

A brief review of PhDs in Creative and Performing Arts in Australia

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on an aspect of a pilot project conducted in 2003 by the authors comprising a bibliographic analysis of all (approximately 51,000) Australian PhDs. The pilot work is both a data and methodological basis for a larger project that investigates the nature and development of PhDs in Australia as they evolved in the context of national economic, social and educational changes. This paper reviews the evidence from the bibliographic data held in library catalogues of PhDs in each Australian university. After considering the definitional properties and their operationalisation, the paper provides an overview of the first instances, locations and frequencies of PhDs in the creative and performing arts in Australia, fields which are relatively new to doctoral study and which pose challenges in terms of doctoral pedagogy and scholarship. This is contextualised in terms of the development of the contemporary university sector during the 1990s, including the growth in the creative and performing arts therein.

INTRODUCTION

This AARE mini-conference is further evidence of the recent scholarly work in doctoral education in Australia. Australian scholars have developed a particular interest in the field, especially since the mid-1990s. From this time there have emerged: new professional doctorate programs in most Australian universities; government-funded reports on doctoral education (McWilliam, and others, 2002; Pearson & Ford, 1997; Trigwell and others, 1997); government policy reviews that included aspects of doctoral education (Kemp, 1999; West, 1998); conferences on doctoral education (for example, the *Quality in Postgraduate Research* conferences, the *Professional Doctorate* conferences, and more specific conferences such as this mini-conference or the *Research on Doctoral Education* conference); special issues of journals (for example, the *Australian Universities' Review* (38, 2 & 43, 2) in 1995 and 2000 respectively, *Higher Education Research and Development* (21, 2) in 2002 and *Australian Educational Researcher* (29, 3) in 2002); books (for example, Green, Maxwell & Shanahan (Eds.), 2002; Bartlett & Mercer (Eds.), 2001; and Holbrook & Johnston (Eds.), 1999), as well as

many articles, papers and chapters in various locations. Within this important work there has been considerable focus on the theory and practice of doctoral education, especially concerning contemporary circumstances and conditions, or particular elements of policy and practice (for example, Brennan, 1998; Evans, 1995, 2000, 2001, 2002; Evans & Pearson, 1999; Holbrook, Bourke, Farley & Carmichael, 2001; Johnson, Lee & Green, 2000; Kiley & Mullins, 2002; Lee, Green & Brennan, 2000; McWilliam & Taylor, 2001; Pearson, 1999; Seddon, 2001). However, work that takes a broader social and historical view of the PhD is much less evident and more limited in scope (see, Coaldrake & Stedman, 1998, pp. 115, 214).

This paper draws on a pilot project (funded by a Deakin University Strategic Research Grant) that is being conducted by the authors to explore the methodological and substantive parameters of a proposed larger project on the ‘evolution of the PhD in Australia’. This larger project will investigate the PhD in Australia since its inception in 1948 and do so in terms of an analysis of the economic, social and historical conditions that influenced research and higher education during this period. The pilot project has involved a substantial bibliographic collection, collation, sorting and analysis of all PhD records—approximately 51,000—from Australian university libraries for PhDs awarded at their institutions. This work has provided a database from which a particular analysis of PhDs in the creative and performing arts was undertaken for this paper. We shall provide a brief discussion of the PhD in Australia as a background, then focus on the conceptual issues we faced concerned with defining the creative and performing arts for our study, and then explain the research design and its implications. The paper then reports on the findings from the pilot study concerning the creative and performing arts.

THE PHD IN AUSTRALIA

The PhD was introduced in 1948 in Australia, the first award being made at the University of Melbourne to Joyce Stone for her thesis entitled, ‘Virus haemagglutination: a review of the literature’. The dominant approach to PhD education adopted in Australia was similar to that which emerged in the United Kingdom in the early twentieth century. In the UK research training was combined with the existing collegial tradition of personal tutor relationships in undergraduate education, and a disciplinary departmental system (Simpson, 1983; Pearson & Ford, 1997; Becher, Henkel & Kogan, 1994). As in the UK, Australian practice led to individual students being closely associated with individual supervisors as well as individual institutions, and a research program that has been characterised as an ‘extension of the BAHons with some research’ (Clark, 1995, p. 79). This is in contrast to the practice in Germany, for example, where the award first originated in the nineteenth century, or the American system which adapted German practice combining graduate coursework with research in a PhD program (Gellert, 1993; Gumport, 1993; Clark, 1995).

