Minutes from the PhD committee meeting

Friday, 30 November 2012, at 13.15 in building 1520, room 732

Present: Marie Grønbæk, Anders Møller, Lars Ransborg, Lena Grinsted, Martin Thorsøe, Lis Wollesen de Jonge, Jan Tind Sørensen, Mariann Fagernæs Hansen, Ernst-Martin Füchtbauer, Elise Norberg, Kurt Thomas Jensen, Henrik Stapelfeldt (until 14.00), Jes Madsen

Apologies for absence: Andreas Stejner Sand Pedersen

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

Agenda for the meeting:

1. Approval of minutes from the last meeting
2. Approval of agenda
3. Statistics courses at GSST
4. Announcements – including news about PhD Planner and Overview of assessment committees, exemptions, etc.
5. Extension of study time – including statistics e.g. divided into Programmes
6. Evaluation of two GSST Introduction days for new PhD students
7. Discussion of Journal clubs, PhD course evaluations/exams, Summer/Autumn schools, ECTS
8. Planning Career Paths for PhDs
9. Misc., incl. PIXI concerning the qualifying exam

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

Lars Ransborg mentioned that since the last PhD committee meeting, he as vice-chairman and Kurt Thomas Jensen as chairman had been asked by GSST to approve certain issues on behalf of the PhD committee in relation to the GSST transferable skills courses in order for the courses to be announced in due time. He
asked that an overview be presented to the PhD committee. This was agreed and will be sent out along with the minutes of the present meeting.

**Action:** GSST sends out an overview of the GSST transferable skills courses and the decisions made in relation hereto.

**Re. 2 – Approval of agenda**
Agenda was approved.

**Re. 3 – Statistics courses at GSST**
Eva Vedel Jensen had been invited to elaborate on the possibility of introducing a GSST statistics course. Eva Vedel Jensen suggested that the course format could be a course held over a few weeks, first with repetition from Bachelor course statistics, and then introducing different topics depending on participants’ interests. Various options were then discussed at the PhD committee meeting, for instance if it would be possible to copy the module-based format of the Science Teaching course concept with a basic course e.g. twice a year and more specific modules distributed over the year(s).

Eva Vedel Jensen also mentioned that at the moment it is difficult to be too specific and concrete with regard to the actual establishing of a course due to the present personnel situation at the Department of Mathematics.

Elise Norberg mentioned that Foulum has offered a statistics course for the life sciences during the post 10-15 years. This course particularly addresses the topic of data analysis.

**Action:** A committee consisting of Eva Vedel Jensen, Elise Norberg, the lecturers and two PhD students will be set up. Lars Ransborg will provide the PhD student representatives. GSST sets up the first meeting.

**Re. 4 – Announcements – including news about PhD Planner and Overview of assessment committees, exemptions, etc.**
**PhD Planner:** Lene Kjeldsteen mentioned that the IT people have been granted more resources. One of the things they have been developing as a consequence hereof is the automatic reminder function with regard to evaluations in the Planner system. This function should be available soon.

GSST also mentioned that in the future more requests will be sent from the Planner system instead of from Outlook. This is important if people look at the Sender of the e-mail as it is different from the one in Outlook.

**Action:** GSST will send a news e-mail to PhD students regarding the requests.

**Overview of assessment committees, exemptions, etc.:** Lene Kjeldsteen presented an Excel file with an overview of assessment committees, exemptions and requests.
Comments to the Overview were that there were differences in the naming of the requests which made it difficult to read, and GSST therefore emphasised that this is a first draft and how it looks at the moment when requests are drawn from the Planner system.

Anders Møller then informed the PhD committee that he had been in contact with Deputy Director of Research and Talent Kristian Thorn about the PhD Planner system. Kristian Thorn said that the priority had been to get all four PhD schools up and run and using the Planner system instead of further developing the system. Anders Møller also talked about his subsequent meeting with project people Lone Urbak and Jette Larsen. In the future, Anders Møller and others from Computer Science will most likely be connected with the PhD Planner project to some degree or other.

