

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

**Time:** Monday, 15 January 2024 at 09.45 – 11.45.

**Place:** 1520 – 737, Ny Munkegade 120, 8000 Aarhus.

### **Minutes**

#### **Meeting information:**

*Participants:*

Stefan Hallerstede, Martin Holmstrup, Lis Wollesen de Jonge, Thea Quistgaard, Julia Prangchat Stub, Tiziana Svenningsen, Anne-Cathrine Storgaard Danielsen, Julie Frost Dahl, Brian Vinter.

*Participating online:*

Ole Højberg.

*Apologies for absence:*

Morten Frederiksen, Ameesh Khatkar, Marianne Hammershøj, Aaron Hurst, Ida Marie Gerdes.

*The secretariat:*

Rikke J. Ljungmann and Frederikke Kongsted Hansen.

### **- Opening meeting -**

#### **1. Round of introduction – beginning of opening meeting**

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

#### **2. Rules of procedure for the PhD Committee**

Due to the weather conditions, the retiring Chair Stefan Hallerstede was delayed. The retiring vice-chair of the GSTS PhD Committee, Anne-Cathrine Storgaard Danielsen, therefore informed the committee members of the Rules of procedure for the PhD Committee.

There are 8 members, namely 4 members of staff and 4 PhD students. The former are elected for three years and the latter for one year at a time. The members meet regularly - usually 4 times a year – and can, if necessary, invite other people to the meetings as observers, however these do not have the right to vote. An agenda for the meeting will be sent to the members no later than four working days before the meeting.

All 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.

The Committee also has representatives in the joint NAT and TECH Course Committees.

Information regarding the PhD Committee, agendas, minutes and the rules of procedure can be found on [GSTS' website](#).

Besides, there was a discussion on substitute members' participation in the meetings this year. It was agreed that substitute members can participate in the meetings if the ordinary member is unable to, i.e. that substitute members will not be invited to all meetings.

### **3. Information concerning the PhD Committee's tasks**

The retiring vice-chair of the PhD Committee, Anne-Cathrine Storgaard Danielsen, informed the committee members of the PhD Committee's tasks. These include for instance:

- Approving GSTS transferable PhD courses
- Approving applications for credits, exemptions, etc.
- Making recommendations regarding the composition of assessment committees
- Discussing various matters relating to the PhD School and making recommendations hereof to the Head of Graduate School

The chair and vice-chair prepare the agenda for each meeting and can also make decisions in between meetings, if necessary. All committee members can submit items to be discussed at the meetings.

### **4. Election of chair**

As per the Rules of procedure, a chair must be elected from among the academic staff of the PhD committee. Stefan Hallerstedte was re-elected as chair.

### **5. Election of vice-chair**

As per the Rules of procedure, a vice-chair must be elected from among the elected PhD student members of the PhD Committee. Thea Quistgaard was elected as vice-chair.

### **6. Election of representative to participate in the NAT-TECH Course Committee**

As per the Terms of reference for the joint Course Committee between the two graduate schools GSNS and GSTS, a joint Course Committee is set up. The chair and vice-chair of each of the two PhD Committees are born members. One other member from each of the two PhD Committees must be elected.

Tiziana Svenningsen was elected.

### **7. Election of representative to participate in the 'Well-being Committee'**

Julia Prangchat Stub was elected. Ameesh Khatkar was elected as substitute member.

## **8. For your information**

### **- GDPR regulations (information concerning the PhD Committee members)**

The Graduate School would like to include information (name and programme) concerning the PhD students members in this committee on the GSTS website (see: <https://phd.tech.au.dk/about-us/organisation/> under 'The GSTS PhD Committee'), and, if necessary, in agendas/minutes from the PhD Committee meetings. Due to GDPR legislation, the Graduate School needs a consent form in order to do so, and the PhD student members were therefore asked to consider if they would sign such a declaration of consent.

It is of course voluntary, and if preferred not to sign such a declaration, other solutions can be found to comply with GDPR regulations. Frederikke Kongsted Hansen will later send an e-mail to the PhD student members.

### **- Presentation of PhD student representatives in the GSTS news e-mail**

The Graduate School would like for the PhD student representatives to introduce themselves in the news e-mail to PhD students at GSTS. Frederikke Kongsted Hansen will later send an e-mail to the PhD student members regarding this (including a link to a previous newsletter with such presentations), giving the PhD student members time to consider.

