



Center for Innovation and Research
in Graduate Education

Assessing the Quality of Doctoral Education

University of Washington
Graduate School -- College of Education
www.cirge.washington.edu

Assessing the Quality of Doctoral Education



Framing questions

1. Why are we assessing the quality of doctoral education?
2. What are we assessing?
3. What is the level of analysis?
4. Who is doing the assessment?
5. Does globalization compel re-thinking notions of quality in doctoral education? If so, how?

Why are we assessing the quality of doctoral education? From a US perspective



Extrinsic reasons

- 1. Accountability towards funders**
- 2. Effective use of resources**
- 3. Establishment of institutional reputation**
- 4. Comparison with other universities**

Intrinsic reasons

- 1. Improvement of quality**
- 2. Planning of programming to provide improvement**
- 3. Feedback to programs, faculty, students**

What are we assessing? What is the level of analysis?



1. The individual student

- a. learning experience
- b. accomplishments

2. The PhD program effectiveness (if there is one)

- a. accumulated outcomes of students
- b. overall program/department faculty/academic staff reputation
- c. dissertation advisor's support
- d. intellectual learning environment of the program/department

4. Professional development activities (location of offering?)

- a. department, b. Graduate School c. other

5. Overall university scholarly infrastructure

- a. accumulated scholarly reputation of professors
- b. library and research facilities
- c. diversity of academic staff and student

Who is undertaking the assessment?

Who is asked to assess?



Assessment agencies

- 1. Non-governmental accreditation agencies**
- 2. Governmental agencies**
- 3. Disciplinary professional associations**
- 4. National Research Council**
- 5. University faculty committee (Graduate Council)**
- 6. Research Centers (such as CIRGE), individual researchers**

Evaluators

- 1. Professors/ academic staff**
- 2. current doctoral students**
- 3. PhD recipients (past students)**
- 4. Employers**

What exactly are we assessing? When are we assessing?



1. Assessing individual student accomplishments and learning experiences

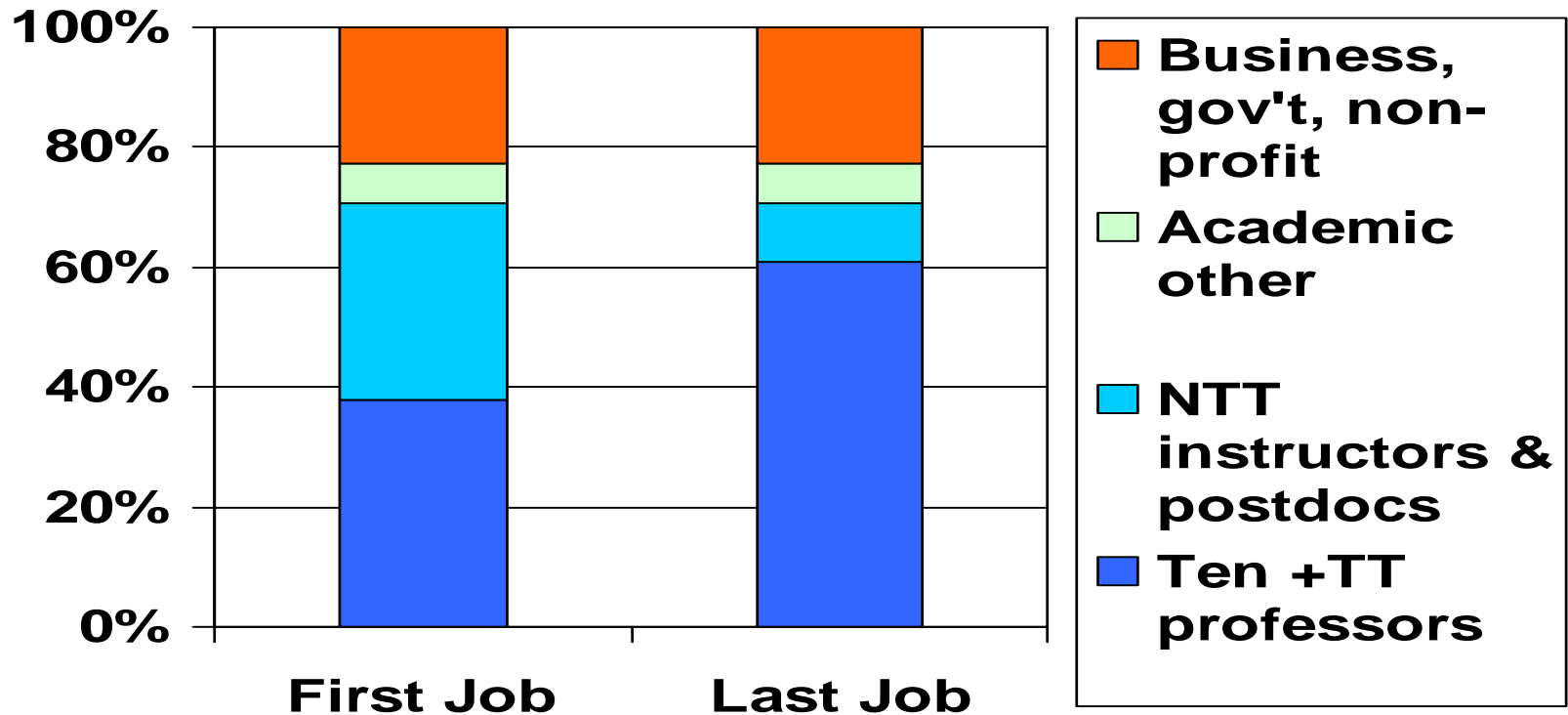
(objective and subjective assessment by student and graduate school)

