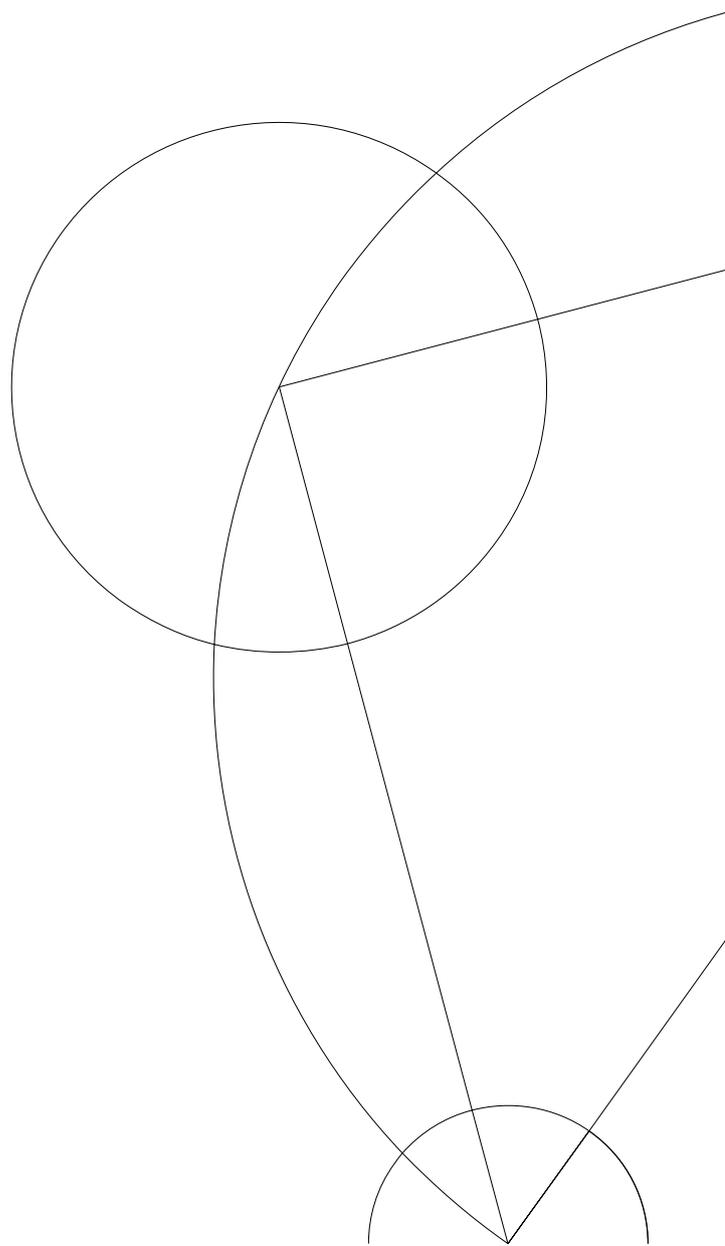




Development and Action Plan for the PhD School

Faculty of Science (SCIENCE) 2018-2020

May 2018



Introduction

The Action and Development Plan 2018-2020 identifies areas to focus on for the continued development and improvement of the PhD programme at SCIENCE in the coming years. It continues some of the areas in, the Action and Development Plan 2014-2016, which was built on the guidelines of international top researcher's for improvement on the PhD area.

The 2018-2020 plan is based on an analysis carried out in 2016-2017 by the Ministry of Higher Education and Science: "The Quality and Relevance of the Danish PhD Programme" based on both reviews from international PhD doctoral committee members as well as PhD supervisors. To be able to include any important findings from the analysis, the PhD Committee chose to postpone a new Development and Action Plan until after the publications of the findings in 2017. A main finding of the analysis was that the research in the PhD theses was of high quality when compared to that of leading international universities especially in the natural science field.

Furthermore, to include all parties involved in the education of PhD students and to ensure that the development plans entails all important aspects of these five key areas, the PhD committee organised a 1-day workshop in the summer of 2017. The committee invited PhD supervisors, PhD coordinators, PhD students, administrative staff and Deputy Heads of Department for Research to discuss input to the strategy. Members of both the current and the previous PhD Committee, have made a significant contribution to the contents of the Action and Development Plan.

In the 2018-2020 plan, the PhD Committee and the head of the PhD School have chosen to focus on five key areas: *PhD Supervision, PhD Networks, Work Environment, Employment after the PhD and Communication*.

As fingers in a hand, the five areas are all connected and all necessary in a continued improvement of the PhD education and of the PhD students that graduate from the PhD School of Science.