The numbers of research students in Australia, and PhD students in particular, have grown with the expansion of research in universities post-World War Two. A further growth spurt in the 1990s followed the expansion of the university system as it incorporated the former Colleges of Advanced Education (Holbrook & Johnston, 1999; Pearson & Ford, 1997). Currently there are 31,140 students enrolled in doctorates by research, of whom 16,368 are female (53%); and 22,469 (72%) are over 30 years of age. Some of this diversity in the profile is a result of the growth in the numbers of PhD

students in professional fields of study and newly established disciplines as patterns of research itself have changed (ARC/NBEET, 1996). A fast growing field for example is Health Sciences. With this growth over time have come concerns about the nature, purpose and quality of research education (AVVC, 1987; Dawkins, 1988; Kemp, 1999). Concerns continue to be raised about completion times (DEET, 1988; Martin, Maclachlan, & Karmel, 2001), the relevance of the award (Sekhon, 1989; Mullins & Kiley, 1998) and calls for new approaches and programs (Clarke, 1996). Increasingly PhD graduates have varying employment outcomes so that the PhD is no longer seen only as an apprenticeship for being a university academic (Thompson, and others 2001).

One response to changing expectations of doctoral study has been the emergence of professional doctorates (Evans, 1997; Trigwell and others 1997; McWilliam, 2002). Currently, a total of 131 professional doctorate programs are offered by 35 of the 39 universities. Professional doctorates are rapidly emerging in the fields of education, health, psychology and business (McWilliam and others, 2002). One of the oldest professional doctorates is, in fact, the Doctorate of Creative Arts introduced at the University of Wollongong in 1984 (Bell, 1998). The other response has been a liberalisation of PhD rules to accommodate new specialities and ways in which research can be carried out and theses presented (Pearson & Ford, 1997, pp. 23-24). It is this latter response that we are concerned with in this paper.

DEFINING PHDS IN THE CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS¹

In order to undertake our study it was necessary to define the creative and performing arts as fields that can be searched in our database of PhDs. The creative and performing arts can be described fairly succinctly as those disciplines that are concerned with the theory and practice of the creation, appreciation and representation of a particular art. Typically this includes areas such as painting, music, dance, drama and sculpture. However, the boundaries of the field may be less clear and they may embrace fiction, poetry and other forms of 'creative' writing, for example, and the new media often push the boundaries further with film, video, computer-graphics and other 'multi-media' creations being included.

Another aspect of defining the creative and performing arts in terms of PhD work, is that a doctorate is typically concerned with producing a significant, original contribution to knowledge in a field or discipline. Therefore, it is expected that a PhD comprises new research or original scholarship that extends a body of knowledge in a theoretically grounded way. For our purposes it seems that we could identify PhDs in the creative and performing arts that represented their original and significant contribution in much the same way as any other PhD, especially those in the Humanities, for example. A thesis on the impact of indigenous Australian art on art collections in major galleries in Australia, can be seen to be equivalent to a thesis on the impact of indigenous Australian political movements on Australian government policy. Such theses as the former are about research and scholarship in the field of a kind that reflects methods and approaches to research and scholarship in other fields. Such theses as the latter are about the creative and performing arts, but not about the actual creation and representation of works of art as a basis of the research itself. This latter area is the one that has taxed the minds of

¹ We are grateful to Nita Temmerman for comments on an earlier draft of this section.

several people in universities in recent years. A study by Strand (1998) entitled, *Research in the Creative Arts*, identifies the move to a 'Unified National System' (UNS) of higher education in the late 1980s as the catalyst for the consideration and development of the breadth of research in the creative arts that is common today in universities. Prior to this time, art and design schools were mostly located outside of the university sector and so matters of original research and scholarship were not a major concern of the staff or their institutions.

