

Graduate School of Natural Sciences (GSNS)

PhD committee meeting

Time: Tuesday, 24 January 2023 at 15.15-17.15

Place: Ny Munkegade 120, bldg. 1520, room 737

Minutes

1. Meeting information

Participants:

Ernst-Martin Füchtbauer, Duncan Sutherland, Henriette Rübsam, Clémence Krystel Marie Rose, Mads Blichfeldt Amdisen, Erik Asbjørn Mikkelsen Jensen, Sebastian Harald Riedelbauch, Pernille Nedergaard Madsen, Tammy Ai Tian Ho, Niklas Lawaetz Østergaard, Simon Panyella Pedersen, Juan Carlos Zamora Luria, Anders Sten Kortegård, Carlo Klapproth, Jens Kristian Refsgaard Schou, Harith Rathish, Anne-Kathrine Kure Larsen and David Lundbek Egholm

Apologies for absence: Ragnhild Ørbæk Laursen, Joanna Martin Davies, Mathias Østbjerg Vang and Andreas Dueholm Bertelsen and Anders Møller

The secretariat:

Rikke J. Ljungmann

First, there was an opening meeting (items 2-12) followed by an ordinary PhD committee meeting (items 13-23).

Opening meeting:

2. Round of introduction – beginning of opening meeting

Beginning of opening meeting

There was a round of introduction to meet and greet everyone.

3. Approval of minutes from the PhD committee meeting on 1 December 2021

Approved

4. Rules of procedure for the PhD committee

The retiring chairman of the PhD committee Ernst-Martin Füchtbauer informed the committee members of the Rules of procedure for the PhD committee.

There are 11 members, namely 3 members of staff and 8 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 committee also has representatives in the joint NAT and TECH course committee, and in the well-being committee.

The public can participate in meetings (unless items are closed).

Finally, the retiring chairman also mentioned that in case of long-term absence, (more than 2 months, e.g. parental leave, illness or, if necessary, stay abroad), the substitute can take over. Particularly in case of long-term illness, this will not be known to the committee or the administration, and in such cases the member is urged to contact the Chairman or Rikke J. Ljungmann, if possible.

5. Information concerning the PhD committee's tasks

The retiring chairman of the PhD committee Ernst-Martin Füchtbauer informed the committee members of the PhD committee's tasks. These include for instance:

- Approving GSNS 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.

6. Election of Chairman

As per the Rules of procedure, a Chairman must be elected from among the academic staff of the PhD committee.

Ernst-Martin Füchtbauer was elected.

7. Election of Vice-chairman

As per the Rules of procedure, a Vice-chair must be elected from among the elected PhD student members of the PhD committee.

Erik Asbjørn Mikkelsen Jensen was elected.

8. Election of representative to participate in the NAT-TECH Course committee

As per the Terms of reference for the joint Course committee between the two graduate schools GSNS and GSTS, a joint Course committee is set up. The Chair and Vice-chair of each of the two PhD committees are born members. One other member from each of the two PhD committees must be elected.

Sebastian Harald Riedelbauch was elected.

9. Election of representative to participate in the 'Wellbeing Committee'

By the end of 2021, a wellbeing committee was set up to discuss and ensure the wellbeing of all AU PhD students – in Danish 'Trivselsudvalg'. The committee consists of all five Heads of school at AU, representatives of AUPA (Aarhus University PhD Association) and one PhD student representative from each of the five PhD committees. Thus, one PhD student member must be elected.

Jens Kristian Refsgaard Schou was elected member, and Niklas Lawaetz Østergaard was elected substitute.

Action: It was decided that it would be useful to discuss the purpose of the wellbeing committee at the next PhD committee meeting.

10. PhD Committee meeting dates in 2023

PhD Committee meeting dates in 2023 will be set up from meeting to meeting – please make sure that all Outlook calendars are updated.

11. For your information

- The Graduate School would like to include information (name and programme) concerning the PhD committee members on the GSNS website (see: <https://phd.nat.au.dk/about-us/organisation/> under The GSNS PhD committee), and, if necessary, in agendas/minutes from the PhD committee meetings. Due to GDPR legislation, the Graduate School needs a consent form in order to do so, and the PhD student members were therefore asked to consider if they would sign such a declaration of consent. It was stressed that it is of course voluntary, and if preferred not to sign such a declaration, other solutions can be found in order to comply with GDPR regulations. Rikke J. Ljungmann will later send an e-mail.

- Last year, the PhD student representatives introduced themselves in the GSNS news e-mail to all PhD students following the opening meeting. We would like to repeat this if you all like the idea. Rikke J. Ljungmann will later send an e-mail, including last year's example.

12. Any other business - end of opening meeting

Rikke J. Ljungmann mentioned that the PhD school will send out a support letter to retiring members.