## **9. Any other business - end of opening meeting**

- Marianne Hammershøj and Aaron Hurst (retiring members) were unable to participate in the meeting. However, Stefan Hallersted passed on their thanks to the retiring committee.
- Brian Vinter pointed out that it may seem strange that all members are subject to confidentiality (according to the Rules of procedure). It was clarified that this is due to the fact that at each PhD Committee meeting, an overview is presented of defences (assessment committees), qualifying exams and requests. Confidentiality therefore applies in connection with specific cases and names. Agenda and minutes from the PhD Committee meetings, however, are available at the GSTS website.

**- Ordinary meeting -**

## **10. Approval of minutes – beginning of ordinary meeting**

The minutes were approved.

## **11. Approval of agenda**

The agenda was approved.

## **12. Announcements – Overview of assessment committees, exemptions etc. for the period 15.11.2023 – 05.01.2024**

Approved with no comments. If anyone has any comments or corrections, they should be sent to Frederikke Kongsted Hansen, [fkh@au.dk](mailto:fkh@au.dk).

## **13. Writing camp retreat**

Brian Vinter mentioned that he had presented the idea to the Deanship, and that they liked the idea of a writing camp retreat at Faculty level.

The PhD Committee set up a working group. The working group consists of all four PhD student members in the committee and Stefan Hallersted. It was suggested that the working group could also be open to participation from the substitute members, if interested.

The framework for the writing camp retreat was discussed:

- Brian Vinter mentioned that the writing camp should take place at Sandbjerg Gods in Sønderjylland, which is owned by Aarhus University. Brian Vinter suggested that all PhD students should be invited to participate in a writing camp during their PhD studies. It will, however, not be made a mandatory part of the PhD studies at GSTS. As part of further discussions, it should be debated whether ECTS should be granted. In addition, Brian Vinter suggested that “well-being” could be included as a theme at the writing camp.
- The timing of the first writing camp retreat was discussed. Ideally, this would take place in fall later this year. However, there could be some practical issues (e.g. availability of Sandbjerg Gods) that may postpone it.
- Thea Quistgaard took on the task of coordinating the meetings between the working group members.

**Action:** It was agreed that the working group will have an outline of the writing camp retreat ready for discussion at the next PhD Committee meeting in May.

## **14. Financial support for social activities for PhD students**

Brian Vinter told the committee that it is possible to apply for financial support for social activities for PhD students in 2024 also. Applications for financial support for social activities should be sent to Frederikke Kongsted Hansen, [fkh@au.dk](mailto:fkh@au.dk).

## **15. Ideas for social activities**

The PhD Committee agreed that it would be good if social activities could be mentioned in the GSTS' newsletter - both previous and upcoming events. This may serve as inspiration across the PhD programmes.

Examples of different social activities at the PhD programmes were mentioned at the meeting, and it was agreed to also state these in the minutes from the meeting:

- PhD lunch.
- Christmas event.
- Padel tennis tournament.

**Action:** The PhD administration will follow-up on the possibility of stating the upcoming and previous social activities in the GSTS newsletter to PhD students.

## **16. News from the PhD students**

Any issues the PhD student members might wish to put forward for discussion.

- Thea Quistgaard mentioned that many PhD students would like to have access to 'LaTeX 'overleaf premium', which is a typesetting system.

**Action:** Brian Vinter will look into the options.

- Thea Quistgaard mentioned that it can sometimes be difficult for PhD students to figure out the Graduate School's guidelines for using e.g. ChatGPT.

**Action:** Brian Vinter said that it will be discussed at the next Programme chairs meeting.

- Thea Quistgaard mentioned that – as discussed at the last PhD Committee meeting – she has also heard about PhD students being asked by their supervisor to make the proposal for the assessment committee in connection with the evaluation of their own PhD thesis. Brian Vinter underlined that this is unacceptable.

**Action:** At the next Programme chairs meeting, the programme chairs will be asked to please help remind the supervisors about their role in the process.

## **17. News from the Well-being Committee**

Julie Frost Dahl gave an account of the latest meeting in the Well-being Committee held on 27 October 2023. The focus was on international PhD students.

## **18. For your information**

No items.

## **19. Any other business - end of ordinary meeting**

The retiring members of the PhD Committee were thanked for their contribution to the PhD Committee.