Re. 5 – Extension of study time – including statistics e.g. divided into Programmes
The PhD committee debated extensions of study time as divided into programmes. It was mentioned that practice differed among the programmes with regard to approving extensions, and that it was important to have the same practice for all programmes – and that everyone involved in the PhD study should be aware of the practice, including main supervisor. It was emphasised that there must be weighty reasons substantiating the extension in order to get it.

In answer to a question, Jes Madsen confirmed that if the extension was somehow stress or illness related, GSST would of course take extra consideration when processing an extension, however it was also important to know that GSST as an employer is not allowed to ask about the cause in connection with illness.

Jes Madsen also stressed the importance of using the evaluations as a tool to spot any need for an extension earlier.

Action: GSST provides statistics from the Planner, possibly for the next meeting, on the number of PhD students who submit their PhD dissertation on time, divided into Programmes.

Re. 6 – Evaluation of the two GSST Introduction days for new PhD students
The evaluations of the two GSST Introduction days for new PhD students were discussed, and it was decided that the Introduction day should continue in the same format as these two, i.e. as a one-day event.

There were a few comments:
- With regard to the Scientific misconduct part: Could it be a bit more down-to-earth and could there be added something about plagiarism?
- Could more be done specifically for the international PhD students? Jes Madsen commented that this is already being looked into.
- Could the GSST transferable skills courses be advertised more?

The PhD committee also discussed whether the Introduction course should be obligatory for all new PhD students. This was approved, however it has not yet been decided how to administer this. When the administration hereof has been set up, this should be announced widely, and the dates should be announced at the same time as the enrolment letters are sent to new PhD students.
Lars Ransborg asked if it would be possible to organise a very basic teaching crash course for new PhD students before they start teaching.

**Action:** Jes Madsen will follow up on this.

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**Re. 7 – Discussion of Journal clubs, PhD course evaluations/exams, Summer/Autumn schools, ECTS**

The PhD committee discussed ECTS for journal clubs, etc. as practice differs on the Programmes with regard to this.

Various criteria in connection with organising a journal club with ECTS were discussed, including:
- It should have the characteristics of a course
- There should be a journal club responsible (the provider of the journal club)
- It should be open to everyone
- In principle, it should be possible to fail the journal club
- There should be a journal club description and learning goals
- It should be possible to make an evaluation of the outcome, e.g. of a presentation

**Action:** At the moment, Animal Science is drawing up a description of how to organise journal clubs. This will be discussed at a later PhD committee meeting.

It was pointed out that if PhD students follow a course with no ECTS specified, the head of programme has to specify the ECTS by checking course description, number of hours used, etc.

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**Re. 8 – Planning Career Paths for PhDs**

Lena Grinsted introduced the subject taking a starting point in the article found here: [http://www.sciencemag.org/content/337/6099/1149.full](http://www.sciencemag.org/content/337/6099/1149.full), and she suggested that the Individual Development Plan found here: [http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/](http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/) could be useful in planning one’s career. She also mentioned that many PhD students were looking for more career counselling.

Jes Madsen had a few comments on ideas/projects already in the making:
- Research and Talent has initiated a three year pilot project under Karrierecenteret. This pilot project addresses career counselling for PhD students.
- GSST is working on several ideas with regard to career planning for PhD students.
- iNANO has developed a mentoring scheme for PhD students who are interested in getting in touch with people in the business sector.

During the ensuing discussion, it was suggested that the Individual Development Plan could be used in connection with MUS.

Martin Thorsøe mentioned that Karrierecenteret has given a two day career counseling workshop for 30-40 PhD students at Agroecology.