End of opening meeting

Ordinary meeting

13. Approval of agenda – beginning of ordinary meeting

Beginning of ordinary meeting

Agenda approved

14. Announcements – Overview of assessment committees, exemptions, etc. for the period 23 November 2022 to 13 January 2023

As usual at each committee meeting, an overview was 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 mentioned that it has been delegated to the Heads of programme and Heads of School to approve assessment committees, requests and credit transfer, hence the overviews at each meeting and mentioning of important cases.

David Lundbek Egholm also explained the rules of impartiality with regard to the assessment committees for the PhD defences and gave an update on qualifying exams, defences and requests, e.g. corona extensions.

Corona extensions are given due to loss of time because of corona lockdown, closing of labs, etc. The number of applications is going down.

15. News from the PhD students

- The newly published article from Videnskab.dk on co-authorship was mentioned – also in terms of the way the article was angled towards throwing suspicion on the PhD students and bearing in mind that the response rate was only 6 %. David Lundbek Egholm said that he had an appointment with the journalist to discuss further and that it should also be seen in connection with the Pleasedon'tstealmywork campaigning. Furthermore, he mentioned that AU is already focusing in this. At NAT for instance through the onboarding programme on research integrity.

- It was asked if some things had come out of the GSNS seminar at programme level. The response was that there had been initiatives at some programmes which were at least partly due to the seminar in October 2022. For instance, Physics and Astronomy is working on a PhD Tips and Tricks Guide.

16. PhD courses

16A. PhD course in dissemination

The offers in the attached documents were discussed.

Action: David Lundbek Egholm should talk further to the Communications department to get more information – and in English.

16B. PhD course in BSc/MSc supervision

CED had been contacted and would most likely be able to offer such a course. They already offer a similar course to Health PhD students.

Action: Rikke J. Ljungmann sends the course description from Health to the committee. It will be discussed further at the next PhD committee meeting.

Included here:

PhD-student as supervisor for undergraduate students – how and when?

<https://au.phd-courses.dk/CourseCatalog/ShowCourse/1182?returnUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fau.phd-courses.dk%2FCourseCatalog%2FShowCourses%2F%3Fquery%3Dsupervision%26showOpen%3Dtrue%26sortOrder%3DStartDate>

16C. A course on 'How to manage your PhD project'

At the last course committee meeting, the committee agreed that it would be a good idea to offer a course on 'How to manage your PhD project' because a lot of the stress levels might have to do with the organisational part and being able to structure and look ahead in your PhD project. A course might help alleviate that. It was suggested that the course should merit 1-2 ECTS.

Action: Look at the onboarding programme to see if we need anything extra for NAT and then discuss it in the course committee to get input from TECH.

17. Follow-up from the GSNS seminar, incl. discussing a possible GSNS PhD association

A discussion took place and revolved mainly around the topic of a faculty-wide PhD association.

As it is now, most of the programmes do not have local PhD associations.

Ernst-Martin Füchtbauer said that if the PhD students have the energy to come up with a faculty-wide PhD association, it would matter greatly. However, it should not drain the resources of the local PhD associations.

It was mentioned that PhD student members from the present committee, i.e. the faculty-wide PhD committee, could perhaps coordinate between the programmes.

Action: It was decided to discuss a faculty-wide PhD association again, e.g. in 3-6 months' time.

18. Wellbeing funds – suggestions for 2023?

There were no suggestions at the moment.

19. Topics to discuss in the PhD committee in 2023

What should the PhD committee focus on in the year to come? Ideas are most welcome.

One thing mentioned was the composition of VIP representatives for the committee from next year – should it reflect the new structure for the PhD student members. This will be discussed at the May meeting.

Action: If you have any ideas send them to Ernst-Martin Füchtbauer and Rikke J. Ljungmann.

20. SDD for PhD students

There was a discussion on SDD for PhD students both in terms of specific phrasing of the questions and the importance of having the SDD. David Lundbek Egholm also mentioned that it will be discussed the Faculty management. It differed between the departments/programmes with whom the PhD students have MUS, but the important thing is that the SDD is held, and that the SDD guide is used.

Action: The secretariat will take the specific comments further.

Action: David Lundbek Egholm will mention SDD at the Introduction days.

21. PhD student members of the local programme committee to participate in the evaluation of applications?

Pros and cons were debated. In the end, it was decided not to include PhD student members of the local programme committee in the evaluation of applications.

22. For your information

The Course committee had asked to see future course evaluations concerning the Science Teaching course after each held course in order to be able to follow changes and improvements of the course. Improvements seem to have taken effect.

23. Any other business - end of ordinary meeting

Danske Universiteter (Universities Denmark) is organising a webinar on wellbeing among PhD students taking a starting point in the Wellbeing catalogue. The webinar is 17 March 2023 at 9.00-10.30.

Action: Rikke J. Ljungmann will forward the meeting invitation and the Wellbeing catalogue.

End of ordinary meeting