

PhD Committee Meeting No 4



MINUTES

12 DECEMBER 2024

Forum PhD Committee Meeting

Meeting held 12th December 2024 13:00-15:00

BÜLOWSVEJ 17

Place Bülowssvej 17, Frederiksberg, 1st fl., A126

FREDERIKSBERG C

Minute taker Charlotte Krenk, PhD Committee Secretary

DIR 45 35 33 37 32

Present

phd-committee@science.ku.dk

David B. Collinge (Chair, PLEN/BIO), Henriette Steiner (member, IGN/SNM), Niels Martin Møller (member, MATH/ DIKU/IND), Stergios Piligkos (member, CHEM/NBI), Debby Schmidt (member, IGN/SNM), Andrew David Harold Stratton (member, IFRO/FOOD/NEXS), Victoria Thusgaard Ruhoff (deputy member, NBI/CHEM), Max Frank (deputy member, PLEN/BIO), Theresa Klara Pfau (member, NBI/CHEM)

Guests

Lise Arleth (Vice Dean for Research/Head of the PhD School), Camilla Volden Van (FS), Pia Fredberg Nielsen (point FS), Marie Louise Holm (FS/PhD administration), Boris Bolvig Kjær (deputy member, MATH/DIKU/IND), Christian Bertram (DIKU, PhD student), Johanna Marie E Ettingshausen (BIO, PhD student), Lisa Gonzales (IFRO?? , PhD student), Malthe Skytte Nordentoft Nielsen (member pr 2025, NBI/CHEM)

Apologies

Morten Arendt Rasmussen (member, FOOD/NEXS/IFRO), Nena Battenburg (member, MATH/DIKU/IND), Courtney Horn Herms (vice chair of the committee and member, PLEN/BIO)

Ad 1) Presentation of Agenda

David B. Collinge, Chair, opened the meeting and presented the agenda. Before proceeding David presented the result of the election for the SCIENCE PhD Committee student members for 2025.

Similarly to last year several representation areas did not register candidates for the election. Therefore, a process needs to be initiated at the department level to find and present candidates as soon as possible in order for there to be enough student representatives in the PhD Committee for the coming year.

Election results:

NBI/CHEM:

- Malthe Skytte Nordentoft Nielsen (NBI) member
- Lukas Wolf Kristensen (NBI) deputy member

MATH/DIKU:

- Boris Kjær (MATH) member
- Christian Bertram (DIKU) deputy member (elected Cecilie Olesen Recke/MATH chose to withdraw in favor of Christian Bertram in order to get a representative from DIKU)

PLEN/BIO:

- Johanna Marie E Ettingshausen (BIO) member
- Max Frank (PLEN) deputy member

The PhD students from each representation areas with vacant positions are called to contact the Deputy Heads of Research (VILF's) at their departments in order to get candidates elected and notify Charlotte Krenk, PhD Committee secretary.

After the meeting is has been settled that:

IFRO/FOOD/NEXS:

- Lisa Anita Gotzmann (FOOD) member
- Andrew David Harold Stratton (IFRO) deputy member

Ad 2) Approval of the Minutes from the Meeting 5th September 2024

The minutes from the meeting on 5th September have been uploaded to the group room at KU-net and the PhD Committee has had the

opportunity to comment. No comments were added, and the minutes were approved.

Ad 3) Decision: Process for Reviewing Approved PhD Courses

Lise Aleth presented the point. The PhD Committee was asked to decide on a process for reviewing approved PhD courses.

The idea is to do a course evaluation immediately after the course is completed, then talk to the course coordinator to know the outcome and see if any adjustments are needed. The Committee was invited to comment.

Debby Schmidt found it a good idea to evaluate the course. Stergios Piligkos agreed and asked if the Fundamentals courses will be evaluated as well. Lise confirmed but specified that it is done in a separate process.

Debby pointed to a challenge she experiences as a student as you never know if your feedback was heard. She suggested a possibility to get notified about whether one's feedback was adopted.

There was a brief discussion on how this could be done. The evaluation system at the bachelor's and master's level was mentioned. The discussion continued with an exchange of views on challenges and benefits. All agreed that it's important to be wary not to create a paper monster (a huge administrative task).

Lise invited the PhD Committee to comment on the process plan. No comments were made, and the process plan was approved.

Lise thanked the committee for the input on behalf of David and her.