**Action:** Martin Thorsøe provides info on the career day.

Lars Ransborg suggested that a career day should be arranged after part A. Jes Madsen commented that it might be better to arrange these locally in relation to inviting speakers matching the specific Programme.
The discussion then centered on MUS, and Agroecology mentioned that they have MUS with all their PhD students, including 4+4, part A PhD students, who are not yet employed. Agroecology has developed a specific MUS concept for PhD students, as focus can differ somewhat from that of other AU employees. **Action:** Lis Wollesen de Jonge provides MUS material developed by Agroecology

It turned out that it differed from programme to programme who held MUS with the PhD students, and if MUS was held at all. Lars Ransborg mentioned that the PhD association PHAUST was of the opinion that PhD student MUS should not be held with one’s main supervisor as it could potentially become complicated.

It was also mentioned that it was important both to have MUS with one’s head/section manager/main supervisor and to have a more formal place like Karrierecenteret to ask career counselling advice.

Jes Madsen mentioned that the rules concerning who holds the staff responsibility with regard to PhD students are somewhat unclear. He would therefore prefer to let it be decided by the individual departments/department management teams who will have MUS with the PhD students.

Anders Møller mentioned that Computer Science has introduced an advisory group scheme with two members of staff from other research units (one of them from the programme committee) following the PhD student through the entire PhD study.

**Action:** The heads of programme must check MUS status on their respective programme. This topic will also be brought up on the next heads of programme meeting in order to check MUS status at all programmes.

**Re. 9 – Misc., incl. PIXI concerning the qualifying exam**

Changes to the PIXI concerning the qualifying exam were discussed. Jes Madsen said that the heads of programme had similarly discussed them on a meeting, and that they had agreed to the changes with two corrections. These were:

1. Under the heading What and the sentence “as agreed with”: Add the following “as agreed with the internal examiner from the programme committee”.
2. Under the heading What: The two sentences “Excerpts from published, submitted or draft manuscripts may be included as part of the report, but the total length should not exceed 30 pages. The student’s own contribution to the work must be clearly specified” should be switched to change focus of the sentence.

It was suggested that the word “partial” in the second bullit under the heading What not should be delete. This was approved.

**Action:** Jes Madsen makes the final changes to the PIXI concerning the qualifying exam.

It was suggested that the qualifying exam reminder e-mail which is sent to the PhD student and the main supervisor three months before the qualifying exam should include a sentence stating that it is expected that main supervisor sees the progress report before it is submitted to GSST. The suggestion was approved.

**Action:** GSST makes the necessary changes to the reminder e-mail.

Lars Ransborg mentioned that the next meeting should be held before 1 February 2013 if it should include the present PhD committee student members due to the upcoming election of new PhD student members.
The meeting ended at 16.00

**Action**  
GSST sends out an overview of the GSST transferable skills courses and the decisions made in relation hereto.  
A committee consisting of Eva Vedel Jensen, Elise Norberg, the lecturers and two PhD students will be set up to discuss a format for GSST statistics course(s)  
Providing two PhD student representatives for the above committee  
GSST will write a news item to PhD students regarding requests being sent more frequently from the Planner system  
GSST provides statistics from the Planner on the number of PhD students who submit their PhD dissertation on time, divided into Programmes  
Jes Madsen will follow up on whether it is possible to organise a basic Teaching crash course for new PhD students  
Animal Science is drawing up a description of how to organise journal clubs. This will be discussed at a later PhD committee meeting  
Info on the career day at Agroecology  
MUS material developed by Agroecology  
Heads of programme check MUS status on their respective programme  
Final changes made to the PIXI concerning the qualifying exam  
GSST makes changes to the qualifying exam reminder e-mail concerning the progress report

**Who**  
GSST  
GSST  
Lars Ransborg  
GSST  
GSST  
Jes Madsen  
Animal Science/Jan Tind Sørensen  
Martin Thorsøe  
Lis Wollesen de Jonge  
Heads of programme  
Jes Madsen  
GSST

**Topics for next PhD committee meeting:**  
- Statistics from the Planner on the number of PhD students who submit their PhD dissertation on time, divided into Programmes  
- How to organise journal clubs – if the description from Animal Science is ready