

EGU21-12840

<https://doi.org/10.5194/egusphere-egu21-12840>

EGU General Assembly 2021

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Science education for doctoral students: MODEST approach and experience

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MODEST (Modernization of Doctoral Education in Science and Improvement Teaching Methodologies) is a capacity building project funded by the Erasmus+ programme.

The project is coordinated by the University of Latvia. There are three other EU partners (from Finland, Poland and the United Kingdom) and a total of ten partners from three partner countries (Russia, Belarus and Armenia).

The project aims to improve the structure and content of doctoral education and the internal capacities of services that manage doctoral studies in accordance with the modern European practices, to facilitate a successful adherence with Bologna process reforms and its instruments, to improve and increase the quality of international and national mobility of doctoral students of Armenia, Belarus and Russia, and to establish a sustainable professional network providing the use of participatory approaches and ICT-based methodologies.

During the past year, almost one hundred members of academic and administrative personnel as well as doctoral students have contributed to creating a total of 14 new courses mainly in transferable skills: Research methodology and research design; Project writing, project management, and funding sources; International research writing and presentation skills; Research ethics, Intellectual property rights and personal data protection; 3I - Interdisciplinarity, interculturality, internationalization in research; Organization of doctoral training; Educational/constructive alignment, design and implementation of courses for doctoral studies; Digital literacy; Data analysis and expert systems; Virtual environment; Commercialization of research, managerial skills; Personal development; Complexity; and Sustainable development and global challenges of 21st century. Each course has specific target group(s) such as PhD students, university teachers, doctoral programme managers, or administrative staff.

Summary of each developed course – aims, learning outcomes, content (including course blocks on lectures, seminars, homeworks, etc.), planned learning activities and teaching methods,

assessment methods and criteria, and other relevant – will be presented. The developed courses will be an integral part of the Doctoral Training Centers for PhD students to be established in the MODEST partner universities in Armenia, Belarus and Russia.

The MODEST project serves as a great example of transfer of good practices in higher education, especially on doctoral level, but it has also created new connections for educational and scientific collaboration. From the PEEEX perspective, MODEST is an important initiative strengthening connections between European universities and institutions in Russia, Belarus and Armenia. The project will continue until 2022. More detailed information is available at www.emodest.eu.