However, the inclusion of a broader range of the creative and performing arts as disciplines within universities led, not only to research, but also to 'research training' becoming a focus of departmental work where this had not been the case before. The undergraduate students who were developing their creative arts skills (and knowledge) could be viewed as a rising generation of Bachelors degree qualified people, some of whom would wish to pursue their studies further, indeed, even to doctoral level. The challenge then arose as to the extent and rationale for creative and performing arts practice being the focus and vehicle for research and doctoral studies in the field, whether in professional doctorates or PhDs, that took into account the production of creative works as part of the research and scholarship process (For example, Melbourne University has a special rule for the PhD in Music (Pearson & Ford, 1997, p. 23).). A report produced by Frayling (1997) for the UK Graduate Careers Council entitled, *Practice-based Doctorates in the Creative and Performing Arts and Design*, canvasses the issues involved and, for the purposes of our research, captures the 'textual' essence of such doctorates. That is, it is envisaged that doctorates (PhDs or DCAs) involving the production of creative works always have a coherent written text: a thesis or exegesis that demonstrates: documentation of the process of origination in a way which is communicable to peers in a permanent and reproducible form; and a sustained and logical argument contextualised to relevant discourse (p. 11). Our understanding of practice-based PhDs in the creative and performing arts in Australia is that they conform to this written requirement in the form of a document (thesis etc.) that is bound and held in the awarding university's library.

Our project is focused on the evolution of the PhD in Australia. Therefore, our work in this paper is derived from this and is not directly concerned with the DCA or other creative arts doctorates. There are some consequential concerns, of course, in that the development of the DCA etc. can be expected to have an effect on the evolution of the PhD in the creative arts. However, there also remain some definitional problems for our work here. That is, what is a PhD in the creative and performing arts? In order to search our PhD database we needed to reach this definition and then operationalise it. We decided to work on the basis of two related definitions. Our broad definition was that a PhD in the creative and performing arts was one which principally addressed a matter of concern or substance for the creative arts. We operationalised this as PhDs for which the title, summary and/or cataloguing classification declared that the thesis was a contribution to the scholarship and/or practice of the creative and performing arts. Therefore, for example, historical or policy works in the field are included. Our justification for this broad definition is that in the development of a discipline area (especially within universities) it is necessary to build a mature knowledge and theory of the discipline in relationship to other existing disciplines. Hence, we see these PhDs being part of the formation of the constituent knowledge of the creative arts, even though they are not specifically contributing to such formation through creative works. Our study

suggests the first Australian PhDs fitting the broad definition are: ‘The function of the thematic process in dodecaphonic music: a study in analytical method’ by Bracanin and ‘The role of universities in the development of music education in Australia, 1885-1970’ by Bridges, both awarded in 1970 by the University of Western Australia and University of Sydney respectively.

We also adopted a narrow definition of PhDs in the creative arts in order to identify only those PhDs that involved a contribution to the field through the production of a creative or performance work. We operationalised this as PhDs in the creative and performing arts (as defined and operationalised in the previous paragraph) for which the title, summary and/or cataloguing classification declared that the thesis included, or had a record of, a creative or performance work. (Note that some of the recordings are part of ethnomusicology studies and are of traditional music). Consequently, the narrowly defined PhDs are a sub-set of the broadly defined PhDs. We suggest the first Australian PhD reflecting the narrow definition is Milgate’s 1988 thesis, ‘Fourteen stations of the cross’ from the University of Wollongong. In effect, the broad definition encompasses all PhDs in and about the creative and performing arts, and the narrow definition specifically includes PhDs involving a creative work or performance. We shall now turn to how we worked with the data to construct our own database on PhDs, and to create the creative and performing arts data-set and sub-set.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The data for this paper have been extracted from a very large dataset created by the research team as part of a pilot study on the evolution of the PhD in Australia. Due to the problematic nature of accessing such a large volume of data directly from the National Bibliographic Database—Kinetica—thesis records had to be retrieved piecemeal using a variety of methods. The data were collected from the library catalogues of all Australian universities and transferred into the EndNote bibliographic management program. Sourcing the bibliographic details from all thirty-nine sites enabled the researchers to get closer to the data due to the additional effort required in filtering the records, and added a qualitative dimension to an otherwise technical process.

