Minutes from the PhD committee meeting

Thursday, 30 August 2012, at 10.15 in building 1520, room 732

Present: Marie Grønbæk, Anders Møller, Andreas Stejner Sand Pedersen, Lars Ransborg, Claus Oxvig (instead of Ernst-Martin Füchtbauer), Lena Grinsted, Martin Thorsøe, Lis Wollesen de Jonge, Jan Tind Sørensen, Kurt Thomas Jensen, Henrik Stapelfeldt, Jes Madsen

Apologies for absence: Mariann Fagernæs Hansen, Ernst-Martin Füchtbauer, Elise Norberg

GSST secretariat: Lene Kjeldsteen, Rikke J. Ljungmann (for the minutes)

Agenda for the meeting:

1. Approval of agenda
2. Approval of minutes from the last meeting
3. Announcements – including news about PhD Planner and Overview of assessment committees, exemptions, etc.
4. Hearing concerning new Main Academic Area Strategy for Science and Technology 2013-17
5. Draft for the Rules of procedure for the GSST PhD committee
6. GSST courses in Science Teaching
7. Misc.

Re. 1 – Approval of agenda
Agenda approved.
Re. 2 Approval of minutes from the last meeting
The minutes were circulated in an earlier e-mail. They were approved.

Re. 3 - Announcements – including news about PhD Planner and Overview of assessment committees, exemptions, etc.
With regard to the Overview of assessment committees, etc., the exemptions will be circulated along with the minutes from this meeting.

With regard to the PhD Planner, there are still many challenges with the system, but it is going in the right direction.

Re. 4 – Hearing concerning new Main Academic Area Strategy for Science and Technology 2013-17

The faculties have been asked to prepare strategies for the main areas in connection with AU preparing a main strategy for the entire university. The document Main Academic Area Strategy for Science and Technology 2013-17 (Hovedområdestrategi for Science and Technology Aarhus Universitet 2013-17) is the Dean’s Office at Science and Technology’s strategy document draft which has been prepared after talks with departments, centres, schools, etc. at Science and Technology.

The PhD committee discussed several items in this connection. The following items were emphasised:

- The PhD committee suggests a more concrete focus on how to recruit the best PhD students than stated on p. 10 and p. 18.
- It should be more evident on p. 10 and p. 18 that AU wants to train PhD students at the highest international level. It should be emphasised that AU also wants to focus on recruiting the best PhD students from AU to the university’s PhD programmes.
- The sentence “Sikre at nyuddannede ph.d.eer fra ST kun undtagelsesvis ansættes ved AU – og kun i et kortvarigt forløb” (p. 19) could be misunderstood. It should be made clearer that employing researchers at AU with a PhD from AU presupposes a post doc career from another institution.
- In relation to the following sentence on p. 10: “Flere og flere ph.d.eere finder job uden for den traditionelle forskningsverden. Science and Technology vil have fokus på øget og forbedret karrierevejledning, der skal sikre, at de færdiguddannede hurtigt finder relevant beskæftigelse”, the PhD committee suggests a change of wording with regard to the last part of the sentence to: “... finder beskæftigelse, der udnytter de ph.d.-studerendes opnåede kompetencer”.
- In relation to the item “styrke karrierevejledningen” on p. 19, the PhD committee suggests more focus on the importance of early career counseling.
- On p. 10 and pp. 18-19 it says: “Flere og flere ph.d.eere finder job uden for den traditionelle forskningsverden”. The PhD committee believes that it should be elaborated upon how Science and Technology wishes to support this. One priority could be the development of networks with the business world – e.g. through alumni.
- In connection with staff development interviews (MUS), it should be stressed that PhD students should also be included.
- On p. 6 it says: “Samarbejdet med erhvervslivet har stærk fokus. Aarhus Universitet har en lang tradition for forskningssamarbejder med særligt store erhvervsvirksomheder”. In relation hereto it might perhaps be considered whether AU should have a strategy for attracting more industrial PhD students.
- When it comes to the paragraphs describing the technical and administrative staff positions (p. 19), the PhD committee assesses that these should be described elsewhere in the document, since talent
development traditionally speaking has been focusing on fixed-term employments (PhD, post doc and assistant professor level).

Action: Kurt Thomas Jensen will prepare an answer on behalf of the PhD committee based on the minutes from the present PhD committee meeting.

Re. 5 - Draft for the Rules of procedure for the GSST PhD committee
The GSST administration presented a draft for the Rules of procedure for the GSST PhD committee. The draft builds on the standard AU Rules of Procedure for the GSST PhD committee. The draft was approved.
Action: The GSST administration will put the approved Rules of procedure on the GSST website.

Re. 6 - GSST courses in Science Teaching
A new PhD course concept concerning Science Teaching was discussed. There were a few comments:
- Would it be possible to introduce a module 3C on how to teach in a lab?
- In connection with the course descriptions for modules 2 and 3A, B (and C), it should be clearly stated that it needs qualifications corresponding to module 1 to participate in the following modules.
- It is important that not only module 1 is offered in the Spring, but also modules 2 and 3.
Apart from that the course concept was approved.

Re. 7 – Misc.
- A question came up concerning status of the Introduction day for new PhD students concept – had it been decided whether the event should last one or two days? The event has been held once, and Jes Madsen said that in general people were happy about the structure and the topics covered at the event. Next event will take place on 12 September 2012. Jes Madsen suggested that evaluations for the two events should be discussed at the next PhD committee meeting. The committee members agreed.
- On 1 September, a national PhD course database will be launched. All eight universities in Denmark have joined forces and created a joint PhD course database. The GSST administration will announce this on the GSST website and send news e-mail to all PhD students and supervisors.
- Future PhD committee meetings will be arranged through a doodle. The GSST administration will organise this. The meetings will be held approx. every third month.

Topics for next meeting:
- Extension of study time – including statistics e.g. divided into Programmes
- Evaluation of the two Introduction days for new PhD students
- Discussion of Journal clubs, PhD course evaluations/exams, Summer/Autumn schools and ECTS

The meeting ended at 12.00.