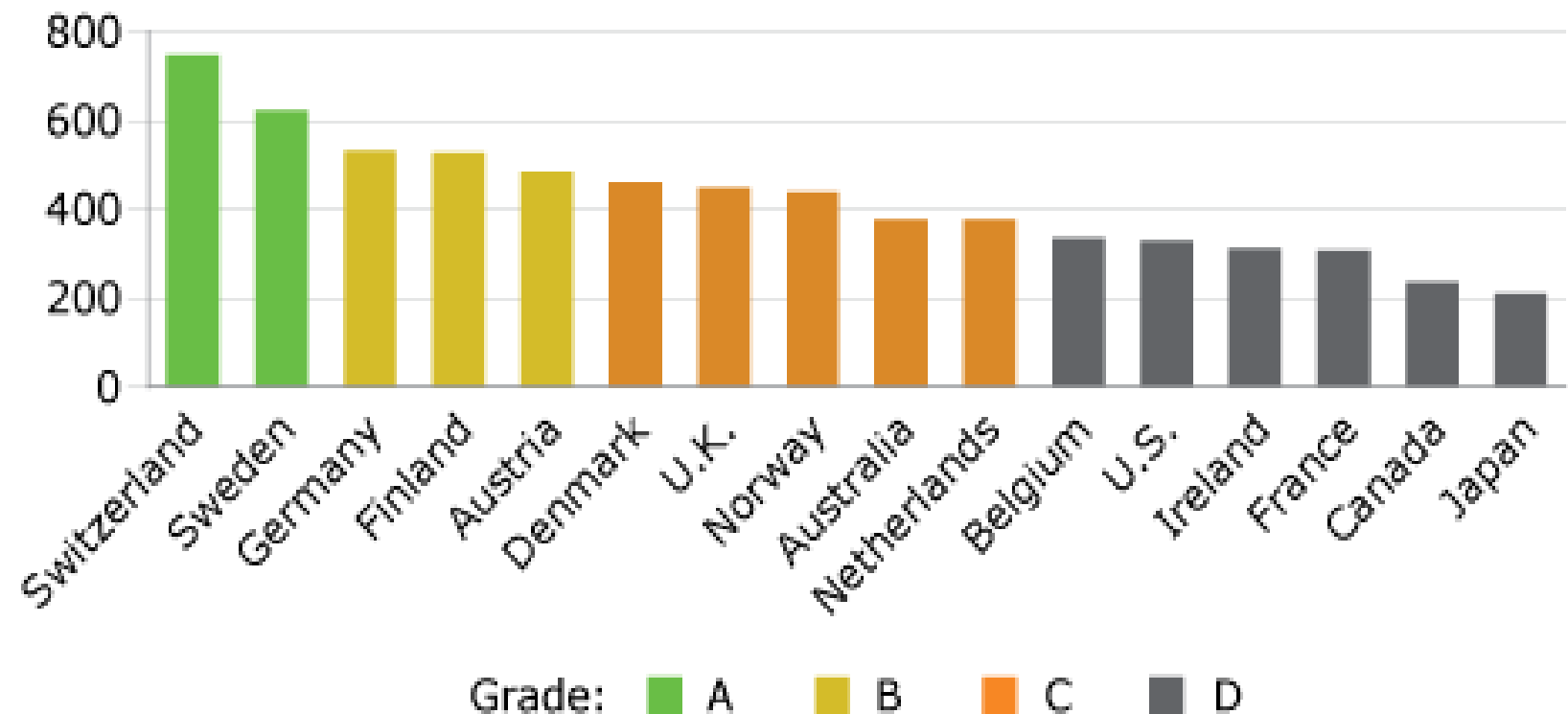
# Why it matters...

- Individuals holding graduate degrees are happier with their lives and have higher incomes
- Doctoral education is an important site of innovation, complex problem solving and risk taking
- Countries with higher rates of doctorates have higher wages and are located in a wider array of research and development related work

# Context: But how do we compare?

## PhD Graduates, 2010

(number of graduates in 2010 per 100,000 population age 25 to 29)



# What do we know about PhD students?

- Older candidates or those in STEM disciplines pursue doctorate for professional reasons
- Younger candidates see doctorate as next step of progression in university world
- 65% of Ontario PhDs pursue degree with intention of becoming a university professors
- 86% of Humanities scholars pursue degree with intention of becoming a university professor

# What graduate students are telling us: CGPSS survey results, 2014

- Good news – 65% ranked their overall academic experience as very good to excellent
- 95% of students are satisfied with the intellectual quality of the faculty
- Most recent CGPSS results, research students were most dissatisfied with quality of support and training
- Students are **dissatisfied** with career services and workshops related to life after graduation

# What are graduate students creating?: Graduate professional skills

- *Experts Convene to Explore Challenges of Understanding PhD Career Pathways*, Council of Graduate Studies, 2014
- Versatile PhD, <http://versatilephd.com>
- Graduateland, <http://graduateland.com>
- Gradlink, <http://www.gradlinkuk.com>
- Hook and Eye, <http://www.hookandeye.ca>



# What do graduate students *want*?

**Communication and Planning**

**Connection with the Outside World**

**Validation of Graduate Professional Skills**

**Provision of Career Services**

# What do faculty *need*? Getting on the same page

**Communication and Planning**

**Connection with the Outside World**

**Validation of Graduate Professional Skills**

**Provision of Career Services**

## How can we do this at programme level?

- universities should invest in graduate-focused career services for domestic and international students
- a network of job opportunities requiring graduate degrees should be developed
- students should receive discipline-appropriate training concerning interviewing and resume/CV preparation
- universities, programs, and faculty must value professional skills development with a variety of career outcomes should included in the quality assurance processes

# How can we change it up?

- direct entry into doctorates
- no course work doctorates
- more collaborative degrees across provinces and nations (offer degree mobility)
- more online doctorates
- more outreach from graduate programmes to countries trying to build graduate capacity
- doctorates for research, doctorates for teaching
- celebrate – spread the word on value of doctoral degree