Initially, all theses identified from Australian-based universities were downloaded using a simple search strategy, for example, searching for ‘thesis’ and ‘university name’. In theory, the term ‘thesis’ should be part of every bibliographic record for doctorates if catalogued according to the international standard, *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules*. In the majority of cases, bibliographic records of theses were obtained by searching the respective library catalogues using EndNote Connection files through a Z39.50 interface. The Connection files enable catalogue records to be downloaded directly in EndNote format, without the need for any reformatting or re-keying of data. These files are generally specific to each library catalogue and are normally downloadable from the web pages of the respective libraries or provided with the EndNote program. Alternatively, EndNote Filters were used where library catalogues were accessed using their own search interface and the required records saved as a text file. EndNote Filters are used to convert the text files into EndNote records. In some instances where EndNote Connection files or Filters were unavailable or not working, the bibliographic records were entered manually. Once entered into EndNote, all records of minor theses and masters by research theses were excluded, resulting in a total of approximately 53,000 doctorates. This number was

cut to 51,168 by restricting the database to PhDs only. For the purposes of this paper, a data-set was formed relating to the creative and performing arts; this process was problematic due to the definitional problems occurring with the overlap in disciplines and sub-disciplines. The creative and performing arts data-set and sub-set were established using a two-fold technique searching the database for both call numbers and keywords (see Appendix 1). Eighty relevant call numbers were identified and searched using the Dewey Decimal Classification and Relative Index for the arts, fine and decorative arts (Mitchell, and others, 1996). However, as not all bibliographical records contained in the database listed individual call numbers, key word searches were also conducted to

mean original recordings of the author, but it could also be an ethnomusicological study where the author is not the creator of the music.

It must be acknowledged that the sub-set of fifty-four PhDs is an underestimation of what exists. Judgments have been made from bibliographic records and not from the original sources. The absence of subject headings in some cases, ambiguous titles, cataloguing errors, or delays in cataloguing theses—one major university has catalogued only a handful of theses since 1995—has imposed some limitations on our data. However, it is believed our database of 51,000 Australian PhDs is the most comprehensive record in existence.

PHDS IN AND ABOUT THE CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS

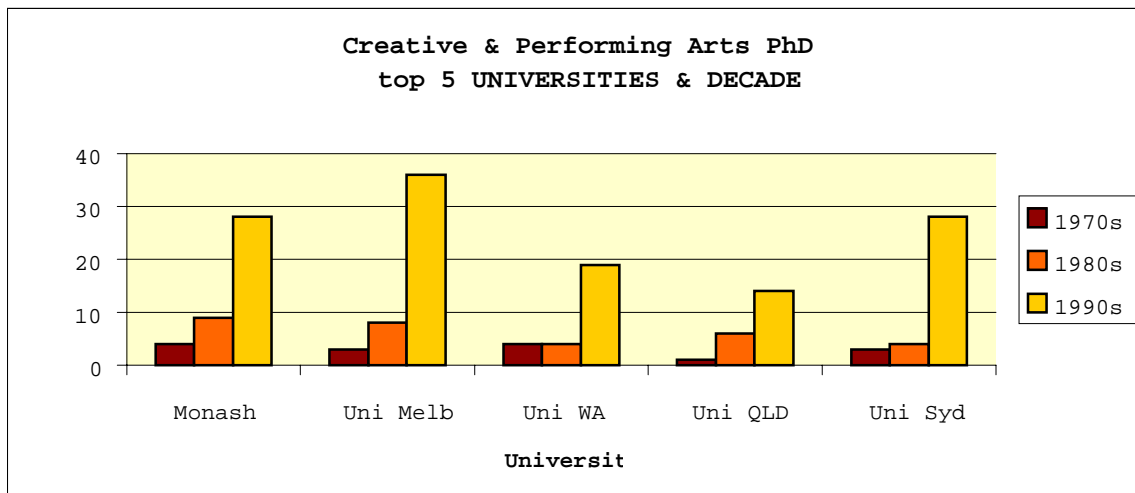
Since 1948 thirty universities have awarded one or more PhDs in the Creative and Performing Arts, of which nineteen have at least one PhD graduate whose PhD involved a creative or performing arts work. Table 1 shows, in rank order, the numbers of PhDs in and about the creative and performing arts.

