Minutes from the opening meeting and the ordinary PhD committee meeting

Monday, 27 January 2014 at 8.30-11.15
at Building 1431, room 021 and 023, Nordre Ringgade 1, 8000 Aarhus C

Present: Ernst-Martin Füchtbauer, Kurt Thomas Jensen, Anders Møller, Heidi Gytz Olesen, Inge Revsbech (until 10.00), Andreas Stejner Sand Pedersen, Kristine Engemann Jensen, Thue Bording, Christian Andersen and Jes Madsen – in connection with item 12 concerning GSST Rules and regulations also Jan Piotrowski, Duncan Sutherland and Ida Marie Gerdes

On videolink: Lis Wollesen de Jonge, Jan Tind Sørensen, Marie Grønbæk, Marielle Babineau (from 9.30), Susanne Frydendal Nielsen and Guilherme de Moura Maciel

Apologies for absence: Peter Nørby and Henrik Stapelfeldt

GSST secretariat: Bente Lynge Hansen, Rikke J. Ljungmann (for the minutes)

Agenda for the opening meeting:

1. Rules of procedure for the PhD committee
2. Information concerning the PhD committee’s tasks
3. Election of chairman
4. Election of vice-chairman
5. Committee meeting dates in 2014

Agenda for the ordinary PhD committee meeting:

7. Approval of minutes from the last meeting – 16 December 2013
8. Approval of agenda
9. Announcements – Overview of assessment committees, exemptions, etc. for the period 11 December 2013 to 19 January 2014
10. Misc.
11. Questionnaire survey
12. Debate concerning revised GSST Rules and regulations (with Heads of programme)
Minutes from the opening meeting:

Re 1. Rules of procedure for the PhD committee
The retiring chairman of the PhD committee Kurt Thomas Jensen informed the committee members of the Rules of procedure for the PhD committee.

There are 12 members, 6 PhD students and 6 members of staff. They meet regularly and can invite other people to the meetings as observers if necessary, however the latter do not have the right to vote.

The PhD student members are elected for 1 year at a time, and the members of staff are elected for 3 years at a time. All members can submit items to be discussed at the meetings. When voting on a subject, it is a question of simple majority. At least half of the statutory members must be present to make the PhD committee quorate.

Re 2. Information concerning the PhD committee’s tasks
The retiring chairman of the PhD committee Kurt Thomas Jensen informed the committee members of the PhD committee’s tasks. These include for instance:

- Approving 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 hereon to the head of PhD school.

Re 3. Election of chairman
Associate professor Kurt Thomas Jensen (Department of Bioscience) was re-elected.

Re 4. Election of vice-chairman
PhD student Christian Andersen (Department of Physics and Astronomy) was elected.

Re 5. Committee meeting dates in 2014
It was agreed to settle meeting dates for the rest of 2014. These will be held approx. as follows:

- Late March
- Middle of June
- Middle of September
- Early December

Action: Rikke J. Ljungmann sends an e-mail to all committee members with a doodle suggesting two dates for each meeting.

None
Minutes from the ordinary PhD committee meeting:

Re 7. Approval of minutes from the last meeting – 16 December 2013
The minutes were circulated in an earlier e-mail. They were approved.

Follow-up on items from last time:
- GSST has checked standard Rules of procedure regarding specific phrase. The Rules of procedure for the GSST PhD committee are now complete.

- Jes Madsen was to follow-up on MUS at the departments with the department heads.
  **Action:** This will take place later.

- Jan Tind Sørensen was to send the journal club evaluation mentioned on the last meeting to GSST. This has been done.

- GSST was to send document on the journal club concept to the heads of programmes. This has been done.

  **Future item:** For next meeting, further discussion on extensions granted in 2013.

Re 8. Approval of agenda
Agenda was approved.

Re 9. Announcements – Overview of assessment committees, exemptions, etc. for the period 11 December 2013 to 19 January 2014
There were no comments to the overview. GSST continues cooperating with the IT department on getting better overview on data from the PhD Planner. It will most likely be solved till the next meeting.

