

The PhD committee



MINUTES

28 JUNE 2019

Forum The PhD committee

SCIENCE RESEARCH AND
INNOVATION
PHD SECTION

Meeting held: 21 June 2019 from 10.00 – 12.00

Place: Konsistoriums mødesal, Bülowsvej 17, Frederiksberg

BÜLOWSVEJ 17

Secretary: Michael Cleve Hansen

DK - 1870 FREDERIKSBERG

Present:

Annette Eva Omari (guest), Christian Gamborg, David B. Collinge, Henning Olai Milhøj, James Connelly, Kell Mortensen, Laurie Walk, Lucas van Duin, Michael Cleve Hansen, Morten Pejrup, Ryszard Nest, Sarah Estela Kylborg, Søren Wengel Mogensen

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Apologies:

Sunny Mosangzi

Agenda:

- 1) Agenda
- 2) Approval of minutes from the meeting 1 April 2019
- 3) Announcements
- 4) Status on new PhD administration system by Morten Pejrup
- 5) International evaluation of the PhD school – The self-assessment report (Encl. 19/04)
- 6) How to follow up on the Action and Development plan 2018-20 (Encl. 19/05)
- 7) Planning the Annual workshop of the PhD school 30 October 2019
- 8) The Introductory course for new PhD students (Encl. 19/06)
- 9) Any other business

1) Agenda

The agenda was approved.

2) Approval of minutes from 1 April 2019

The minutes were approved.

3) Announcements

Morten: SCIENCE attracted in 2018 from the European Union a grant to co-fund 75 PhD students to be enrolled in 2019-2020 (500.000 DKK for each scholarship). The faculty/departments should as part of the agreement pay 1.000.000 DKK to cover the remaining funding for the individual project. It appeared to be difficult for the departments to raise the funding, but hopefully, the faculty will succeed!

In general, Morten stressed, it is difficult for the departments to co-fund or fully fund scholarships (that always have to be announced in regular job announcements). Thus, an increasing number of PhD enrolments are supported only by external funding. If the external funding is not provided by Danish research councils, other Danish governmental sources or the European Union, these scholarships are not announced broadly in open job advertisements. It applies for PhD students who are awarded scholarships from abroad or private companies. In these cases, the element of open competition is missing. If the trend continues, it might endanger the quality of the PhD programme in the long run.

David: Participated recently in a Marie Curie meeting and learned that EU intend to triple the budget for Marie Curie initiatives (for employing Post docs and PhD students). It is good news because Marie Curie scholarships are fully funded and always have to be announced in international job advertisements.

Ryszard: Pointed out that Denmark is one of a few countries in the world that embeds a regular salary in the PhD programme – that makes Denmark one of the most expensive country to educate PhD students.

4) Status on PhD planner

The system is constantly getting better and better, but there are still some details that need to be adjusted before the system is fully implemented and especially the integration with the filing system Workzone is still not operating properly, which is a major problem.

At the committee meeting 1 April 2019, it was suggested that the PhD school should hire/employ 5-6 PhD students to be trained as “super users”

of the system, supports their fellow PhD students and re-write the user guides.

At the present meeting, the idea was not that well adapted and it was concluded to discuss the proposal further on the next committee meeting based on a draft job description.

5) International evaluation of the PhD school –The self-assessment report

In autumn 2019 a panel of international experts will evaluate the PhD school. The aim of the evaluation is two-fold: It has to investigate whether or not the quality of the PhD education lives up to international standards, and recommend how the PhD school can enhance the quality of the PhD education. The evaluation will partly be based on a self-assessment report.

The chair of the PhD school presented at the committee meeting a draft report that was discussed and commented page by page. The various inputs from the committee members will be included in the report, that will be finalized on the committee meeting 21 August 2019.

The following points and general remarks was also discussed – even though they do not directly relate to the self-assessment – they will be included in the general rules and regulations of the PhD programme that is up for a revision after the summer holyday.

- Is it necessary to hand out a user guide to members of the assessment committee?
- Should the PhD school ask the members of the assessment committee to comment on the co-author statements?
- Should the PhD school ask the assessment committee to rank the individual PhD thesis, for example by using a scale (1 = poor to 5 = excellent)?
- Should the PhD school define a minimum duration period for the change of scientific environment?
- What are the possibilities for the PhD school to enhance the number of PhD courses supplied by the departments?
- Moreover, how does the PhD school encourage the departments to offer a PhD course on Data management?

6) How to follow up on the Action and development plan 2018-20

The point is postponed for the meeting 21 August 2019.

7) Planning the Annual workshop of the PhD school 30 October 2019

The point was briefly discussed and the overall aim of the workshop will be to discuss how to follow up on the recommendations by the international evaluation panel. The agenda for the workshop will be written subsequently to the site-visit of the evaluation panel.

8) The introductory course for new PhD students

The Introductory course is offered by Department of Didactics (IND) and is part of the courses financed directly by the PhD school – students who pass the Introductory course also pass the mandatory course in Responsible Conduct of Research. The course has been supplied for many years. In general, the PhD students are very satisfied with the content and set-up - a four day residential course covering a lot of relevant topics.

Maybe too many - based on the course evaluations provided by the participants, and to make the course less dense, IND suggested to exclude the part of the curriculum that involve project management. The project management element of the course scores the lowest degree of satisfactory in the evaluation feed-back from the PhD students and according to the feed-back from quite a few participants, they do not feel able to use their own project in the case work conducted during the course – probably because their projects are pre-designed from the beginning.

At the meeting, the PhD committee discussed the proposal and concluded – based on experiences from the PhD student members of the committee – that the project management element should remain as part of the curriculum, if possible.

The PhD committee encourage IND to find other ways to make the course less dense – maybe by narrowing the project management part to include only elements of basic theory and advise/encourage the students to sign up for a regular project management course if they intend to learn more.

9) Any other business

From 1 July 2019 James Connelly and his research group will be part of Globe Institute at Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences. Because of that, James will no longer be member of the PhD committee at SCIENCE.

Kell Mortensen thanked James for his contribution in the committee and wished him good luck in his future career.