Table 1: Creative and performing arts PhDs in rank order by university.

University	All C&PA PhDs
University of Melbourne	74
Monash University	50
University of Sydney	47
University of Western Australia	29
University of Queensland	26
University of New South Wales	20
La Trobe University	18
University of Adelaide	17
Deakin University	16
Murdoch University	15
Griffith University	14
University of Wollongong	14
Australian National University	11
Macquarie University	10
Flinders University	9
University of New England	9
James Cook University	8
University of Newcastle	8
University of South Australia	6
Queensland University of Technology	4
University of Tasmania	4
University of Western Sydney	4
Victoria University	4
RMIT	2
University of Technology, Sydney	2
Curtin University	1
Edith Cowan University	1
Northern Territory University	1
University of Canberra	1
TOTAL	425

The University of Melbourne has the largest number of PhDs in or about the creative and performing arts (74), whereas the University of Sydney has the highest number (15) of PhDs involving a creative or performing arts work. Table 1 identifies five universities (shaded) with the highest number of PhDs awarded in the creative and performing arts: The University of Melbourne, Monash University, University of Sydney, University of Western Australia and the University of Queensland. The growth in the number of awards at these institutions is illustrated in Figure 1. The most significant expansion occurred in the 1990s—as was the case for all PhDs nationally. The University of Melbourne, closely followed by the University of Sydney, showed marked increases in their 1990 creative and performing arts graduations. It is significant that the two oldest prestigious universities in Australia contribute so highly to the development of a field of study that many might expect to have occurred most strongly in the newer universities. As is illustrated below, Music is an important factor here. However, notwithstanding the growth in numbers in these established universities, the growth in creative and performing arts was sector-wide. Numbers increased from a base of 24 and 56 respectively in the 1970s and 1980s, 228 PhDs were awarded in the 1990s.

Figure 1: The top five universities awarding creative and performing arts PhDs.



Although the broad field of the Creative and Performing Arts is seen to be a relative newcomer to doctoral research, this is not so for all specialities within the field. The first two PhDs in the broad field of the Creative and Performing Arts were both awarded in the field of Music in 1970 at the universities of Western Australia and Sydney. Awards were also made in that decade in the fields of Visual Arts, Painting, Art, Textiles Graphic Arts and Theatre, but as shown in Table 2, the largest number of awards were in Music in those earlier years.

Table 2: First creative and performing arts PhDs awarded in the 1970s by field of study.

Field	C&PA PhDs awarded
Music	16
Visual Arts	2
Painting	2
Graphic Art	1
Theatre	1
Textiles	1
Art	1
TOTAL	24

Similar to the situation with the population of PhD students nationally, the gender balance for the Performing & Creative Arts PhD holders was equal with 201 Males (47.3%) and 201 Females (47.3%). Twenty-three (5.4%) were unidentifiable as only initials, or names that were not clearly of one sex or the other, were given.

PHDS INVOLVING CREATIVE WORKS OR PERFORMANCE

The sub-set of creative and performing arts PhDs that involved a creative work as part of the thesis and examination process was constructed as described previously. Thirteen percent of PhDs in or about creative or performing arts involved a creative or performing arts work. From an analysis of first and/or middle names in the bibliographic records we identified that 25 (46%) of these PhDs were completed by men, and 21 (39%) were by women. It was impossible to determine the sex of the other graduates (eight, 14%) from the bibliographic records. Assuming these were distributed similarly, 55% of such PhD graduates are men, and 45% women.