Re 10. Misc.
There was a question concerning software to detect plagiarism. It had been mentioned at an earlier meeting that AU would introduce a general system for all the studies. The system is still being developed, and there is no deadline fixed yet.

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

Re 11. Questionnaire survey
The questionnaire survey which was carried out during the Autumn of 2013 was discussed. The report will be published 3 February 2014. As AU has decided that it should be considered similar to work place assessments, various AU bodies should be allowed to discuss it prior to its release.

Originally, it was intended that supervisors should have been involved in the questionnaire, but this proved too complicated technically speaking, especially within such a short time span. Instead, a similar survey also including supervisors is expected to take place in 2 years’ time.

Jes Madsen stated that the survey conveyed a good overall impression of the PhD studies at AU. A large majority of the PhD students had answered that they receive a good education.
However, there is still room for improvement, and Jes Madsen therefore first stated an action plan, and afterwards a discussion on the survey took place.

**The action plan** is as follows:
- Discussion to be held both in the PhD committee and with the heads of programme
- Jes Madsen will contact the departments more formally to ensure local discussions and action plans
- Discuss the survey and action plans again at meetings in the PhD committee and among the heads of programme in late March
- Another iteration and then a final discussion at meetings in the PhD committee and among the heads of programme in June.

The ensuing debate centered on the following issues:
- Stress among PhD students
- Relation to supervisor – matching of expectations (Jes Madsen noted that it was important to be aware of the distinction between main supervisor and supervisor (daily supervisor) in some of the questions).
- PhD students wondering if they are good enough at their project – matching of expectations
- Problem with project management of one’s PhD project
- Half year evaluations and PhD Planner – Jes Madsen had two comments in this regard: 1. Due to the fact that the system is locked during the evaluation process, it is not possible technically speaking to use it as a working tool on a daily basis. 2. It is essential to use the half year evaluations to follow up on the PhD student’s progress.
- Difference between ST/HE and ARTS/BSS with regard to the extent of which the PhD student feels in control of his/her own project. The survey shows that it is rather closely related to external funding, and again to hands-on supervision. The more the supervisor feels that he/she has to deliver in relation to the project, the less the PhD student feels in control of his/her own project.
- PhD courses – Jes Madsen commented that it is essential that more scientific PhD courses are established. At the moment, the number of courses established differs between the programmes, the reasons among other things being lack of manpower, student population and funding. Various ideas to remedy this situation were mentioned, incl. using post docs to teach, if possible, join forces with other universities in Denmark or abroad, PhD students getting together and approach potential lecturers.

It was decided to ask for specific data on the following:
- Gender
- Nationality
- Geography/location
- How many PhD students go abroad

**Re 12. Debate concerning revised GSST Rules and regulations (with Heads of programme)**
The revised GSST Rules and regulations were debated for one last time in a joint meeting with the heads of programme. Jes Madsen noted that apart from the suggestions agreed upon at the previous meeting the only new thing added to the document had to do with the half year evaluations, section 6.2.

Comment to section 4.3.1 ("In addition to the PhD scholarship, some PhD students are offered a supplementary income for different kinds of academic work, e.g. as teaching assistants") – Will this be the case in the future? Jes Madsen answered that the final model has not been made up yet, but the offer of giving 3+5/4+4 teaching will no longer be granted automatically. In the future, this will be solved on an individual basis.

The revised GSST Rules and regulations were then approved.
After a final check, they will be put before the Dean for approval. They will enter into force on 1 February 2014.

The meeting ended at 11.15

**Action**

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<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Who</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E-mail all committee members with a doodle suggesting two dates for each of the next committee meetings in 2014</td>
<td>Rikke J. Ljungmann</td>
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<tr>
<td>Follow-up on MUS with department heads</td>
<td>Jes Madsen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Follow-up on deadline for introduction of AU system to detect plagiarism</td>
<td>Jes Madsen</td>
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**Future items:**

- For next meeting, further discussion on extensions granted in 2013.
- Discuss the survey and action plans in late March, possibly have another iteration after that and then a final discussion at meetings in the PhD committee and among the heads of programme in June.