ARTS
AARHUS UNIVERSITY

PhD Committee meeting 9 March 2022 at 9.15 -11.15 am

Arts PhD, Tåsingegade 3, building 1443, room 440, Aarhus with videoconference to Emdrup A204

Members of the committee:
Academic representatives: Kirsten Elisa Petersen (chair), Katja Brøgger, Christian Ulrik Andersen, Charlotte Appel, Anders-Christian Jacobsen.

PhD representatives: Eva Gjessing (vice chair), Hatice Nuriler, Malthe Stavning Erslev.

PhD Substitute: Kalle Kusk Gjetting.

Observers: PhD students William Toke Mathorne, Rithma Kreie Engelbreth; Head of Graduate School/Vice Dean Anne Marie Pahuus, Anders Gade Jensen (minutes) and Anna Louise Plaskett/PhD Admin team.

Apologies for absence: Academic Rep. Jacob Lund, PhD students Lise Sofie Houe, Alexander Ulrich Thygesen, Karen Nordentoft, Clara Rosa Sandbye.

Agenda
1. Welcome and approval of the agenda/Kirsten.
2. News from the Graduate School and PhD Admin/Anne Marie Pahuus and Anna Louise Plaskett (see appendix 2)
3. Follow-up discussion regarding *Offensive Behavior*. Read more here: https://medarbejdere.au.dk/en/administration/hr/workingenvironment/psychological-work-environment/offensivebehaviour **and here**: https://medarbejdere.au.dk/en/strategy/the-whistleblower-scheme
4. The 4+4 scheme – guidelines/processes etc./Eva Gjessing
   4.b – Differences between the 5+3 and 4+4 scheme (se appendix 4).
5. The international assessment of the Graduate School: Discussion of the attached 'action plan' regarding the recommendations of the report/ Kirsten Elisa Petersen and Eva Gjessing (see appendix 5a and 5b).
6. The upcoming joint-seminar at Sandbjerg Manor: Suggestions from the PhD Committee for the programme/agenda/Kirsten
7. Any other Business ('evt.')

1. Welcome and approval of the agenda

Agenda approved.

AMP and EG introduced the work in the PhD well-being committee. In political science, they have made a "survival guide" for new students. This could be an idea on the department level; possibly with at different title. A dedicated PhD councilor was not a wish made by the PhD students.

2. News from the Graduate School and PhD Admin

ALP explained procedures for data collection and elaborated on the data presented in appendix 2.

The ministry has allowed the Danish universities to extend PhD enrollments and scholarships due to COVID-lockdowns. The agreement has not yet been given an end date, so we will be able to give extensions for a while.

Discussion about interpretation of data across the AU Graduate Schools based on confidential data in the appendix.

ALP/AMP elaborated on current status regarding GSA help to students for improving academic English writing.

Students who participated in the writing course were quite satisfied. It was discussed whether or not digital tools like Grammerly should be offered. The History and Archaeology programme had good experiences offering it to PhD students.

Language revision is quite costly; courses offered and proper language feedback early in the enrollment is widely considered the most cost-effective and beneficial approach. The Danish expectations regarding publishablity of the dissertation differ from other international PhD regulations.

3. Follow-up discussion regarding *Offensive Behavior*.

KEP – Do we address this issue in a proper and timely manner as a committee?

We need to ensure that newly enrolled PhD students are made aware of the Whistleblower Schemes and policies regarding offensive behavior.

ALP: The HR-departments are working on on-/off-boarding documents for all new employees. The administration will include the links mentioned above in the appendix to all new PhD students sent out with the contracts.

4. The 4+4 scheme – guidelines/processes etc.

EG: The PhD students wanted the point on the agenda due to some frustrations among the students. The guidelines are confusing to the students. The balances between the MA thesis and PhD dissertation work seem unclear. Students can feel caught between the student scheme and the researcher identity.

The remaining MA-ECTS on part A can be hard to plan. Especially the "profile courses" can be difficult to manage. It can be hard to enroll on the relevant courses.

An increasing dialogue between the GSA and the study administration would be a suggestion.

The study boards should also be made aware of the existence of the small number of part A-students that should fit into the MA-programmes as well even though part A students represent a statistically extremely minute part of the individual study regulations. The PhD students will contact their representatives in the study boards with concrete challenges posed by restrictions in the study regulations.

Regarding the questions of reuse of material from MA-thesis to dissertation, the "praksisudvalg" has made a statement regarding reuse from the MA to the PhD which is very helpful for students and supervisors' planning of the research project development.

The onboarding meetings at CAS for 4+4 have been quite successful.

5. The international assessment of the Graduate School

The GSA "action plan"-spreadsheet as proposed is approved. The individual points will be discussed in depth on the Sandbjerg seminar.

CA: The proposition that there could be a "middle ground" between open calls and specific calls with deeper involvement from the department level seems to be outside the scope of the means available.

AMP: We have the infrastructure on faculty management-level. The Head of GSA engages in strategic discussions with the heads of department before the selections in the open calls.

The spreadsheet could be used as a dynamic tool over the coming years. But we also need a lager discussion to evaluate how costly each point might be.

6. The upcoming joint-seminar at Sandbjerg Manor

Suggestions for topics
- Criteria for applications on 4+4 and 5+3 respectively. Do they differ or are they the same? Aligning local committees, programme directors and political level of GSA.
- Internationalisation of scholarships. Ensuring good programmes for the international students in Aarhus.

- Media training for PhD students who might be media targets. What is the GSA-responsibility of preparing students for the public arena.
- Employability: Where do they go apart from Higher education and what is the value of the research outside of the university.
- Differences between programmes (directors and assessment committees). How are the committees assembled – how is the department involved, as is required in the guidelines? There seems to be differences across programmes.
- International agreements – how are they used, what is the added value? (ALP: This could be useful to postpone to the autumn when the current flux of defences has passed and we can benefit from the experiences)
- The first day of the seminar could be dedicated to the international assessment, doing a workshop on brainstorming on the specific topics mentioned in the Action Plan.

A planning committee for the seminar will be set up. Kirsten Elisa, Christian Ulrik, Hatice and one more appointed amongst the PhD students and Anders-Christian join from the committee, and a member from the PhD programme directors should also be appointed. Anne Marie and Anna will also be involved in the planning.

7. Any other Business ('evt.')
Suggestions regarding wellbeing-committee (see item 1)
- Expanding the use of mentorships.
- Giving PhD programme directors more means to connect directly with the smaller group of students. Socializing between both students and supervisors could help give informal networks where expectations can be aligned.
- Help-kit (not "survival guides") for new students to be developed at the department.
- Co- supervisors could be used actively to get the supervision team to work more smoothly – both socially and topic specific. More meetings between the supervisors ensures that supervision is academically and practically coherent.
- There is a hesitation regarding more formalized proposals. The complexity between PhD programme, research programme and department is already high enough.

The iThenticate-software pilot project is ongoing. Malthe Erslev is in the group and suggests to open a discussion on the pros and cons of the system for students on a later meeting.