Ad 4) Directing PhD Students to the MSc Courses

David presented the point. It appears that some of the PhD students who need to take MSc courses to increase their field specific knowledge have a hard time finding the MSc courses as they mainly look in PhD Planner and not the course database for MSc courses.

The PhD committee was invited to share knowledge of the issue and ways to overcome it.

Stergios confirms having experienced this and it indeed was a challenge to locate the courses.

Victoria suggested that the PhD students are guided on how to find the relevant courses as part of the Fundamentals course so all can find it and it doesn't disappear in a huge amount of information. This is supported by Lise.

Some PhD students confirm it to be confusing as some MSc courses appear in Front Planer but not all. Lise said that in the future no MSc courses will be in Front Planer as there is not administrative resources for updating course information more than one place.

Stergios suggests that the link for the MSc courses is included in future welcome material.

The Committee concludes that there are currently challenges with finding MSc courses. It should be prioritized to make it easier for the PhD student to find relevant MSc courses. It could be beneficial to how to find courses in the on-boarding process for new PhD students. In the near future MSc courses will be removed from FrontPlanner.

Ad 5) Input for the Description of Fundamentals Module 4

The PhD Committee was invited to comment and give input to the description of the Fundamentals Module 4, with special emphasis on the scientific dissemination element. Lise invited the PhD Committee to share their views on:

- What type of dissemination activities should be included?
- Should it be peer-to-peer dissemination or dissemination to a broader audience? (it is not possible to include both).

Debby pointed out that to some extent doing a presentation to other academics within Fundamentals would already be 'a broader audience' as they are outside your specific field. Focusing on dissemination to an audience even further from one's field could lead to a reaction from PhD students who can find it to be too far from their PhD work as they want to stay in their path.

Doing poster was suggested as a useful format as it holds possible benefits in various directions. Lise found this to be a good idea.

The timing of the dissemination part was discussed in relation to the in-dept work needed for the thesis. Lise clarified that that module 4 is taken around 9 months before the thesis deadline, which should

give there should be time to go in depth with the thesis. Also, the dissemination aspect of the thesis work was discussed.

Henriette suggested the possibility of including both dissemination aspects as you have a first part which is focused on the PhD thesis, and a second part where the students can be divided into groups in accordance with each student's needs. That would also give room to students who might want to communicate to the industry. Debby gave support to Henriettes suggestion.

Stergios pointed to the academic presentations at department level which can also be seen and used as dissemination opportunities. Lise referred to a survey done last year among the PhD students about their needs and wishes and they showed to be very down to earth.

Victoria pointed to the benefits of learning how to handle question-and-answer situations in order to learn how to make good responses. Lise informed the Committee that this is in fact already included in the beginning of Fundamentals.

Niels-Martin proposed to include a pool of good examples of dissemination within each field.

There was a short exchange of views on the timing of Fundamentals. Lise finished off by saying that right hey are not going to change the placing of the Fundamentals. She continued by thanking the Committee for the input. She will be returning with a suggestion on how to include the wishes and points presented – a kind of all-inclusive solution, where there could be a general part and a division into specific topics.

Henriette called that PhD students to volunteer to make suggestions. Debby, Max, Victoria and Henriette will meet in week 4 2025 to work on a suggestion for a dissemination day as part of the Fundamentals.

Ad 6) Response to sexism study by the Working Group for Wellbeing

Max presented an initiative from the PhD Committee's Working Group for Wellbeing (WGFW) to respond to the study published in the beginning 2024 on sexism and discrimination experience by PhD students at University of Copenhagen. (Slides are included with the minutes).

Max pointed out that PhD students are a vulnerable group due to them being early in their career, many are new to the culture due to being foreigners, heavily dependent on supervisors and seniors and unaware of their rights.

The wellness group presented a set of specific initiatives aimed at improving the conditions for PhD students as a way to decrease risk of discrimination and sexism.

Highlights from the proposed initiatives:

- Welcome guide and onboarding (folder and Fundamentals course)
- Creating more spaces where PhD students can share their experiences e.g. support to social PhD Activities beyond introductory classes and establish mentorship outside the hallway
- Give PhD students a possibility to “review” their lab in order to increase possibilities to create good supervisor-PhD student matches for future PhD students
- Give the possibility to contact previous PhD students before applying for at PhD position
- Remind supervisors of their obligations and PhD students of their rights
- Increase incentives for supervisors to care
- Initiate a PhD project (anthropology) to look into the culture at the faculty

The PhD Committee was invited to comment. The initiative to do a response and propose initiatives was widely supported by the committee members.

