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**Abstract**

Doctoral education has experienced dramatic changes all over the world in the last three decades. Currently, Russia is at the beginning of a doctoral education transformation to structured programs according to needs of knowledge-based economies. This paper aims to identify national-level barriers to PhD completion in Russian doctoral education. The data from the empirical study in highly selective Russian universities that participate in a special government program were employed. About 40% of all doctoral students participated in the Russian Federation study at these universities. The following problems were revealed and discussed in the research: (1) problems of transition to a structured model of doctoral education, (2) diffusion of doctoral education's goals, (3) unpreparedness of Russian universities for the massive expansion of PhD education, (4) ineffective mechanisms of doctoral student selection, (5) a lack of funding and a need for doctoral students to have paid work, (6) excessive dependence on supervisors and (7) insufficient study time and skills for meeting the

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requirement for publications before the date of defence. Some problems correlate with the global challenges, but some are unique to the Russian institutional context. The relevance of the Russian case to understanding the worldwide transformation of the doctorate is discussed. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Maloshonok, Natalia, E-Mail: [nmaloshonok@hse.ru](mailto:nmaloshonok@hse.ru)