

Meeting date: 19 November 2020 9:00-10:00

Meeting place: Zoom

Meeting subject: PhD-programme committee - Biology

Attendees:

VIPs: Bente Aagaard Lomstein (BAL), Kurt Thomas Jensen (chair) (KTJ), Mark Bayley (MB), Signe Normand (SN), Volker Loeschke (VL)

PhD-students: Ann-Sofie Dam (ASD), Stefano Scilipoti (SS), Kris-Emil Mose Jørgensen (KEJ), Solvei Mundbjerg Jensen (SJ), Michael Bjerre Pedersen (MP), Clemence Krystal Marie Rose (CR)

PhD-programme secretary: Benita Nordentoft Hyltdgaard (BNH)

Agenda:

1. Background and presentation
2. Proposals to strengthen PhD-studies at Biology
3. Status-meetings every six-months
4. Organize an annual PhD-day
5. Coaching activities and workshops about tools to handle challenges during a PhD-study
6. Organize workshop on career-planning
7. Other suggestions?
8. Part 2: 10:00-11:00 (without PhD-students)

1. Background and presentation:

- KTJ welcomed everybody and thanked the PhD-students who has signed up for the meeting. KTJ highlighted the importance of including PhD-students in the discussions of PhD-related topics
- Presentation round
- KTJ informed about the workload in the PhD-programme committee: Approx. four one-hour meetings per year. (PhDs are rewarded with 10 hours of salaried work per year participating in the committee).

2. Proposals to strengthen PhD-studies at Biology (App. 1: Note prepared by Trine Bilde – critical issues stressed by PhD-students at ‘Genetics & Ecology’):

- The welcome-plan for new PhD-students at Biology will be re-visited; Information material, introduction day at GSNS and at Biology etc.:
 - A list of “Who-to-go-to” to be included in a quick-guide or on the department webpage (see further below)
 - Welcome letters and other written information: New PhD-students receive several information documents from the department and GSNS. BNH will go through all written information and will re-write welcome letter, information on the department webpage and maybe a new PhD quick-guide
 - Guided tour through the department buildings with introductions to relevant persons (incl. administration): It will be further discussed how this should be implemented
 - GSNS information day (6 hour meeting) held four times a year: The PhD students think that it is too long and that the information load is too heavy to comprehend in one day. Discussion of



the possibility of getting ECTS for participating in introduction day (practiced at KU). KTJ will consider this

- All PhDs should have an introduction meeting when they start. BAL informed that this is not always the case. KTJ will consider if there should be a formal description or check-list for an introduction meeting with new PhD-students
- BNH suggested that new PhDs get a “Buddy” (experienced PhD who can help with everyday issues and make sure that the new PhD student is on-boarded properly and feel welcome – practiced at FOOD). Some PhDs supported the idea. VL suggested that PhD students should get teaching-hours. This will be discussed further

3. **Status-meetings every six-months** (App. 2: Description of ½-year meetings at section of Microbiology)

- KTJ asked all to discuss the model with PhD students and supervisors in your sections. We need to look at what the sections are already doing. There are diverging opinions and it needs to be discussed further.
- BAL will complete an additional ½-year meeting according to the model and will evaluate the process. BAL will re-phrase the description of the model to clarify which parts that are mandatory and which are not.
- Discussion:
 - BAL presented a model for ½-year evaluation meetings: The model will ensure a throughout discussion of the progress in the project, including future plans and also evaluate the well-being of the PhD-student. After the meeting the student should write a summary of the meeting and discuss this with the mentor and supervisor a week after the meeting – this is to ensure that all agree on the outcome of the meeting. The summary can be uploaded to the PhD planner. The PhD-student can bring a buddy to the meeting. The meeting should not be an extra burden to the student, but should be considered a help to write the summary for the PhD plan and make sure that the PhD project progress as planned
 - Comments from PhD-student: Some supervisors are too ambitious and make unrealistic plans for the PhD-students. The plans should be realistic to avoid stress.
 - Comments from PhDs and VIPs: Some sections already have regular seminars, where PhD-students present their project and work approx. two times a year. VL: Each section should be allowed to do this in their way. BAL: Twice a year we have a day for master students, where PhDs also present their work + presentations at regular seminars. It should therefore not be an extra burden to make a project presentation in a ½-year meeting. MJ: ½-year meetings should be optional. We have seminars regularly about our research and future plans – so we already have the possibility to discuss our project with external researchers. CR: Seminars and ½-year meetings are not the same – in the seminars, we do not talk about well-being. Many PhDs feel that the part A exam is not sufficient and ask for more opportunities to discuss the progress in their project.

