Agenda PhD committee meeting
- Tuesday, 20 January 2026 from 15.15 to 17.00 -
Meeting room: Ny Munkegade 120, building 1520, room 737

1. Meeting information
Participants: Amalie Arildslund, Blanca Gil Rosell, Bo Volf Brøchner, Caroline Palma Berger, Cyril Matousek, Ditlev E. Brodersen, Duncan Sutherland, Emilie Holkgaard, Hans-Jörg Schulz, Jacob Christian Warming, Jeppe Bayer Pedersen, Johannes Ellemose, Krista Agathe Bossow, Mads Ramsgaard Stoltenberg, Malthe Kjær Bendtsen, Marie Vogel Kolte, Marius Vendelbo Bjørnbak Brix, Niels Rysgaard Sørensen, Ole Bækgaard Nielsen and Sophie Vidal

Apologies for absence: Lasse Messell Desdorf, Ama Bembua Bainson and Brian Julsgaard

The secretariat: Frederikke K. Hansen and Rikke J. Ljungmann

First, there was an opening meeting (items 2-11) followed by an ordinary PhD committee meeting (items 12-18).

- Opening meeting –

2. Round of introduction – beginning of opening meeting
There was a round of introduction to meet and greet everyone.

3. Rules of procedure for the PhD committee
Ditlev E. Brodersen introduced the Rules of Procedure. There are 12 members, namely four members of staff and eight 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.

The Chair and Vice chair prepare the agenda for each meeting and can also make decisions between meetings, if necessary. All committee 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 - to the extent that we discuss personal information or GDPR information. Rikke J. Ljungmann added that the minutes will be made available at the GSNS website.

The committee also has representatives in the joint NAT and TECH course committee.

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

4. Information concerning the PhD committee's tasks
The committee's tasks include, for instance:

- Approving GSNS transferable PhD courses
- Discussing various matters relating to the PhD School and making recommendations hereof to the Head of Graduate School.

In addition, approving applications for credits, exemptions, and making recommendations regarding the composition of assessment committees. In practice, this is done at each committee meeting, where the committee is presented with the following:

- An overview of assessment committees in connection with PhD defences
- An overview of exemptions
- An overview of credit granted

By being presented with the overviews, it will also be possible to look at any trends or tendencies.

5. Status of the 2025 PhD committee's work
The retiring Vice chair of the PhD committee Jeppe Bayer Pedersen provided a status of the 2025 PhD committee's work. The following topics have among other things been discussed:

- Research environment change: If PhD students are abroad for less than 90 days, an alternative plan must be made and approved
- Integration of the PhD students into the PhD programme: A joint list of initiatives from all PhD programmes has been compiled and sent to the Heads of Programme for discussion in the local PhD programme committees
- Supervision and teaching hours: A subcommittee was established to look into the issue, and they prepared a survey which was sent to all PhD students. Based on the survey, the subcommittee presented the outcome to Dean's office
- Evaluation of the onboarding programme: As a result of the evaluation, the programme will be organised in a more condensed version, so all courses are held consecutively and not on different days during a semester.

6. Election of Chair
Duncan Sutherland was elected Chair.

7. Election of Vice chair
Jeppe Bayer Pedersen was re-elected Vice chair.

8. Election of representative to participate in the NAT-TECH Course committee
Sophie Vidal was elected for the Nat-Tech Course Committee.

9. PhD Committee meeting dates in 2026
The Secretariat will settle the dates. It is possible to attend the meetings online, if necessary.

10. For your information
Ditlev E. Brodersen mentioned that GSNS would like to include information (name and programme) about the PhD committee members on the GSNS website (see:

https://phd.nat.au.dk/about-us/organisation/ under GSNS PhD committee), and, if necessary, in agendas/minutes from the PhD committee meetings. Due to GDPR legislation, GSNS needs a signed consent form to do so, and the PhD student members are therefore asked to consider if they will sign a declaration of consent. It is voluntary. An e-mail will be sent later giving the PhD students time to consider.

Furthermore, Ditlev E. Brodersen mentioned that last year the PhD student representatives introduced themselves in the GSNS news e-mail to all PhD students following the opening meeting. It would be nice to repeat this. An e-mail will be sent later.

11. Any other business - end of opening meeting
It was mentioned that all new members are more than welcome to reach out to the outgoing members, if they would like to know more about earlier discussed issues.

End of opening meeting.

- Ordinary meeting -

12. Approval of agenda – beginning of ordinary meeting
The agenda was approved.

13. Announcements – Overview of assessment committees, exemptions, etc. for the period 4 November 2025 to 12 January 2026
Ole Bækgaard Nielsen introduced the item. Due to the Rules of procedure, the committee must look at and approve these matters. In practice, this is done through the overviews and discussions presented at the committee meetings.

14. Quality in the PhD education 2025 (KiP)
Every four years, Aarhus University conducts a survey on the quality in the PhD process (Kvalitet i ph.d.-forløb) at all five Graduate Schools. The 2025 survey was concluded at the end of 2025.

Ditlev Egeskov Brodersen went through the report and concluded that it gives the impression of an overall healthy and well-functioning PhD school, although improvements could be made in several areas, including::

- gaps in supervision and support
- teaching, workload and working conditions
- well-being, isolation and stress
- learning outcome and career perspectives

Ole Bækgaard Nielsen added that there are issues regarding:

- stress
- loneliness
- teaching obligations

Action: It was decided to identify top three issues that the committee will focus on looking further into.

15. News from the NAT/TECH PhD course committee
The retiring Vice chair of the 2025 PhD committee Jeppe Bayer Pedersen provided a status of the 2025 NAT/TECH PhD course committee's work.

A lot has been achieved, including:

- Approval of new PhD courses: *Artificial Intelligence for Scientific Writing* and *Introduction to Data Visualisation*.
- General focus on GAI in the offered PhD courses
- Suggested that PhD courses that are offered twice a year will have one on campus and one online
- Arrange a hand-over meeting between the outgoing and incoming course committees

16. Topics to discuss in the PhD committee in 2026
Several topics were mentioned, e.g. that a free Danish course for international PhD students could be beneficial. Furthermore, it was mentioned that there might be more to gain from the GSNS seminar in 2024 and it should be a topic for further discussion. It was discussed if a seminar should be held in the last part of 2026, and this will be discussed at the next meeting. Lastly, it was emphasised that it is important to evaluate the integration of iNANO PhD students transferred to new departments as of 1 August 2026.

Action: The summaries of the workshops from the GSNS seminar in 2024 will be sent by e-mail to all members and added to the agenda for the next committee meeting.

17. News from the PhD students
No issues were brought forward for discussion.

18. Any other business - end of ordinary meeting
The outgoing committee members were thanked for their great work and relevant discussions.

End of ordinary meeting.