Kell Mortensen
Chair of the PhD Committee

Morten Pejrup
Head of the PhD School

PhD School Action and Development Plan 2018-2020



PhD Supervision

Good supervision is crucial for a successful completion of the PhD program. The definition of good supervision is different for each student and each supervisor. This needs to be taken into consideration when making any plans and activities.

Focus Area	Goal	Strategy / Action	Anchoring	Implementation
Career Supervision	PhD students have the knowledge needed to decide for a career in academia, industry, or elsewhere.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Look into adding a carrier section in the Progress Assessment Reports based on experiences from other Danish universities (if any). 2) Inform PhD students and PhD supervisors about employment statistics to promote an open discussion of non-academic career paths. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) PhD School 2) PhD School 	2019
Rights and Responsibilities	PhD students are aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding the PhD supervision.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Spread knowledge of the material already available, e.g. via the homepage/in PhD Planner. 2) Consider performing a user test or similar on the structure of the homepage/ PhD planner. 3) Address the issue face to face with PhD students e.g. at info meetings for new PhD students. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) PhD school 2) PhD School 3) PhD School initiates. Departments organize 	2019/2020
Problematic Supervision Relations	Identify problematic supervision relations and solve any problems in time for the PhD students to complete the PhD programme satisfactorily within the time frame.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Review what is currently done at PhD school and department level. 2) Consider what could be done more/instead (e.g. look into whether PAR enables a fast enough identification?) 3) Identify key players in solving problems 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) PhD Committee 2) PhD Committee 3) PhD Committee 	2018

Role of PhD Coordinators	To make sure the PhD coordinators play an active role in the PhD students' life both academically as well as administratively.	Check up on the current role of the PhD coordinators and investigate whether they check up on PhD students on a regular basis and take an active role in solving issues e.g. between PhD student and PhD supervisor if needed.	Departments	2019/2020
Supervision during the PhD Study	To ensure the best possible supervision for PhD students at SCIENCE.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Secure all-round supervision of students through supervisor teams / two or more supervisors per PhD student 2) Focus on how to build the best possible PhD student-supervisor relationship based on, for instance, the advice in "To Lead the Way" 3) Focus on matching the expectations of student and supervisor(s) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Departments and supervisors 2) PhD School 3) PhD School 	2018

Networking

Networking is important during a PhD programme. Different types of networking can be important depending on e.g. where you are from and what your focus is career wise. For instance, social networking may be extremely important for international PhD students moving to Denmark, but not so much for Danish nationals.

Focus Area	Goal	Strategy / Action	Anchoring	Implementation
Social Networking	To introduce new PhD students to the University of Copenhagen and meet other new PhD students as well as existing students.	Organize an annual event where all PhD students, supervisors and PhD School staff are invited. Among other things, the event should include an introduction to UCPH/SCIENCE events that encourage people to interact.	PhD School	2019
Research Networking	To expose PhD students to other research groups and facilities to identify prospective new collaborations.	Extend a call for proposals for Science Days to be organized at the Department or Research Group level.	PhD School Initiates Department or Research Groups organize	2019

Career Networking	To help PhD students nearing completion of their programme meet with prospective employers and potentially facilitate the next step in their careers.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Extend a call for proposals for PhD Career Days. These should be organized at department or research group level. 2) Look into funding possibilities from e.g. PhD School or Corporate sponsorships 	PhD School Initiates Department or Research Groups organize	2018-2019
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Work Environment

When looking at the psychological work environment for PhD students, stress and loneliness is a recurring theme across all areas of study both nationally and internationally. Many factors play in and they are often interrelated e.g. lack of clear success criteria may lead to stress, or a heavy workload might lead to stress and/or loneliness. Who are key players in providing a good psychological work environment and what can be done?

Focus Area	Goal	Strategy / Action	Anchoring	Implementation
Stress Awareness	Raise awareness among PhD students, PhD supervisors and PhD coordinators on how stress can arise, what can be done and which help mechanisms are in place.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Produce material (video, website etc.) that provides information to PhD students, PhD supervisors and PhD coordinators on stress ("break the silence"), and on healthy coping strategies. 2) Make a recurrent workshop with case stories focusing on how to gain psychological balance and reach realistic goals. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) PhD School 2) Departments 	2018
Stress Relief	Relief of stress and loneliness among PhD Students	Investigate whether it is possible to setup group based meditation courses as an alternative to individual stress counselling.	PhD Committee	2018-19
Loneliness	To help especially international PhD students combat loneliness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Support a PhD network (cf. 'Networking group') with a mix of science/social activities on a regular basis 2) Promote a cooperative culture 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) PhD School 2) Department / Supervisor 	2018