- MB: The idea of this new meeting model is to catch the ones who are struggling. MB addressed that this meeting model would add extra pressure on the PhD-students who are already struggling, whilst it would not be considered as such for strong students.
- SN: PhD-students should get ECTS for these ½-year meetings
- SN asked if supervisor or PhD student should call for these meetings? Pros and cons were discussed – no conclusion was reached.

4. **Organize an annual PhD-day** (themes and activities)

- We will aim at several shorter workshops/events (online or normal-show events) instead of one annual PhD-day
- Participants can get ECTS points for attending the PhD day/events
- PhD-students need to be responsible for organizing the event, but BNH will help. PhD-students can get teaching hours for organizing PhD events
- Discussion:
 - KTJ informed that it is highly relevant with events where PhD-students across the department can meet, but also stated that participation has been limited the past years.
 - CR: Could we receive ECTS points instead of teaching hours for organizing? KTJ will consider this.
 - PhD students support the idea of a PhD day
 - SN suggested several shorter events instead of one yearly whole-day event, e.g. theme based events. Some events could be online
 - SN suggested that PhD-students could sign up for an organizing committee, in the same way as teaching. (BNH: I can add it in Gonzales, if preferred)
 - CR was interested in being part of the organizing committee

5. **Coaching activities and workshops about tools to handle challenges during a PhD-study**

- Not discussed due to lack of time
- Could be part of a PhD day / a shorter PhD event

6. **Organize workshop on career-planning**

- Not discussed due to lack of time
- Could be part of a PhD day / a shorter PhD event

7. **Other suggestions?**

- The workload and rules regarding PhD courses and ECTS points
 - KTJ: We want to make a catalogue with other activities that can be accredited with ECTS-points. PhD-students and supervisors are asked to send suggestions to KTJ and BNH
 - KTJ will look into how ECTS are awarded at other universities to clarify if there are differences and how to address this
 - VIPs asked if it is possible to be more flexible in the evaluation of the 30 ECTS, since the official rules states “approximately 30 ECTS” (see below in Danish). KTJ confirmed that PhD-students can pass the exam with less than 30 ECTS – but it is not possible to formulate rules about it: Official rules regarding ECTS-points:

§ 7. Ph.d.-uddannelsen tilrettelægges efter regler fastsat af institutionen.

Stk. 2. Uddannelsen omfatter: 1) Gennemførelse af et selvstændigt forskningsarbejde under vejledning (ph.d.-projektet). 2) Gennemførelse af ph.d.-kurser eller andre lignende uddannelseselementer af et samlet omfang svarende til ca. 30 ECTS-point

- PhD-studies during the Corona-period – challenges
 - KTJ: Some of you have problems with staying abroad and courses. SN: Do PhD-students still get reduction in teaching hours, if they are not going because of the corona-crisis? KTJ: GSNS deals with the reduction in teaching and the rules about this. The students most probably need to apply for a reduction in teaching hours if their stay abroad. This will be clarified and communicated.

8. Part 2: 10:00-11:00 (without PhD-students)

- Meddelelser
- Indstilling af rundens ansøgere
- Evt.

Action-list

Registration	Topic	Resp.	Deadline
19-11-2020	Activities: Send suggestions with activities which could give ECTS or teaching hours to BNH and KTJ	All	ASAP – before next meeting
19-11-2020	ECTS points for activities: Send suggestions to BNH and KTJ	All	Before next meeting
19-11-2020	ECTS points for activities: GSNS Information day, PhD events – organizing and participation, rules at KU,	KTJ	November - January
19-11-2020	½-year meetings: Re-phrase model description	BAL	Before next meeting
19-11-2020	½-year meetings: Discuss model with PhD-students and supervisors in your section	All	Before next meeting
19-11-2020	PhD events: Organizing committee. Encourage PhD-students at your section to sign up. Send mail to BNH	All	ASAP – before next meeting
19-11-2020	PhD events: Send relevant topics to BNH	All	ASAP – before next meeting
19-11-2020	Welcome to new PhD-student (welcome letter, webpage, “Who-to-go-to”, GSNS information day)	BNH	November - January
19-11-2020	Check-list: Guided tour – new PhD-students	BNH	Discussed at next meeting
19-11-2020	Check-list/model: Information meeting – new PhD-students	KTJ	Discussed at next meeting