Lise thanked for a good presentation and invited the wellness group to come and present it to the Deputy Heads of Research. It helps in these cases to have the management on board.

Henriette mentioned that there was a type of PhD project done as the anthropological study that the wellness group suggests done at some point.

Victoria shared that she contacted PhD students before she applied. She found that it is up to people themselves to take the initiative to do that. Debby – on the contrary – found that it the university should

implement the procedure that it should be possible to talk to other lab students under the same supervisor.

Boris pointed to good local management as key in these matters and supported Lise's initiative to involve the Deputy Heads of Research. He mentioned exit interviews as powerful tools.

Henriette drew a connection between the proposed initiatives here and the input given to the presentation on mentorship at the previous PhD Committee meeting regarding mentorship, where the importance of the PhD coordinators was mentioned.

Debby mentioned a current experiment at Department for Geosciences and Natural Resource Management to have an off-boarding process for the PhD students, which involves the Head of Department.

Victoria suggested there could be established a prize for the laboratory with the best work environment.

Ad 7) Present a New Welcome Guide to all PhD students with suggestion to implementation across SCIENCE

Johanna presented a new welcome guide to PhD students, which has been implemented at Department of Biology. The PhD Committee was invited to discuss the potential and possibilities to implement it across the departments at SCIENCE. The welcome guide is found in Appendix 3 and can also be found [here](#).

The guide is the result of a cooperation between Johanna and professor and VILF at Department of Biology Michael Poulsen.

Highlights from the guide:

- Presentation of relevant people
- Guide to where to find what e.g. rules in order to navigate the Danish society (taxes, digital ID, etc.) because these things take up a lot of time to get to know and get sorted.
- The idea is to have the presentation of all the admin info on the first day before you might have access to other KU net.

Marie-Louise, part of the future administrative management of the PhD School, suggested that guidelines is centrally distributed as she

pointed to the challenges with ensuring that the content is updated and continues to be useful. Currently there is a tendency to PhD students taking advice and information from other PhD students, which might not be updated as sources change, and rules might as well.

Johanna on the other hand found that the task of developing and distributing a welcome guide should be anchored in the departments e.g. in order to be specific to local conditions. Debby suggested an exchange of welcome folders.

Ad 8) Status of the Administrative Change

Marie-Louise Holm from the PhD administration gave a short status on the preparation for the organizational shift following the administrative reform, which is to be implemented pr. 1st March 2025.

Marie-Louise will be part of the future PhD administration. They are working on a new, joined PhD administration. So far it will be divided into the following teams: PhD progress process, courses, broad support (economy, management support and committee support).

They are working on a new governance framework, PhD planner, service catalogue.

Stergios aired a concern regarding the financing currently covering external stays (COSE) which is now handled within the department but will be centralized and seems to include a long application process.

Henriette asked about the further life of the Vision Project. Lises responded that it will be carried on in the new organization.

Henriette asked for the PhD committee to be consulted in the future in regard to new initiatives discussed in the forum on mentorship etc.

Ad 9) Status from the Working Groups

There was no further news from the working groups. The working groups are called to give notice to the PhD Committee secretary and/or to Chair of the Committee in advance so it can be fitted into the agenda.

- WG for Dissemination (increase knowledge of the PhD Committee)
Members: Niels Martin (MATH), Courtney (PLEN), Nena (MATH). More are welcome to join.

- WG for Improved Wellbeing of the Ph.D. students

Members: Henriette (IGN), Teresa (NBI), Debby (MATH), Nena (MATH), Johanna (BIO), Max (PLEN), Lisa (FOOD) and as guest Niels Martin (MATH)

- WG for Mentorship
Members: David (PLEN) and Henriette (IGN)

Ad 10) Dates for the upcoming year PhD Committee Meetings

The updated meeting dates for the PhD Committee 2025 are as follows:

20th February 10-12 (moved from 13th February)

16th June 9-11

4th September 13-15

11th December 9-11 (moved from the afternoon)

Ad 11) A.O.B

PhD days count as miscellaneous activities. Stergios suggested that the PhD Coordinators are made aware of it.