

# **The future direction of doctoral education in Finland**

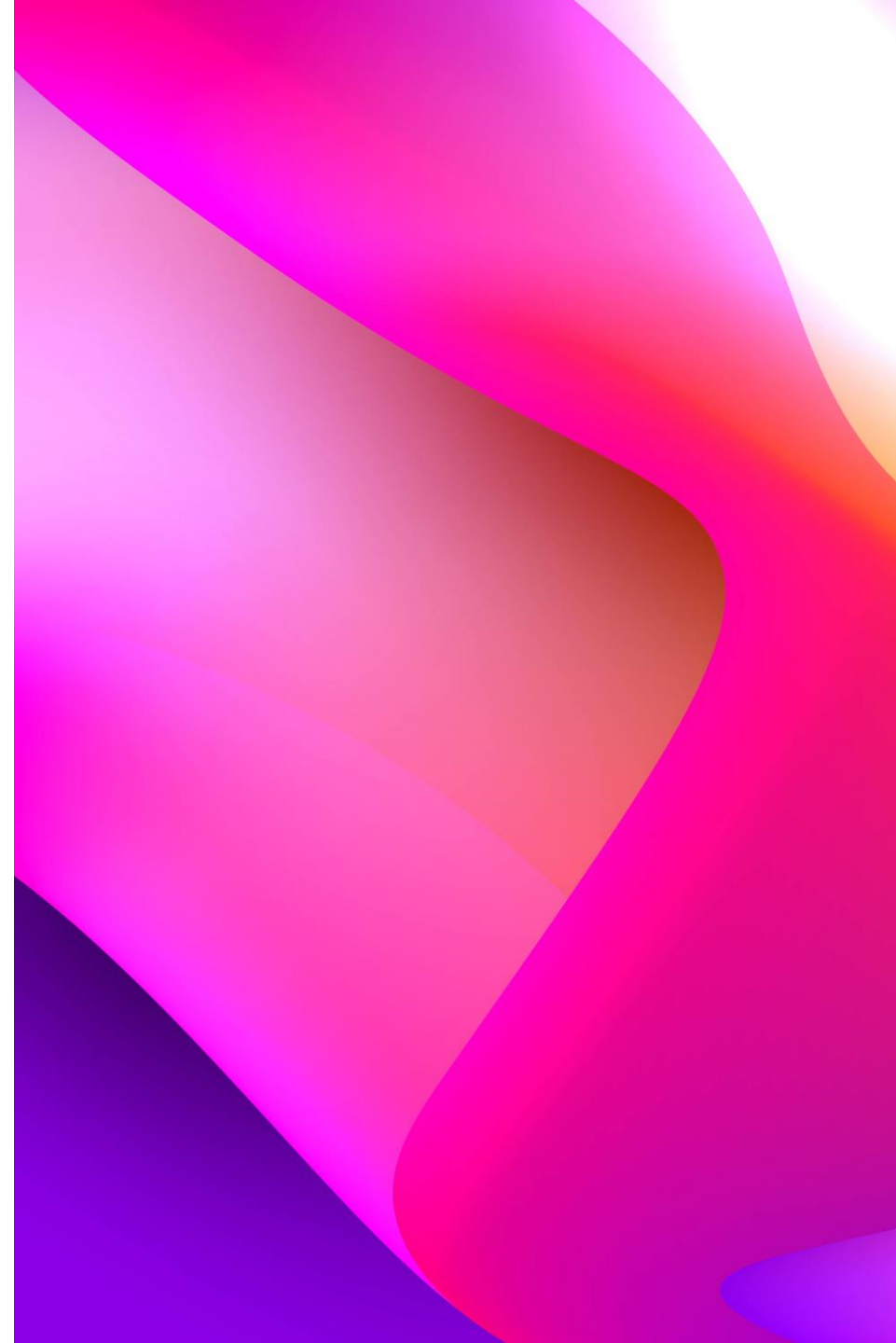
## **Recommendations for developing doctoral education**

Annu Perttunen

Doctoral Education Reform Development Working Group



**The primary task of the report is to encourage continuous dialogue and collaboration between various stakeholders to ensure that doctoral education remains attractive, relevant, high-quality, and impactful also in the future.**



