

Graduate School of Natural Sciences (GSNS)
PhD committee meeting

Time: Wednesday, 16 June 2021 at 13.30-15.30

Place: Online

Minutes

1: Meeting information

Participants:

Ernst-Martin Füchtbauer, Henrik Stapelfeldt, Anders Møller, Mads Blichfeldt
Amdisen, Irfansha Shaik and David Lundbek Egholm

Apologies for absence:

Louise Marie Dalskov Kjerulff and Ragnhild Ørbæk Laursen

The secretariat:

Maria Fauerby Iversen and Rikke J. Ljungmann

2: Approval of minutes from the PhD committee meeting on 10 May 2021

Approved

3: Approval of agenda

Approved

4: Announcements – Overview of assessment committees, exemptions, etc. for the period 29 April 2021 to 7 June 2021

Approved

5: News from the PhD students

It was mentioned that it was great that defences can now be held physically again.

6: Follow-up on corona-related issues

David Lundbek Egholm gave an update on current corona-related issues:

- All PhD students are allowed back in the offices and labs, although as regards the latter there are still some limitations in some places due to various reasons.
- Defences and qualifying exams may now be held physically – new equipment is being installed at all NAT departments to accommodate the hybrid solutions/models.
- It is still possible to be granted exemption from a full course programme and/or mobility – if it proves necessary to prioritise one over the other, the advice is to prioritise mobility.
- 85 PhD students have been extended so far.

David Lundbek Egholm also said that the graduate school will continue with the extension programme. At the same time, he pointed towards the fact that it is important to start considering the post-corona situation. He would therefore be very interested to know of any good ideas as to what the graduate school might do to support the PhD students in this new situation.

Discussion for a later meeting: When Covid-19 is over, would it still be possible to have external assessment committee members online for the defence instead of being physically present? Pros and cons will be discussed. The administration will follow-up in terms of rules and regulations.

7: Discussion of the transferable skills PhD course portfolio 2022

The course committee had recommended that the two PhD committees at GSNS and GSTS should approve the suggested transferable skills PhD course portfolio for 2022.

The GSNS PhD committee approved the course portfolio.

8: Individual courses: A) statistics courses and B) Storytelling – suggestion for new course. Example of course description

Following input from the Heads of programme/scientific environments and a thorough discussion at the course committee meeting, the course committee had recommended that the two PhD committees at GSNS and GSTS would look further into two new statistics courses, i.e. a more basic statistics course and one/two courses in Python. This should take place in the autumn 2021.

The GSNS PhD committee approved this.

9: Procedure with fixed deadlines for suggesting new courses

The course committee had recommended that the two PhD committees at GSNS and GSTS should approve the procedure and the deadlines.

The GSNS PhD committee approved this.

10: Discussion of evaluations – for some courses evaluation lies with the graduate schools, for others it lies with the course provider. Should practice be standardised in the future?

The course committee had recommended that the two PhD committees at GSNS and GSTS should approve that evaluation of all transferable skills PhD courses should lie with the graduate schools.

Following a discussion, in which it was clear that the PhD committee sought a model where the graduate schools ask a fixed set of questions and the course provider is given the opportunity to likewise ask a set of questions (not necessarily the same set of questions from time to time so as to allow for feedback and subsequently incorporate changes to the course content, if necessary), the GSNS PhD committee approved this.

Action: Provided that the GSTS PhD committee also approves, the design and development of the evaluations will be discussed in more detail in the autumn, first in the course committee and then in the two PhD committees.

11: Follow-up on the international evaluation

The self-evaluation report is about ready to be sent to the international panel.

Action: When ready, the report will also be sent to the members of the PhD committee and the Heads of programme.

Action: Rikke J. Ljungmann will book the members of the PhD committee and the Heads of programme for meetings with the international panel during the site visit.

12: For your information

In the autumn, nomination and running for election for the PhD committee 2022 will take place. The administration will send out e-mails to the PhD committee and the Heads of programme as well as announce it in news e-mails and on the school website.

13: Any other business

David Lundbek Egholm mentioned that competition for entering the Graduate school has increased. So has external funding. However, private foundations do not cover indirect costs, thus making funding for PhD student intake as such more complex and difficult.