

Graduate School of Natural Sciences (GSNS)

PhD committee meeting

Time: Thursday, 28 September 2023 at 12.00-14.00

Place: Ny Munkegade 120, bldg. 1520, room 732

Minutes

1. Meeting information

Participants:

Duncan Sutherland, Sebastian Harald Riedelbauch, Pernille Nedergaard Madsen, Niklas Lawaetz Østergaard, Erik Asbjørn Mikkelsen Jensen, Juan Carlos Zamora Luria, Mathias Østbjerg Vang, Anders Sten Kortegård, Anne-Kathrine Kure Larsen, Jens Kristian Refsgaard Schou and David Lundbek Egholm

Participating online:

Ditlev Egeskov Brodersen, Anders Møller and Tammy Ai Tian Ho

Apologies for absence:

Carlo Klapproth, Harith Rathish, Andreas Dueholm Bertelsen, Simon Panyella Pedersen and Mie Meulengracht Christensen

The secretariat:

Rikke J. Ljungmann

2. Approval of minutes from the PhD committee meeting on 16 May 2023

Approved

3. Approval of agenda

Approved

4. Announcements – Overview of assessment committees, exemptions, etc. for the period 5 May 2023 to 19 September 2023

At each committee meeting an overview is presented of the following:

- Defences – assessment committees
- Qualifying exams
- Requests (incl. credit transfer granted during the PhD study, if any)
- Credit transfer granted in connection with admissions process (NB: None have been granted during the period – therefore no appendix)

- Covid-19 extensions applied for and approved during the period

David Lundbek Egholm pointed out important cases, including mentioning that the number of corona extensions applied for is continuously going down. We do still see corona extensions, but this fits well with the fact that many of those who started close to or during the corona period are now nearing their study end date and as asked for have waited until late in their study period to apply.

5. News from the PhD students

1. The Hoodies initiative is still being examined. At the moment, the secretariat awaits answers from possible suppliers.

2. Retreats and autumn schools were discussed both for scientific reasons and as a means to create better well-being among the PhD students.

Next meeting: MBG and iNANO will give a short presentation of their events.

3. There was a question on teaching exemption in connection with going abroad. At the moment, this is granted if the PhD students go abroad within the teaching period. The question was whether it would be possible to change this and allow for a teaching exemption also outside teaching periods. David Lundbek Egholm answered that he will bring it forward to the Faculty management as part of discussing teaching obligations further.

6. News from the Well-being committee

Jens Kristian Refsgaard Schou gave a summary of the discussions at the last Well-being committee meeting. In particular, offboarding and career days were a theme.

Furthermore, there was a discussion as to how the half-year evaluations can be properly used if any of the parties are concerned. It is possible to choose the option 'Concerned plan may not lead to timely completion'. This is not widely known, but would be useful to raise a flag if there is a concern. It was discussed whether this option could be explained clearer in the MyPhD system.

David Lundbek Egholm mentioned that SDD/MUS (Staff Development Dialogues/ Medarbejderudviklingssamtaler) is coming up. AU has implemented a new HR system in which these dialogues take place. However, there is no specific dialogue guide for PhD students at the moment. The guide closest to is the one for Junior Researchers. A specific guide will hopefully be considered implemented later. The Graduate School will push for that.

The idea of having panels (such as MBG, CS and GEO, and Biology as a pilot, have) was discussed and well-received. In continuation of that, it was discussed at the present meeting whether this might possibly be extended to all GSNS programmes.

Next PhD committee meeting: As the panels differ somewhat between the programmes, MBG, CS, GEO and Biology will each present their solutions.

At the next Well-being committee meeting, the theme to be discussed will be well-being with a particular focus on the international PhD students.

Action: Juan Carlos Zamora Luria will join Jens Kristian Refsgaard Schou at the meeting.

7. AU election coming up

Registration for elections is coming up. The Graduate School sends out news e-mails on the topics for both PhD students and supervisors and will announce it on the website.

Further initiatives to get people to register and run for election were discussed, incl. present members talking directly to potential candidates, and to mention it at retreats or similar events or meetings.

8. The onboarding programme

The onboarding programme has been running in the Spring semester, going through all the workshops and two introduction days. David Lundbek Egholm therefore gave a brief status.

There is a good turn-out although more people are taking the mandatory workshops than the non-mandatory ones.

Following evaluations of the session about peer mentoring groups at the Introduction day, the set-up of the peer mentoring groups will be changing somewhat with more focus on practical matters rather than theoretical ditto. The composition of the peer-mentoring groups was also discussed.

There will be a continuous focus and follow-up on the onboarding programme.

9. Mindfulness (MBSR) workshop for PhD students

The graduate schools at TECH and NAT have been asked if they would be interested in two Mindfulness workshops for the PhD students. Description and evaluation from similar workshop at University of Copenhagen had been attached to the agenda and formed the basis of the discussion.

One of the points made was that it was a cool suggestion, but a problem with the amount of time people would need to invest in it. It was also discussed who were the intended target group: PhD students already under stress or to prevent stress.

Action: The secretariat will talk further to the lecturers regarding the time aspect, target groups and possible connections to the onboarding programme.

10. The Graduate School finances

David Lundbek Egholm gave a brief overview of the Graduate School finances, and in general terms how the money is spent.

11. For your information

There was a follow-up from the meeting with the lecturer at the Science Teaching course. The questions discussed were:

- How to better integrate students who do not teach at the time of taking the course or who do not teach at all.
- The possibility of including some questions from the lecturer in the course evaluation.

It was clear from the meeting that the lecturers are very aware of these matters, and will focus even more on it in future classes.

12. Any other business

It was mentioned that there has been a rather large waiting list for the last two Science Teaching courses. This has been discussed with the course provider, who have been able to offer an extra course in Spring 2024.