

Graduate School of Natural Sciences (GSNS)

PhD committee meeting

- opening meeting and ordinary meeting

Time: Monday, 18 January 2021 at 10.00-11.00

Place: Online

Minutes - opening meeting

1: Meeting information

Participants:

Kurt Thomas Jensen, Ernst-Martin Füchtbauer, Henrik Stapelfeldt, Anders Møller, Louise Marie Dalskov Kjerulff, Mads Blichfeldt Amdisen, Ragnhild Ørbæk Laursen, Michelle Møhlenberg, Frederik Thorning Bjørn and David Lundbek Egholm

Apologies for absence:

The secretariat:

Damian A. Hertoft Goldberg, Liselotte K. Heller and Rikke J. Ljungmann

2: Round of introduction

There was a round of introduction.

3: Information concerning the PhD committee's tasks

The retiring chairman of the PhD committee Kurt Thomas Jensen informed the committee members of the PhD committee's tasks. These include for instance:

- Approving GSST transferable PhD courses
- Approving applications for credits, exemptions, etc.
- Making recommendations regarding the composition of assessment committees
- Discussing various matters relating to the PhD school and making recommendations hereon to the head of PhD school.

The chairman and the vice-chairman prepare the agenda for each meeting and can also make decisions in between meetings, if necessary.

Decision: It was decided to involve Chairman and Vice-chairman of the PhD committee in cases of disagreement between Head of programme and Head of school where composition of assessment committees is concerned.

4: Rules of procedure for the PhD committee

The retiring chairman of the PhD committee Kurt Thomas Jensen informed the committee members of the Rules of procedure for the PhD committee.

There are 6 members, namely 3 members of staff and 3 PhD students. The former are elected for three years and the latter for one year at a time. The members meet regularly – usually three to four times a year – and can, if necessary, invite other people to the meetings as observers, however, these do not have the right to vote. Agenda for the meeting will be sent to the members no later than four working days before the meeting.

All members can submit items to be discussed at the meetings. When voting on a subject, it is a question of simple majority – only members can vote. At least half of the statutory members must be present to make the PhD committee quorate.

All members and any invited observers are subject to confidentiality.

The Rules of procedure were approved. However, it was noted that there was a discrepancy between the Danish and the English version of the Rules of procedure with regard to section 9, subsection 6.

Action: Rikke J. Ljungmann will follow up and contact relevant party to ask if this can be corrected. The Rules of procedure will be put on the GSNS website afterwards.

5: Election of chairman

Associate professor Ernst-Martin Füchtbauer (Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics) was elected.

6: Election of vice-chairman

PhD student Louise Marie Dalskov Kjerulff (Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics) was elected.

7: PhD Committee meeting dates in 2021

These will be decided prior to each meeting.

8: Any other business

Due to GDPR, the PhD student members were asked if they would sign a declaration of consent with regard to being mentioned by name on the GSNS website and in agendas/minutes from the PhD committee meetings. It was stressed that it was completely voluntary, and if they would prefer not to sign such a declaration, other solutions could be found in order to comply with GDPR regulations.

Action: Rikke J. Ljungmann will send declaration of consent to the PhD student members.

Minutes - ordinary meeting

9: Approval of minutes from the GSST PhD committee meeting - 24 November 2020

Approved.

10: Approval of agenda

Approved.

11: Announcements – Overview of assessment committees, exemptions, etc. for the period 18 November 2020 to 8 January 2021

Approved.

12: Follow-up on corona-related issues

David Lundbeck Egholm mentioned that the applications for corona-related extensions we see at the moment still relate to the lockdown in the Spring of 2020. However, it is likely that we will see more applications for corona-related extensions based on the present lockdown situation.

The committee debated whether to maintain the present practice of recommending that PhD students

affected by the corona situation apply for a possible corona-related extension when they have less than a year left of their PhD or to change procedures when the present lockdown is over and a vaccine has been deployed and then set a fixed deadline for all corona-related applications once and for all.

Decision: Given the current situation, it was decided to continue with the present practice and discuss again later this year.

It was asked what one should do as a PhD student if he or she was not able to go on a research environment change due to the Covid-19 situation. David Lundbek Egholm answered that one should first explore the possibilities of postponing or rearranging, if this is not possible, one should apply for exemption, and the Covid-19 situation would naturally be taken into consideration.

Action: To communicate more clearly to the PhD students about this procedure, e.g. in the next news e-mail.

David Lundbek Egholm mentioned that the DKK 18 million granted from the government to help cover financing of corona-related extensions has now been distributed to the eight Danish universities. At AU, they have been distributed according to the agreed basis of allocation between the five graduate schools. Thus, GSNS will receive DKK 770,765.

13: International evaluation in 2021

The international evaluation of the five AU graduate schools, which is to take place in 2021, will consist of a self-evaluation report, a site visit by the international panel members and a report from the international panel following the site visit.

In September last year, an administrative working group was set up to look into the data sets to go with the self-evaluation report. This process is almost finished. Next step is the drawing up of a draft version of the self-evaluation report. This will include data from the Quality in the PhD education survey (KIP). The draft report will be discussed at a PhD committee meeting and a Heads of programme meeting most likely in April before it will be sent to the international panel.

We are aiming at a site visit in September 2021, thus, hopefully, making it possible for the panel to visit in person. The chair of the committee has been found, and the remaining members of the panel will most likely be settled by the end of January.

14: Transferable skills courses - future procedures

With two new PhD committees at GSNS and GSTS respectively, procedures for debating and setting up transferable skills courses were discussed. A possible model could be to set up a sub-committee consisting of members from both the GSNS and the GSTS PhD committees who should discuss in greater detail and make recommendations to the two committees.

Decision: To adopt the suggested model. If likewise adopted by the GSTS PhD committee, the three members from GSNS will be the chair and vice-chair of the PhD committee and the PhD student member representing iNANO, Chemistry, and Physics and Astronomy.

The GSNS PhD committee is awaiting the GSTS PhD committee to discuss the suggested model.

15: GSNS website and other information targeted applicants

This item had been postponed from last time. It was suggested to take a look at the GSNS website targeted applicants with a view to examining whether it could benefit from a closer look and update among other things to make it easier for candidates to find information about procedures concerning application for enrolment to the graduate school.

Decision: To set up a working group consisting of the PhD students of the committee, one or more of

the staff members, the head of school and staff from the secretariat. Following that, the item will be discussed further on the next PhD committee meeting. The PhD student members will make themselves acquainted with the relevant webpages before further discussions. The secretariat will call a meeting in the working group before the next PhD committee meeting.

16: PhD employment survey 2020

For the PhD committee's information, the PhD employment survey 2020 had been attached to the agenda. The survey had been conducted with joint figures from NAT and TECH. The survey will be prepared with separate figures for NAT and TECH as soon as possible.

Action: When received, Rikke J. Ljungmann will forward the survey with separate figures.

17: PhD association GSNS

David Lundbek Egholm mentioned that GSNS supports the establishment of a local PhD association at Natural Sciences if an association was to be set up. The graduate school would provide a lump sum each year to support activities and administrative support with regard to e.g. arranging specific events.

18: Any other business

It was asked if the PhD committee members had any suggestions for topics to be discussed in the PhD committee in the coming years. Suggestions could be sent to either Ernst-Martin Füchtbauer or Rikke J. Ljungmann and be discussed at the next PhD committee meeting.