# Key themes:

## The future needs motivated researchers

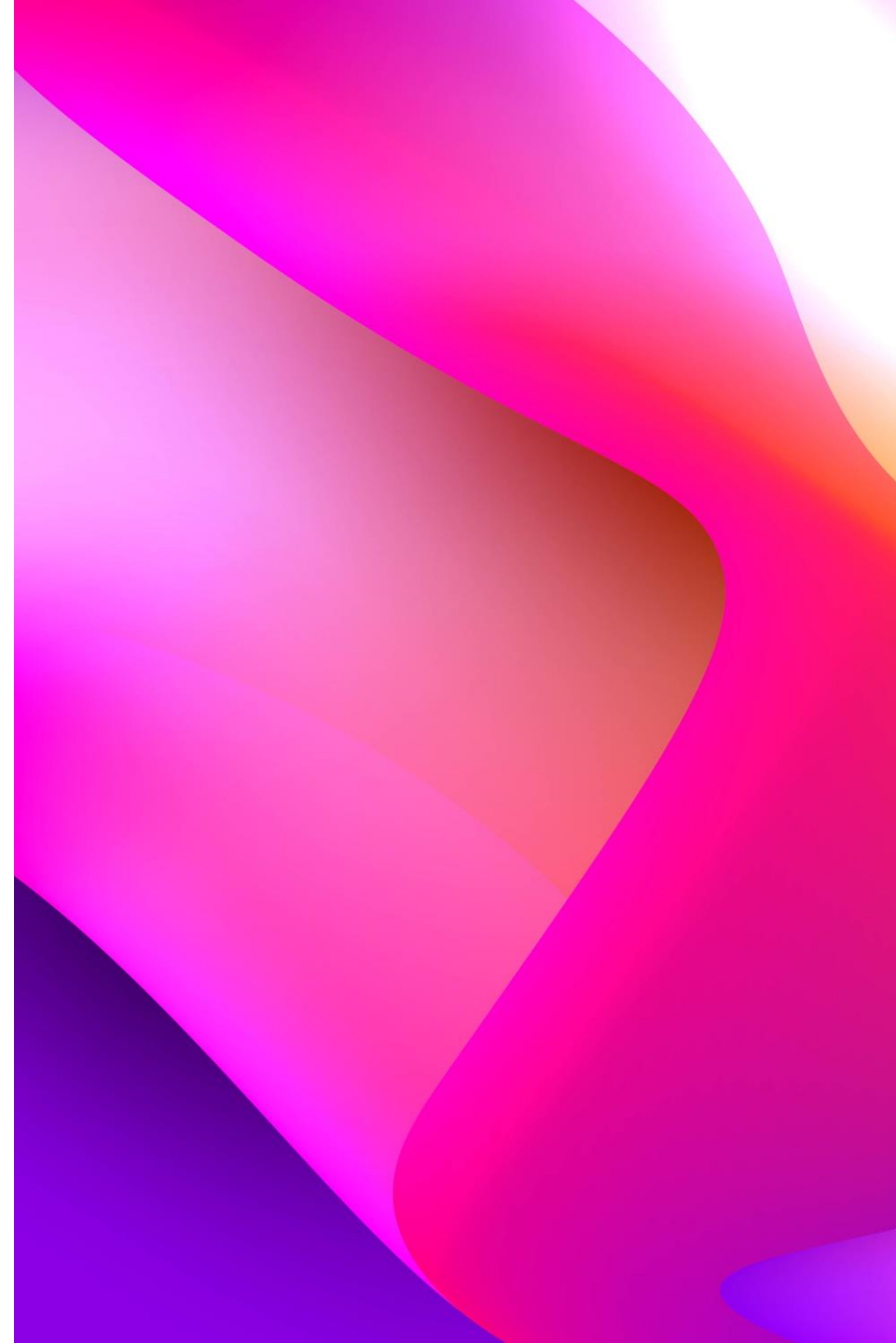
- *How can we ensure that doctoral education meets the needs of the future working life?*

