

Graduate School of Technical Sciences (GSTS) PhD Committee meeting

Time: 16 September 2024 at 11.00 – 13.00.

Meeting place: 1520 – 737 (Sky Lounge), Ny Munkegade 120, 8000 Aarhus C.

Minutes

Participants:

- Stefan Hallerstede, Martin Holmstrup, Lis Wollesen de Jonge, Ole Højberg, Thea Quistgaard, Michelle H. Williams.

Apologies for absence:

- Tiziana Svenningsen, Julia Prangchat Stub, Ameesh Khatkar, Ida Marie Gerdes.

Secretariat:

- Rikke J. Ljungmann and Frederikke Kongsted Hansen.

1. Round of introduction

There was a round of introduction to meet and greet everyone. The committee welcomed the new Head of School Michelle H. Williams.

2. Approval of agenda

The agenda was approved.

Since there was only one PhD student representative present, it was suggested that the PhD students be encouraged to notify the administration if they have comments on the discussed agenda items. If the PhD student representatives have comments, these should be sent to Frederikke Kongsted Hansen, fkf@au.dk

3. Announcements – Overview of assessment committees, exemptions etc. for the period 04.05.2024 – 08.09.2024

Approved with no comments. If anyone has comments or corrections, they should be sent to Frederikke Kongsted Hansen, fkf@au.dk

4. News from the Course Committee



4.1. PhD Course in data visualisation

The committee discussed the proposed course description. It was agreed that – to attract more people to the course – it should be stated explicitly that no experience with programming is required.

Action: *The administration will follow up. The course is considered approved when the changes have been made.*

4.2 Course with focus on ‘Outreach’

Thea Quistgaard emphasised the importance of the ‘outreach’ part in science.

Michelle H. Williams suggested to discuss whether more focus on ‘outreach’ could be implemented in the mandatory course in Science Teaching. It was agreed to discuss agenda item 7 in connection with this agenda item.

Michelle H. Williams asked whether the PhD students and supervisors find the Science Teaching course useful. She has seen some course evaluations that she found troubling. She suggested that the long waiting list may have meant that the PhD students signed up and followed the course too early in their PhD studies out of concern that they would not make it.

The representatives of the academic staff were not aware of general dissatisfaction with the course. It was agreed that the 0.5 ECTS that must be earned doing ‘follow up’ activities at the department can cause some confusion. It was asked if CED could mention some more about this during the course, e.g. give some examples of activities.

Thea Quistgaard suggested having two courses, one in teaching and one in outreach. And that it should be mandatory to follow one of the two courses.

The administration mentioned that the previous course in outreach was cancelled for quite a few years before being cancelled indefinitely. And that this has been due to - among other things - too few registered participants. The committee agreed that the content of a potential new course in outreach should be considered. It was agreed to investigate other universities’ courses on outreach.

Action:

- *Item 4.2.: The administration will look into what courses in outreach are offered by other universities.*
- *Item 7: Michelle H. Williams will discuss the Science Teaching course also with the programme chairs.*

5. How to manage your PhD project

The PhD Committee discussed the suggested course descriptions. Stefan Hallerstedte suggested that the two courses should be combined into one. Michelle H. Williams pointed out that AU Career PhD & JR has good offers similar to the themes covered in the second course.

It was agreed to discuss with the course lecturer whether it is possible to make some adjustments to the course 'How to manage your PhD project: Identifying opportunities and challenges – setting the compass' and offer this course only. Specifically, it was suggested to include some considerations on the writing phase and the importance of setting aside time for this in the plan for the PhD study.

It was suggested that the course workload should correspond to 2 ECTS points/ approx. 50 hours in total. Ideally, the course should run twice a year.

Action: The PhD administration will discuss the proposed changes with the course lecturer.

6. Writing camp retreat

The committee discussed the proposed course description, incl. the location of the writing camp. Michelle H. Williams emphasised the importance of creating an inclusive writing camp, where all PhD students can take part. If the writing camp is held far away from Aarhus, i.e. at Sandbjerg, there is a risk that many PhD students will not find it possible to take part.

The committee discussed alternative locations. It was agreed that the writing camp can be held in Aarhus in 2025, and that it should be possible to stay overnight for those wishing to do so. The writing camp, incl. the location, must be evaluated afterwards.

The conference center and hotel 'Horisont' in the northern part of Aarhus was suggested as a possible venue.

Thea Quistgaard made the committee aware that there is still some work to be done in relation to the writing camp, and that the PhD student members do not have the time and resources to carry out these tasks themselves. Rikke L. Ljungmann mentioned that the administration can help with practicalities such as booking of the location, catering, announcing the writing camp and so forth. Michelle H. Williams will investigate if a Tenure-Track could be interested in taking on the role as course responsible.

Action: The administration will investigate further if 'Horisont' in Aarhus has any available dates in 2025 (May or June). The administration will also contact the proposed lecturer in relation to the workshop (Joseph William Sterret) to coordinate possible dates. Michelle H. Williams will find a course responsible.

7. The Science Teaching course

The item was discussed in connection with agenda item 5.2.

8. News from the PhD students

Thea Quistgaard presented the following news from the PhD students:

1. *PhD students and holidays:*

Some supervisors push their PhD students to postpone their vacation and get it paid out as salary. Michelle H. Williams made it clear that this is not acceptable. PhD students must be supported in using their holiday days incl. to be supported in going on leave, etc., to which they are entitled. Michelle H. Williams will pass this on to the programme chairs at the programme chairs meeting.

2. *GDPR rules:*

Some PhD students at Environment Science have problems finding out the GDPR rules that apply to their PhD project. Michelle H. Williams underlined that it is the responsibility of the main supervisor that rules are being followed. Based on the feedback from the other committee members, it was concluded that it might be a local problem. Thea Quistgaard will pass it on to the local programme committee.

3. *Access to Latex overleaf premium:*

Thea Quistgaard mentioned that many PhD students would like to have access to 'LaTeX overleaf premium', which is a typesetting program. It was also discussed at a previous PhD committee meeting.

Action: *Michelle H. Williams will discuss it with the other Heads of School.*

9. For your information

- *AU Elections 2024*

The 2024 AU elections are approaching (for PhD students). Info will be sent out through the news e-mail to the PhD students and supervisors, and information will be made available at the GSTS website. The administration will also send out a separate e-mail to the PhD committee and Programme chairs.

10. Any other business

None.