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**Abstract**

The article examines the status and knowledge contributions of professional doctorates (PDs) undertaken by practising professionals who in most cases are not intending to join the academic community. The purpose of these doctorates is usually to research and develop an original contribution to practice through practitioner-research. Giving greater primacy to practice knowledge has caused new developments in doctoral education. The discussion is based upon a research project and an extensive literature review. Internationally, quality assurance agencies have generally embraced more work-related and practice-oriented criteria in doctoral learning. Doctoral learning that seeks to enhance practice and develop benefit to communities and organisations in professional contexts leads to different pedagogic protocols for higher education, for example a differently ordered approach to ethical issues of research, assessment and peer review. More curriculum development and understanding of the wider knowledge contributions of doctorates is needed across higher education and professional communities. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)