- a. **AT ENTRANCE:** expectations, career goals
- b. **DURING STUDY:** experience, availability of services
- c. **AT PhD COMPLETION:** quality of the dissertation, time-to-degree, completion rates, # of publications, presentations, placement in post-doctoral position or academic or non-academic job
- d. **5 - 10 YEARS OUT:** career outcomes in all employment sectors, publications/ patents, job satisfaction, usefulness of PhD in life, retrospective program evaluation in light of application

When are we assessing Employment? 1 and 6-9 years out)

(Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out, 2006)

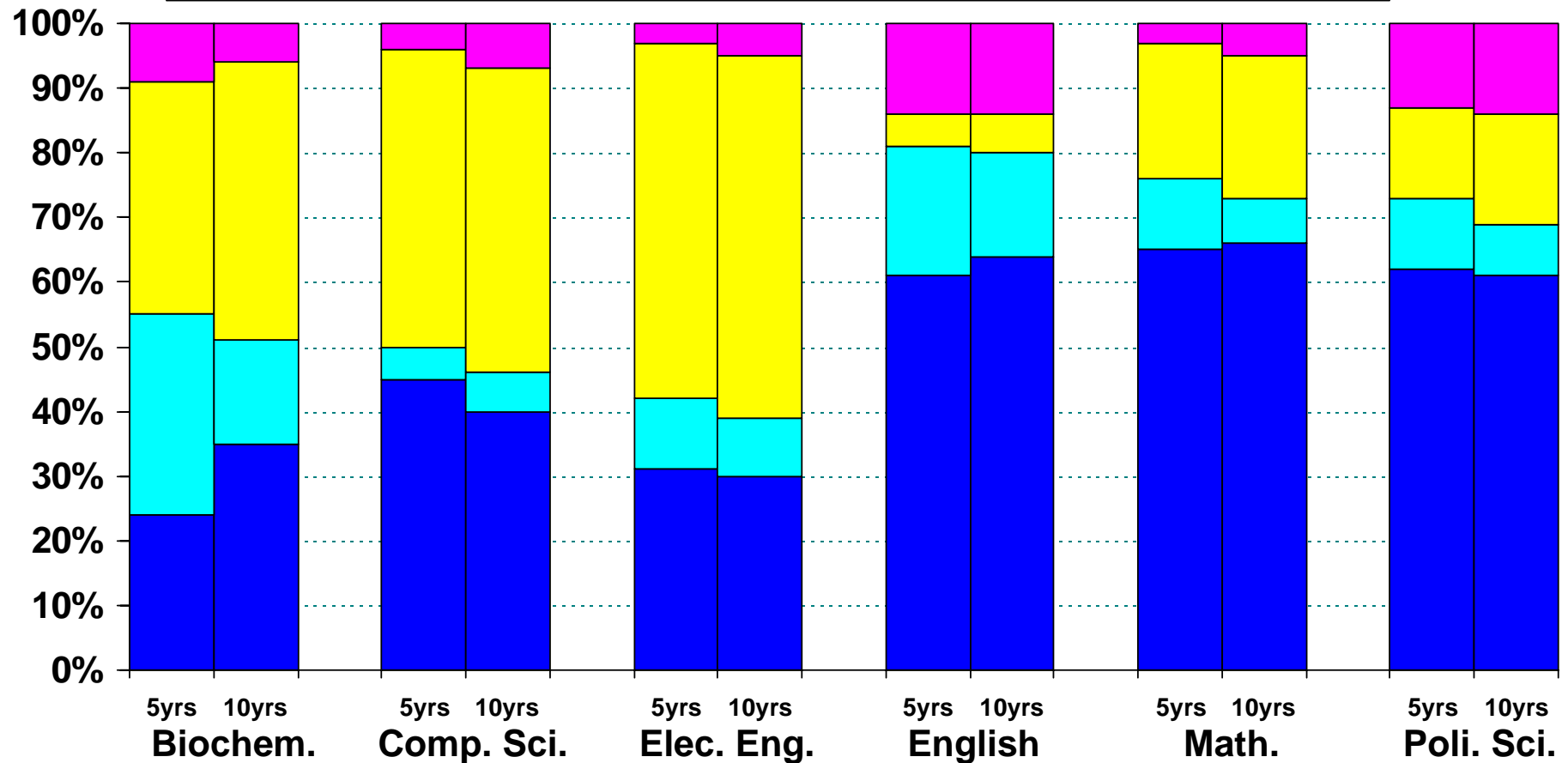
CIRGE



When are we assessing Employment? 5 and 10-13years



■ Tenure / TT ■ Acad. Other ■ BGN Res. / Mng. / Exec. ■ BGN Other



What exactly are we assessing?



2. The PhD program

(objective and subjective assessment by student, graduate school, Graduate Council-faculty peers)

- **Curriculum**
- **Teaching by Faculty/academic staff**
- **Advice, guidance, mentoring of academic staff**
- **Research experience by students**
- **Research methodology**
- **% Student funded by TA, RA, fellowship**
- **Opportunities for interdisciplinary research & instruction**
- **Exam preparation**
- **Dissertation support**
- **Diversity of faculty and student**

What exactly are we assessing?



3. Availability and Quality of Professional Development Activities

At PhD completion, or 5+ years out

- **Teaching**
- **Grant writing**
- **Presentation**
- **Publishing**
- **Leadership (time management, organizational understanding, etc.)**
- **Working in teams, collaborating**
- **Working in inter/multi/trans-disciplinary groups**
- **Working with diverse people**
- **Career development, placement support**
- **Preparing for global citizenship**

What exactly are we assessing?



4. University Scholarly Infrastructure

- **Library holdings**
- **Laboratory equipment**
- **Computer laboratory**
- **Research and office space for students**
- **Diversity of people (professors, students, staff)**
- **Child-care facilities**
- **Health Insurance**