## Supervision, monitoring and evaluation

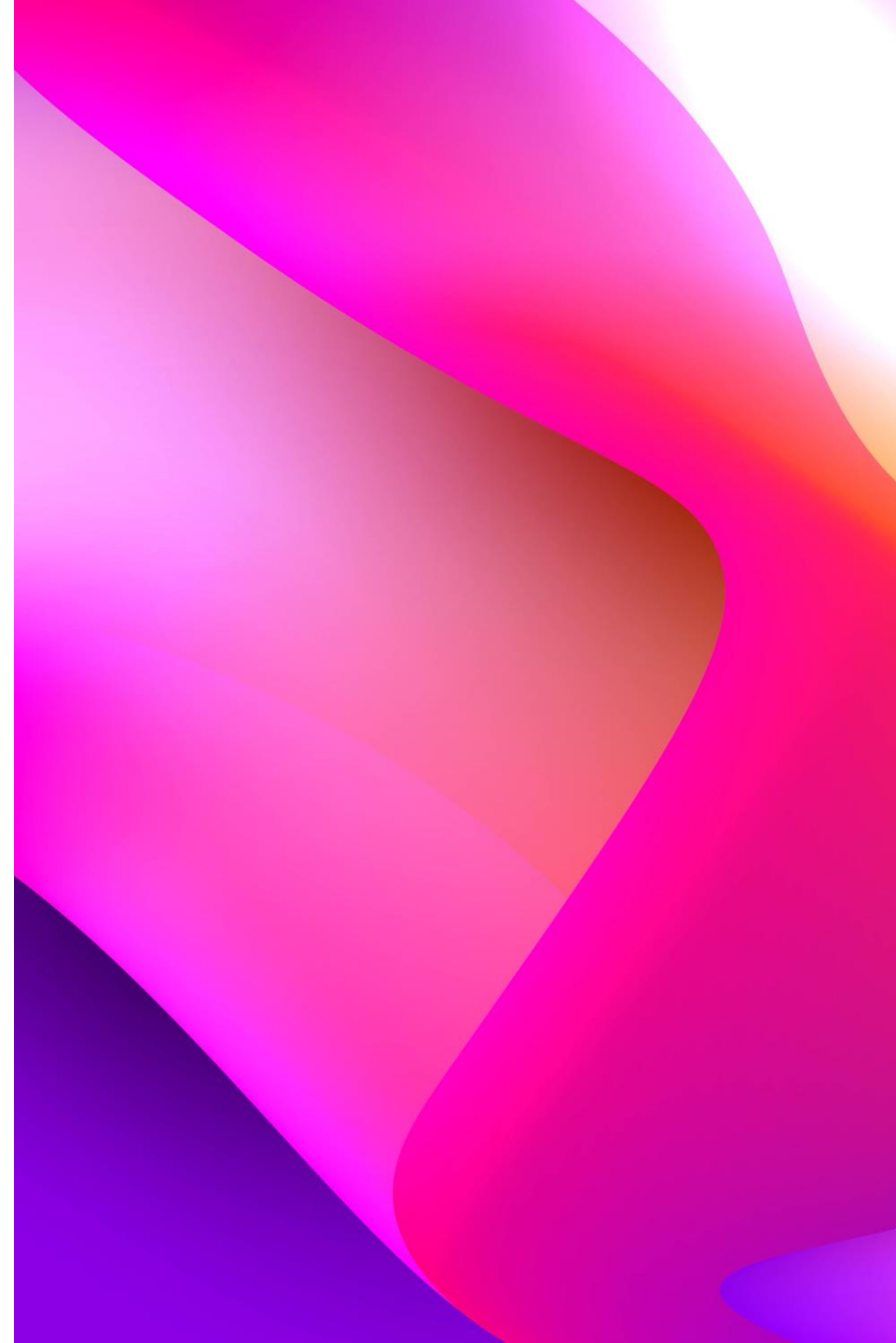
- *How can we build a stronger community within doctoral education where both researchers and supervisors feel supported and valued?*

## Doctoral education with partners

- *How can we strengthen the impact of doctoral education and ensure it benefits both society and individuals?*



# Recommendations



# Legislation

**Limiting doctoral study right:** Examine the target time for completing a doctoral degree and the possibility to limit the validity of a doctoral study right. Unifi starts working on a proposal to reform the Universities Act to limit the study right for doctoral studies. In the same context, monitoring completion time and applying for extension must be resolved.

