

## **Graduate School of Technical Sciences (GSTS) PhD Committee meeting**

**Time:** Wednesday, 13 September 2023 at 11.30 – 14.00.

**Place:** Ny Munkegade 120, 8000 Aarhus C, building 737

### **Minutes:**

#### **Meeting information**

**Participants:** Aaron Hurst, Anne-Cathrine Storgaard Danielsen, Julie Frost Dahl, Thea Quistgaard, Lis Wollesen de Jonge, Marianne Hammershøj, Stefan Hallersted and Brian Vinter

**Apologies for absence:** Morten Frederiksen, Ida Marie Gerdes, Frederikke Kongsted Hansen and Simon Dinitzen

**Secretariat:** Rikke J. Ljungmann

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

#### **1: Approval of agenda**

Approved

#### **2: Approval of minutes**

Approved

#### **3: Announcements – Overview of assessment committees, exemptions etc. for the period 25.04.2023- 03.09.2023**

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

- Defences – assessment committees
- Qualifying exams
- Requests

There was a question on the relative high number of supervisor changes. Brian Vinter answered that these are usually related to tenure track assistant professors becoming permanently employed and therefore allowed to become main supervisors, and the higher proportion of Industrial PhD students' company supervisors getting employment elsewhere and the subsequent need to find a new company supervisor.

There was a question on gender diversity in relation to assessment committees. Brian Vinter answered that this relates to the unfortunate still lack of gender diversity in those types of positions, but that it is important to be aware of and focusing on it.

#### **4: AU elections coming up**

AU elections are coming up and therefore also elections for the PhD committee next year. Both PhD students and staff members are up for elections this time.

Nomination period:

Friday 6 October 2023 at 9:00 - Thursday 12 October 2023 at 12:00 noon

Election period:

Monday 13 November at 9:00 - Thursday 16 November 2023 at 16:00.

It was discussed how to get people to nominate. It was suggested that it could be mentioned at section meetings.

Brian Vinter also mentioned that some of the financing from the GSTS Well-being fund could be used to invite other PhD students to an event and tell them about the PhD committee and its work. Contact Rikke J. Ljungmann at the Graduate School to apply for the funding.

#### **5: News from the PhD students**

Thea Quistgaard mentioned that she has arranged a writing camp retreat for the PhD students at Environmental Science. She asked whether it might be possible to do something similar at Faculty level, especially in terms of promoting cohesion and feeling more anchored within the Faculty. Brian Vinter answered that if enough PhD students could be gathered for such an event, he would have financing for it.

**Decision:** Follow-up on the next PhD committee meeting in terms of discussing a writing camp retreat further.

Aaron Hurst asked if other programmes have something like a PhD day. FOOD does. He also mentioned that it might be useful to have a kind of department/research group “retreat” e.g. for a couple of days to go abroad and discuss new ideas, etc.

Brian Vinter replied that it might be an idea to introduce thematic retreats for the PhD students. He will take that further in his capacity of Vice-Dean for research.

#### **6: News from the Well-being Committee**

Julie Frost Dahl gave an account of the last Well-being committee meeting. Focus was on offboarding. Among other things, it was discussed that career awareness is closely connected to well-being, because the more you know of it, the less stress along the way. It is also important that the supervisors know this and can help.

Here it would be nice to be reminded of and get more information about the Career centre. Would it be possible e.g. to insert a sentence in the notification e-mail for the qualifying exam about the Career centre?

The next Well-being committee meeting will discuss if there should be specific attention and/or initiatives for international PhD students to ensure their well-being. Julie Frost Dahl will find an international substitute to participate in the meeting.

**Next GSTS PhD committee meeting:** Follow-up on this discussion.

## **7: News from The Course Committee**

Stefan Hallerstedde gave an account of the meeting with the lecturer at the Science Teaching course. The questions discussed were:

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

To sum up, the lecturers are very aware of these issues. They already address them and will be sure to be even more aware of addressing them.

Marianne Hammershøj mentioned that it would still be useful to have a course in Applied Statistics.

## **8: Well-beings funds**

There is still funding to be applied for if the programmes wish to make any kind of event promoting the well-being of the PhD students.

Contact Rikke J. Ljungmann at the Graduate School to apply for the funding.

## **9: Permission for lending/How to guide**

Brian Vinter mentioned that he would like for more of the GSTS PhD theses to be published on the Internet. There was a discussion as to pros and cons on this, on one side the possibility of open access and dissemination of knowledge, and on the other side a possible need not to disseminate new ideas or research broadly until decisions regarding further work in the field have been taken.

Aalborg University has a solution for publishing PhD theses on the Internet.

**Action:** The secretariat will contact Aalborg University to learn more, and there will be a follow-up at the next PhD committee meeting.

Brian Vinter mentioned that it might be possible to add an item to the GSTS webpage on 'Common topics during a PhD' on Open Access.

He also said that any publishing of PhD theses should be on departmental websites to add to the value for the department.

## **10: A course on 'How to manage your PhD project'**

The Course Committee discussed the course idea at their meeting in April. It was concluded that the course is not relevant at GSNS due to overlap to workshops in the recently launched

onboarding programme. However, it was agreed that the course could be useful for PhD students at GSTS. It was discussed at the last PhD committee meeting with inspiration from the Inspirational catalogue on the well-being of PhD students (Universities Denmark) and at the last Programme Chairs meeting, but nothing final was decided.

The discussion at this meeting took its starting point in the fact that it would still be useful to have some kind of course or event where these issues might be addressed. The discussion then centered on whether it should be at Faculty or programme level or even both, and pros and cons were debated.

**Decision and action:** To be discussed at the next Programme Chairs meeting in terms of ensuring that all programmes have a local PhD day where some of these topics could also be discussed.

**Action:** Anne-Cathrine Storgaard Danielsen will have a look at the Inspirational catalogue to see if ideas can be gathered from that in terms of a course. To be discussed at the next PhD committee meeting also.

### **11: Mindfulness (MBSR) workshop for PhD students**

A mindfulness (MBSR) workshop for PhD students was discussed.

**Decision:** Due to TECHs situation with a number of locations, it was decided not to engage in this offer.

**Decision and action:** Brian Vinter will discuss it with the other Heads of school as to whether it would be possible to engage with the AU Danish Centre for Mindfulness on workshops at all AU locations.

### **12: Any other business**

None