

The PhD committee



MINUTES

8 JANUARY 2019

Forum The PhD committee

SCIENCE RESEARCH AND
INNOVATION
PHD SECTION

Meeting held: 13 December 2018 from 14.00 – 16.00

Place: Meeting room BAMS, Nordre Sti 1, Frederiksberg

BÜLOWSVEJ 17

Secretary: Michael Cleve Hansen

DK - 1870 FREDERIKSBERG

Present:

Anine Laura Borger, David B. Collinge, James Connelly, Kell Mortensen, Lucas van Duin (guest), Michael Cleve Hansen, Morten Pejrup, Ryszard Nest, Stylianos Bakoulis, Sunny Mosangzi

DIR +45 35332056

MOB +45 21161366

mclh@science.ku.dk

Apologies:

Anton Grønne Kühl, Christian Gamborg, Espen Bing Svendsen, Søren Wengel Mogensen

REF: MCLH

Agenda:

- 1) Agenda
- 2) Approval of minutes from the meeting 24 May 2018
- 3) Announcements
- 4) Status on PhD Planner – is it properly up and running?
- 5) The Action and development plan for the PhD school 2018-2020 -
Follow up on the annual meeting of the PhD school 2018
- 6) Status on the 2019 election for the PhD committee
- 7) Important focus areas for the PhD committee of 2019?
- 8) Any other business

1) Agenda

The agenda was approved.

2) Approval of minutes from the meeting 24 May 2018

The minutes were approved.

3) Announcements

Morten: The first of three announcements for the Cofund-Talent programme were published in the autumn of 2018 and attracted more than one thousand applicants. Nine hundreds of those did not fulfil the formal requirements for enrolment as a PhD student and out of the rest; twenty were selected and offered a scholarship. In spring 2019, another announcement will be launched and in total 74 PhD students will be recruited to the Cofund-Talent programme.

5) Status on PhD planner – is it properly up and running?

The new PhD administrative system – PhD Planner – was implemented in April 2018. Most of the functionalities are currently up and running, but unfortunately not all. The rest will be delivered in the beginning of 2019.

However, there are still a lot of bits and pieces that need to be adjusted before the system is fully implemented and the integration with the filing system Workzone is often not operating properly.

In general, the members of the PhD committee are quite contempt with PhD Planner, the transparency of data and on-line access to applications and workflow-approval and they acknowledge that the system have the potential to be quite an improvement in the administrative PhD setup.

However, it seems annoying that you are not able to copy-paste text from a word document directly into the PhD Planner without having to do a lot editing, and the quality of the user interface could be better.

If Morten Pejrup should award PhD Planner a grade, it would be 6-7 out of 10.

5) The Action and development plan for the PhD school 2018-2020 - Follow up on the annual meeting of the PhD school 2018

Before the ADP discussion started, the PhD committee evaluated the outcome of the residential workshop of the PhD school. The general opinion of the workshop were positive and the venue was ok. The concept of having workshops adds on to the positive impression – the mix of senior scientific staff members, PhD students and administrative staff worked well, and almost all participants were “active” and contributed in the discussions. It is always valuable to get together in order to create and maintain networks across employment categories. However, the meeting would have been even

better if more new PhD coordinators had attended. And maybe the programme of the meeting should have been more focused.

The main speakers did well. Bjarne Toftegaard gave a good introduction to the concept of stress, and Sofie Kobayashi presented an inspiring speech on the importance of good and decent supervision that led to vivid discussions among the participants.

The PhD committee concluded that the meeting gave valuable inputs on how to work further with the Action and Development Plan.

Stress among PhD students and discontinuation of PhD programmes are serious challenges for the PhD environment and hopefully parts of it can be avoided if the overall balancing of expectations between PhD students and their supervisors is taken more seriously, if the ways of communication is improved, and if the general standard of and knowledge to “good supervision” is improved.

It is difficult to point out the exact reasons for discontinuation. Roughly speaking, one third of the students who discontinue their programme makes the decision within 2 years after enrolment, another 33 percent discontinue the PhD study after having been enrolled between 2 years and 3,3 years, and the last third makes the decision later.

However, due to the newly implemented rule on unemployment benefit (dagpenge), implying that PhD students are no longer entitled to receive unemployment benefit while they are enrolled on a PhD programme, it is expected that many of the PhD students that does not graduate at the expected date, will discontinue the PhD study to be able to support themselves. They will be able to hand in their PhD thesis when it is completed, and therefore this category of discontinuations is not as serious as the ones that drops out after many years of study and especially those who discontinue at an early stage of the “PhD career”.

The PhD committee will focus their attention on the latter category, knowing that part of those de-select the PhD programme out of lost interest in the research field. Maybe improved strategies for recruitment of PhD students and better supervision will have a positive impact?

Another part of the ADP 2018-20 that is expected to have a positive effect on the social wellbeing of the PhD students is creating networks. At UCPH there is already established a network that welcome all PhD students enrolled at UCPH. Also local networks at department level is up and running. They rely primarily on a few individual PhD students who invests their own time and energy in making the networks operate.

It is the impression of the PhD committee that networks have to be created “bottom up” and the PhD school will continue to encourage the departments to assist their PhD students to create networks. Either at the individual departments or across two or more departments.

6) Status on the 2019 election for the PhD committee

Unfortunately, only two PhD students was officially elected. The PhD section will contact the heads of department, the PhD coordinators and PhD secretaries at the departments to ask for assistance to fill the empty chairs.

7) Important focus areas for the PhD committee of 2019?

The committee will continue to implement the ADP 2018-20, and will be involved in an evaluation on the PhD school carried out by a panel of international experts. The international evaluation will be based on a self-evaluation report and the panel will visit SCIENCE in the autumn of 2019.

The PhD committee expects to have three regular meetings (2 before the summer holyday and one in December). The committee is also expected to meet at least 2 times during the international evaluation and will host the annual meeting of the PhD school.

8) Any other business

Kell thanked the student members of the PhD committee for their great effort and wished everybody a merry Christmas and a happy new year.