# Potential applicants

- a. **Attractiveness of doctoral education:** Communicate about career prospects that are made possible by doctoral degrees and strive to achieve growth in recruitment potential.
- b. **Scientific expertise:** Emphasise the uniqueness of supervisors and the discipline and the comprehensive support offered for doctoral education.
- c. **Flexible pathways:** Enable flexible transition from master's degree studies or working life to doctoral education.
- d. **Effective recruitment:** Follow international recruitment principles and use clear evaluation criteria.

# Doctoral researchers

- a) **Effective onboarding:** Participate in the comprehensive orientation to ensure that the research gets off to a smooth start.
- b) **Objectives and schedule:** Negotiate and commit to a realistic plan to focus on research so that well-being and the quality of research remain intrinsic values.
- c) **Conducting research is motivating:** Conducting research must be inspiring and the process meaningful and rewarding.
- d) **Clear career options:** Doctoral researchers set clear goals for their career and the competence they need and seize opportunities for networking and getting to know career options.



# Supervisors

- a) **Commitment and quality:** Provide supervisors with the necessary resources and support to focus on quality supervision, ensuring doctoral researchers receive adequate guidance in both research and career planning.
- b) **Developing supervision competence:** Supervisor training is recommended to enhance supervision skills and support for doctoral researchers. Effective induction, particularly for new and international supervisors, is important
- c) **Community guidance:** Leverage research groups and peer support to avoid dependence on a single supervisor. Broader career counseling support can come from a follow-up group or mentor.
- d) **Guiding research and knowledge:** Supervision should focus on process rather than just the final outcome. The interaction between the doctoral researcher and the supervisor can be strengthened, for example through a supervision plan.



# Doctoral programmes

- a) **Competence:** Doctoral programs must clarify mandatory, recommended, and optional skills. All disciplines should highlight the project-based nature of dissertations and redefine 'sufficient content' for career advancement.
- b) **Study and dissertation requirements:** The target duration for completing a doctoral degree is 3-4 years, involving a dissertation and at least 30 credits of doctoral studies. Sufficient scientific or artistic contribution can be shown through 2-3 articles, manuscripts, a monograph, or an artistic component
- c) **Monitoring and evaluation:** Define clear objectives and indicators for monitoring the progress of doctoral researchers.
- d) **Innovative operating models:** Promote the utilisation of artificial intelligence and other digital tools in doctoral education while following ethical principles and responsible conduct of research.

