

Graduate School of Natural Sciences (GSNS)

PhD committee meeting - ordinary meeting

Time: Monday, 10 May 2021 at 15:00 - 16:30

Place: Online

Minutes:

1: Meeting information

Participants:

Ernst-Martin Füchtbauer, Anders Møller, Louise Marie Dalskov Kjerulff, Mads Blichfeldt Amdisen, Irfansha Shaik and David Lundbek Egholm

Apologies for absence:

Ragnhild Ørbæk Laursen, Henrik Stapelfeldt and Maria Fauerby Iversen

The secretariat:

Rikke J. Ljungmann

2: Introduction round - welcoming Ragnhild's substitute Irfansha Shaik to the meeting

3: Approval of minutes from the PhD committee meeting - opening and ordinary meeting 18 January 2021

Approved

4: Approval of agenda

Approved

5: Announcements – Overview of assessment committees, exemptions, etc. for the period 9 January 2021 to 28 April 2021

Approved

6: News from the PhD students

It had been suggested to include a new item on all future PhD committee meetings in order to make it easier and set aside enough time to discuss any issues that might concern the PhD students.

There was a comment on the distribution of information from the graduate school in terms of getting information from AUPA to the PhD students since there is no PhD association at Natural Sciences. In that context, it was also discussed in general how to ensure that the PhD students get all necessary information. It was agreed that there were no easy solutions, but one way could be to send out the news e-mail from the graduate school more regularly. Another could be to ask the Heads of programme to mention the GSNS news e-mails as a means to get information from the graduate school at introductory meetings with new PhD students.

Decision: To send out regular monthly newsletters from GSNS and notify the Heads of programme of mentioning them at introductory meetings with new PhD students.

7: Follow-up on corona-related issues

David Lundbek Egholm informed the PhD committee that from 10 May, PhD students are allowed back to the offices and study areas, etc. Test sites have been set up at the university, and test capacity is working well. He also mentioned that even though the PhD students have been allowed to return, many supervisors still have to work from home, so supervision, etc. may still have to take place online at least for some time.

With regard to Covid-19 extensions, David Lundbek Egholm mentioned that so far a little more than 15 % of the PhD students have received extensions. Thus, at AU, Natural Sciences is the faculty that has extended the most PhD students percentage-wise. Applications are still handled with regard to focusing on those PhD students who are in their last year, but if there are PhD students who have a serious need for clarification earlier in their PhD study, their applications will of course be handled, too.

As far as applications for exemptions from going abroad is concerned, GSNS has only received a few. Many PhD students are still hoping to get abroad.

8: Follow-up on discussions and recommendations, if any, in the PhD course committee

At the moment, in particular three courses/types of courses are debated.

- Science Teaching:

Meetings have been held with the course provider and the Heads of GSNS and GSTS. The course provider is now in the process of accommodating the course description and content of the course to take into account the points that were raised at the meetings.

- English courses:

To speed up things and hopefully be able to offer these courses already in the autumn, a written approval process of the course description of the two English courses was taking place at the time of the meeting, first in the Course committee and afterwards in the GSNS and the GSTS PhD committees.

- Statistics courses

The Course committee had asked for input on statistics courses. At the time of the meeting, a written hearing on the subject was taking place.

Following the update and discussion of the individual courses, there was a general discussion on allocation of ECTS. It was agreed that the allocation of ECTS should preferably be more liberal than restrictive – within the framework of the European regulations on ECTS, of course.

Finally, there was a discussion on how to bring the PhD students' ideas for new courses into play. For instance, would it be possible to send out a questionnaire. It was mentioned that it would be important to ask the right questions, and that it might have to be more programme-specific, especially with the scientific courses.

9: Follow-up on the GSNS website and other information targeted applicants

As follow-up on the work done in the working group set up at the last PhD committee meeting, it was mentioned that the website had been discussed thoroughly, and changes were already being implemented.

10: PhD committee meetings in the future

It was discussed how the meetings should be scheduled for the rest of 2021.

Decision: If there is no joint agenda with the meeting of the Heads of programme, it was decided to have the PhD committee meetings and the Heads of programme meetings on separate days.

11: For your information

- Terms of reference for the PhD Course committee has been revised slightly
They were approved

- New administrative set-up concerning the transferable skills PhD courses at NAT/TECH

Rikke J. Ljungmann informed of the new administrative set-up concerning the transferable skills PhD courses at NAT/TECH. In the future, the PhD students will have to register for courses through the new system. A news item on the subject will be included in the next GSNS news e-mail.

- Rules and Regulations and GSNS website have been updated with regard to new committee structure following the establishment of the two new PhD committees for GSNS and GSTS

12: Any other business

None