Evaluation as Feedback

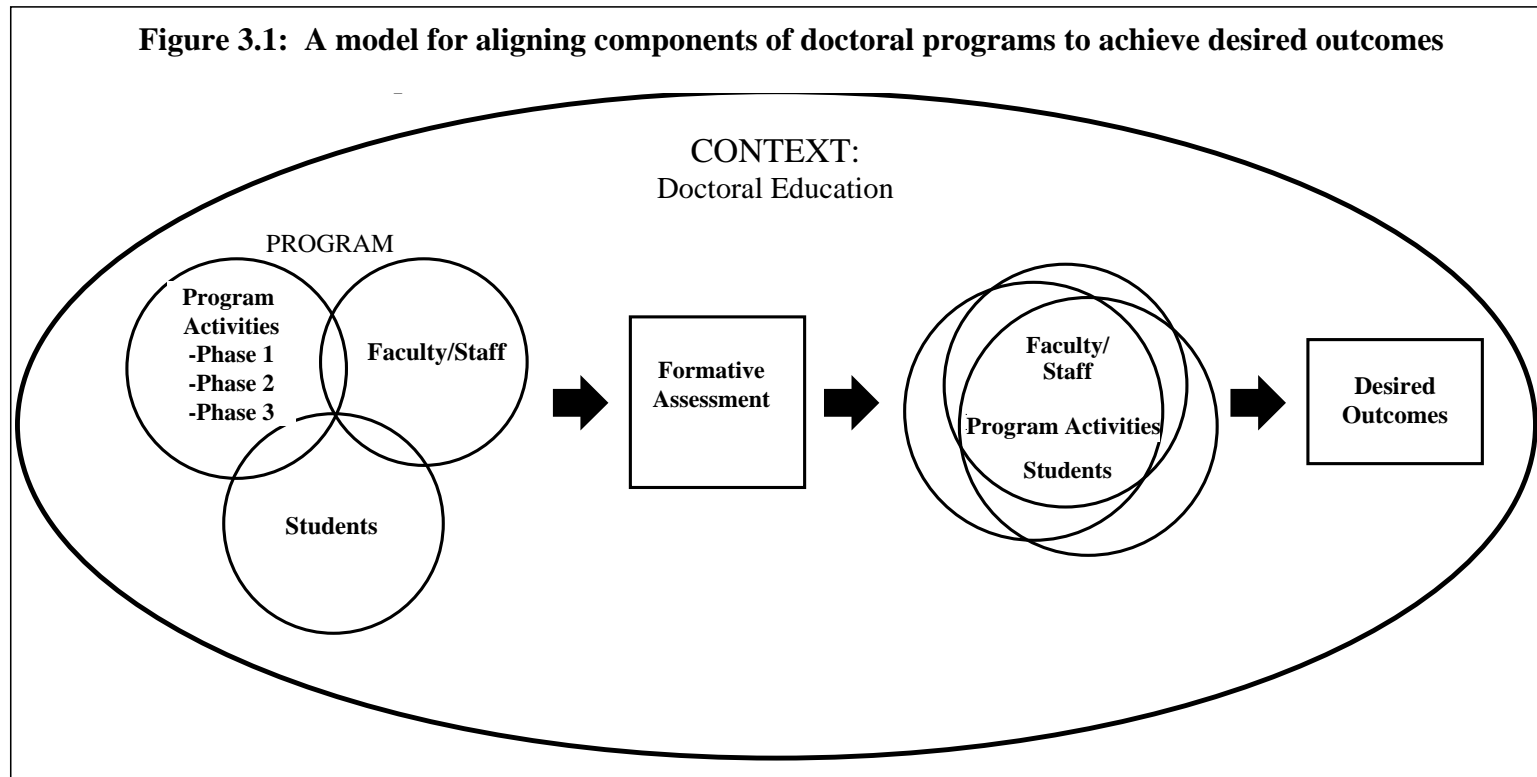


The need for a feedback loop to the program, the campus, the individual faculty, the student

- **annual doctoral student reviews**
- **institutional self-reflection**
- **current student satisfaction/ survey**
- **departmental/program self-studies**
- **alumni surveys**

The Importance of Formative Evaluation in Successful Doctoral Education

book chapter by Don Wulff and Maresi Nerad



Adapted from "Using the Alignment Model of Teaching Effectiveness," by D. H. Wulff in *Aligning for Learning: Strategies for Teaching Effectiveness* (p. 3-15), by D. H. Wulff, Ed., 2005, Bolton, MA: Anker. Reprinted with permission of Anker Publishing.

Thank you!



CIRGE website

www.cirge.washington.edu