# Graduate schools, faculties and other academic units

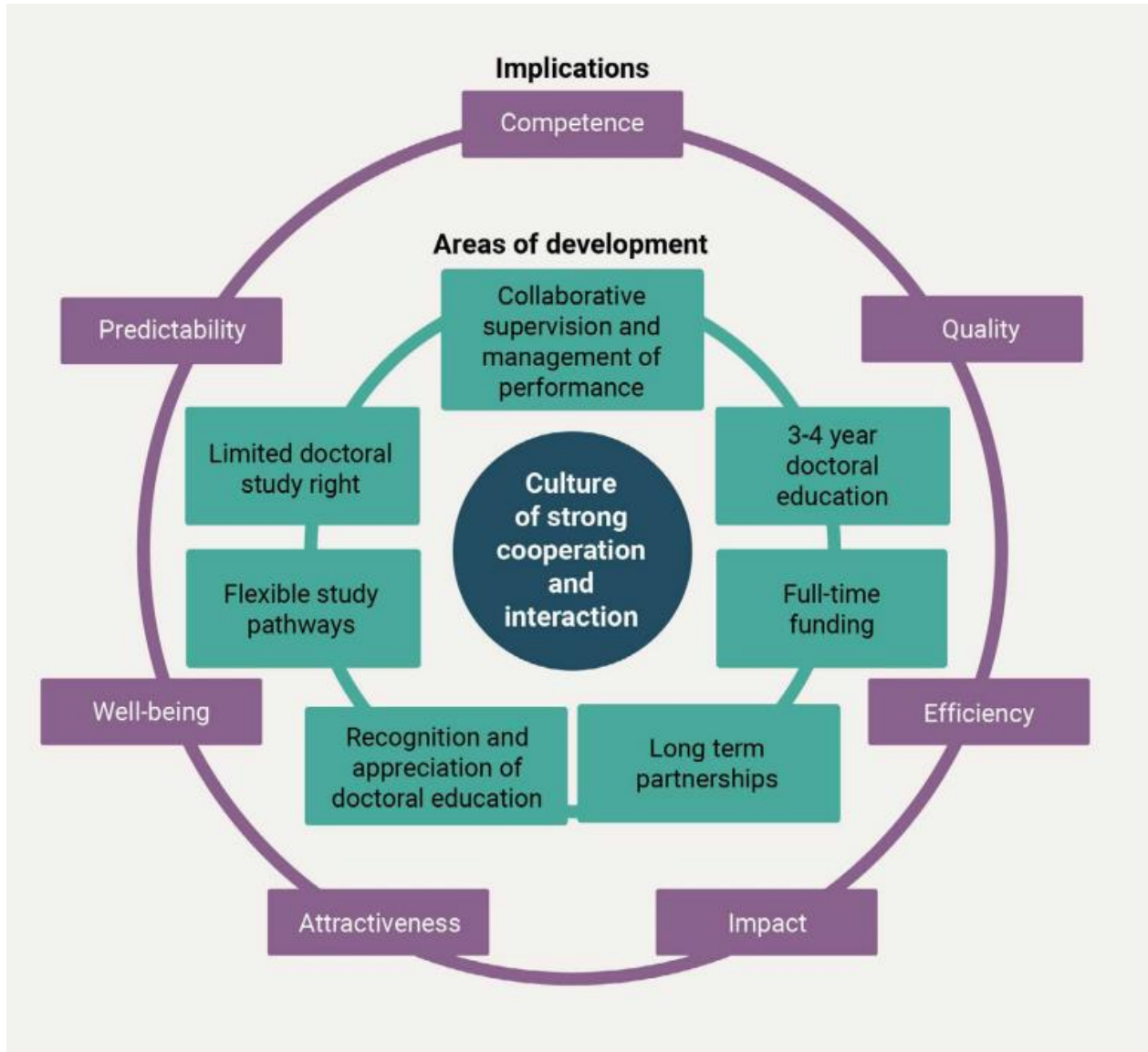
- a) **Strong support system:** Provide comprehensive guidance and support services for doctoral researchers. Ensure clear processes for solving problem and conflict situations.
- b) **Resource management:** Develop infrastructure and resources that support the achievement of the objectives of doctoral education (e.g. monitoring system, supervisor training, national training offering).
- c) **Process management:** Ensure enabling formal structures and eliminate bureaucracy (e.g. condensing the final phase to two months).
- d) **Open science:** Promote open publication practices and open science that increase the openness and accessibility of research.

# University management

- a) **Strategic planning:** Doctoral education is an important strategic issue for universities, and its objectives should be planned in the long term.
- b) **Setting goals:** Define clear and measurable objectives for the results and quality implementation of doctoral education. Ensure that these objectives are in line with the university's strategic objectives.
- c) **Strengthening cooperation:** Promote long-term and strategic cooperation between universities and different sectors with the aim of supporting the relevance and effectiveness of doctoral education.
- d) **Well-being and quality:** The management is responsible for the well-being of both doctoral researchers and supervisors and for ensuring the quality of research work.

# Partners

- a) **Working life needs:** Carry out close to ensure that doctoral education meets the requirements of employers in a comprehensive manner.
- b) **Identifying skills and employment:** Ensure that researchers find employment in positions that match their competence and that they increase the competitiveness and renewal of business, public sector and society.
- c) **Policy harmonisation:** Agree on practices regarding shared employment relationships, IPR practices, entry into Finland and research results. Universities are expected to take an active role in promoting cooperation.
- d) **Innovative funding models:** Ensure sufficient long-term funding for doctoral education and create new funding models that encourage cooperation and support doctoral researcher projects.



*Recommendations and implications for doctoral education*

# Kiitos Thank you

Doctoral Education Reform Development Working Group

Annu Perttunen

[annu.perttunen@oulu.fi](mailto:annu.perttunen@oulu.fi)