Table 1 above showed the rank order of universities offering awards in the creative and performing in the data-set, however, a rank ordering of the universities granting PhDs in the creative works sub-set provides a somewhat different picture. The top five become in rank order:

Table 3: Creative and performing arts PhDs involving creative works in rank order, by university.

University	C&PA Works PhDs
University of Sydney	15
Deakin University	8
Monash University	3
Griffith University	3
Victoria University	3

Although two of the original five universities remain (Sydney and Monash), three newer universities are added (Deakin, Griffith and Victoria University), with Deakin and Griffith both being established well before the new universities were created as part of the Unified National System in the 1990s. The Unified National System can be seen to be related to the growth in PhD graduations involving creative and performing arts works from the 1990s. Table 4 shows the distribution by year of PhDs involving creative or performing arts works.

Table 4: PhDs involving creative works, by year.

80s		90s		00s	
1988	1	1990	1	2000	4
		1992	3	2001	14
		1994	1	2002	5
		1995	4		
		1996	3		
		1997	5		
		1998	5		
		1999	8		

Table 4 illustrates that there was only one PhD in Australia involving creative or performing arts works by the end of the 1980s. That is, until the time the Unified National System commenced. The 1990s produced thirty PhDs involving creative or performing arts works. It appears clear that the college and university mergers and the new universities occurring during the 1990s contributed to this increase.

college-based. The next decade, 'the noughties', might well produce a shift in the balance toward these art-forms.

CONCLUDING COMMENT

The work represented in this paper contains original data and analyses from a pilot study focusing on the evolution of the PhD in Australia. Its data source is the PhD records held in the conferring universities' libraries. The reliability of the data is therefore determined by the efficacy of each library's cataloguing and catalogues, in some instances going back over 150 years. The cross-checking that has been undertaken has shown that there were some omissions and errors which were corrected, however, it is expected that there are some other errors yet to be traced. The net effect is that the data reported here are likely to be underestimates of the numbers of PhDs in the creative and performing arts, and of PhDs involving creative or performing arts works.

The field of creative and performing arts is a relatively small one in academic life. The data reported show that of approximately 51,000 PhDs awarded in Australia, approximately 0.8% are in or about the creative or performing arts. Thirteen percent of these (0.1% of all PhDs) involve creative or performing arts works. There are other doctorates in creative arts that can be expected to boost the number of doctorates in the field, especially the proportions of doctorates involving creative or performing arts works.

The analysis in this paper is based on two definitions of PhDs in the creative and performing arts. One is broad and includes any substantive contribution to the knowledge and understanding of the field, the other is narrow and requires a thesis involving creative or performing arts works. These two definitions were operationalised for this study in ways that enabled the interrogation of the bibliographic database. The AARE mini-conference at which this paper is to be presented is seen as a site in which these definitions, and our analyses, can be discussed critically to help focus later work on the topic of the evolution of the PhD in Australia

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Appendix 1

CREATIVE & PERFORMING ARTS PHDS SEARCH TERMS

The following key word and call number searches were conducted for the Australian PhD EndNote libraries (approx. 51,000 records).

Key word search

Source: *Research Fields, Courses & Disciplines Classification (RFCD) list.*

1. Fine arts
2. Decorative Arts
3. Drawing
4. Plastic
5. Sculpture
6. Painting
7. Graphic Art
8. Printmaking
9. Printing
10. Music
11. Performing Arts
12. Creative Arts
13. Visual Arts
14. Fashion design
15. Craft
16. Drama
17. Theatre
18. Photography
19. Design
20. Dance

Call number search

Source: *Mitchell, and others (1996) Dewey Decimal Classification and Relative Index, Edition 21, 2, Forest Press, Albany, New York.*

700—709	The arts, Fine and Decorative Arts
730—739	Plastic arts, Sculpture
740—749	Drawing & Decorative Arts
750—759	Painting & Paintings
760—769	Graphic Arts, Printmaking & Prints
770—779	Photography & Photographs
780—789	Music
790—799	Recreational & Performing Arts