Balancing expectations	<p>Gain a higher degree of transparency with regard to success criteria. Show how unclear expectations and success criteria for the PhD students can lead to stress and a bad psychological work environment</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Provide material for the PhD Introductory course on more transparent criteria for different topics and for short term (e.g. courses, readings) and longer term criteria (papers to publish, research stays and collaboration) 2) Provide material to address the split between being a 'student' at a school and an employee at a workplace. 3) Encourage department/workplace to set up generic, transparent PhD success criteria as part of their PhD policy guidelines, including encouraging new PhD students to be teamed up with fellow students ("buddy") at the start. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) PhD School 2) PhD School 3) Department Supervisors 	2019
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Employment after the PhD

Today there are quite few structures and initiatives for career planning for PhDs. Most of them are informal and unstructured. One of the challenges is that there is an unevenness between the departments in the area of career development for PhD's. Another challenge is how to get more PhD's to participate in the career development activities. Can we further create a culture with a sense of a responsibility to bring the PhDs further in their career?

Focus Area	Goal	Strategy / Action	Anchoring	Implementation
Career Guidance	Give PhD students the knowledge and tools needed to prepare for a career in academia, industry, or elsewhere.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Offer all PhD students (bi)annual carrier events (Career days). 2) Make sure that communication about these events is clear. 3) Look into possibilities to match PhD students with mentors (mentoring via MUS, mentoring programmes etc.). 4) Encouraging industrial (or other, e.g., ministerial) placements where mutually beneficial. 5) Prepare a small idea catalogue to be circulated to the PhD coordinators and Deputy Heads of Department for Research to stimulate activity at department level. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) SCIENCE Private and Public Sector Services 2) SCIENCE Private and Public Sector Services 3) UCPH 4) Departments 5) PhD School 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) 2018 2) 2018 3) 2018 4) 2019 5) 2019

Communication

In 2018, the new IT-system for the PhD School at SCIENCE, PhD Planner, is implemented. It is expected to lead to more efficient information finding and more transparency regarding the status and practicalities for PhD students and PhD staff at the Faculty.

In addition to the IT-system, there will be focus on developing a place for all information of interest for PhD students across the departments and branding of the PhD education internationally. A better branding of the PhD education can lead to stronger candidates applying, stronger research environments, and better graduates and thus a PhD title with a high value internationally.

Focus Area	Goal	Strategy / Action	Anchoring	Implementation
PhD Web and Intranet sites	To make information for PhD students and PhD staff better and more accessible.	Look into creating a 'PhD Marketplace' showing/updating all events (network, carrier, conferences at the faculty, workshops etc.), information that is of interest to PhD students and with easy links to information, job advertisement directed to PhDs at SCIENCE etc.	PhD School	2019/2020
	Branding: Making the website for the PhD School more accessible and attractive to people outside the PhD School.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Look into search engine improvements to ensure that SCIENCE PhD School pops up first when searching the internet. 2) Make the current website more attractive. 3) Improving the access to the subpages about considering taking a PhD at University of Copenhagen, SCIENCE. 	PhD School	2018/2019
PhD Introduction Information	All departments arrange introduction/ information meetings for new PhD students.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Setting up introduction meeting at department level, where new PhD students can meet relevant staff, such as PhD secretaries, PhD coordinators, and others. In addition, be introduced to relevant committees and associations. 2) Look into finishing with a social event to ensure PhD students know other PhD students socially. 3) Invite someone from International Staff Mobility Service (ISM) to talk about Danish work culture, and also to inform Danes 	Departments	2019

		about what to be aware of when interacting with non-Danish students/employees.		
	Secure transparency of information	4) Make sure information about upcoming events is spread both locally at the departments and more globally at UCPH. 5) Provide information about the Progress Assessment Reports and how to use it as a management tool.		2018
	A complete introduction package	The introduction should provide new and current PhD students with relevant information about PhD student rights, expectations, where to find information, contact information, etc.	Departments and PhD School	2019
Branding Initiatives	Improve branding of the PhD School	Look into different branding initiatives such as making posters to hang at different universities, making videos about the benefits of taking a PhD in DK or setting up a framework to help individual supervisors advertise internationally.	PhD School Communications Office	2018
	Create a better support with regards to PR activities	Improve support with making an appealing job advertisement and improve support with where to post the PhD position.	Department HR	2019