

**Meeting date:** 13 September 2023 11.30-17.00

**Meeting place:** Taasingegade 3, 1443, room 340, 8000 Aarhus C

**Meeting subject:** Joint meeting for the PhD Committee and the Graduate School Management

**Attendees:**

**PhD representatives:** Catrine Sundorf Kristensen, Rithma Kreie Engelbreth Larsen, Maiken Norup, Hatice Nuriler, Kalle Kusk Gjetting (vice chair).

**Academic representatives:** Kirsten Elisa Petersen, Katja Brøgger, Christian Ulrik Andersen, Jacob Lund, Charlotte Appel, Anders-Christian Jacobsen (chair).

**Members of the Graduate School Management:**

Head of Graduate School Anne Marie Pahuus. PhD Programme Directors: Stefan Iversen, Mikkel Wallentin, Iben Have (from 12.15), Jakob Bek-Thomsen, Lisanne Wilken, Karen Valentin, Lars Emmerik.

**Guest**

Professor Lotte Meinert, Department of Anthropology and PI of ANTHUSIA

1. **Welcome and presentation of the agenda and lunch**
2. **Internationalisation**
3. **Assessment of dissertations**
4. **PhD students' communication with the public**

**1. Welcome and presentation of the agenda and lunch**

Anders-Christian opened the meeting with an introduction to the agenda.

**2. Internationalisation**

Lotte Meinert did a presentation on some of the benefits and challenges of the ANTHUSIA European Joint Doctorate. Programme directors shared day-to-day experiences of internationalisation in the programmes.

Wellbeing as a foundation for successful integration of international students was discussed. Initiatives targeting the visiting students differ from programme to programme. It is sometimes difficult to pull those ad-hoc students into orbit of programme initiatives.

The joint/double programmes give rise to significant paperwork, but the students integrate into the programmes equally to other international students. Large international research networks do seem to give a natural place of belonging compared to regular programmes where international students enter more ad-hoc along with the Danish cohort.



Adding extra funding to the international recruitment effort was discussed (Screening stipends for ingoing students, funding for well-being initiatives and stipends for outgoing Danish students). Possibly combining the efforts with post-doc initiatives might help improve impact of initiatives.

Integration into the research environment will be beneficial for both international students and students from other parts of Denmark.

On the application level, there are some obstacles. 4+4- regulations are often an administrative hindrance for international applicants. Admission criteria for individual candidates may differ between Danish universities.

Summing up: The committee agrees on the following

- Onboarding and social environment issue is to some degree a similar issue to Danish students. Overall, the committee considers that we are doing well in this area. However, members of the committee, including PhD students, also raised issues concerning the well-being of international students and challenges concerning onboarding and integration. International students might benefit from more cross-campus activities targeting both Danish and international students.
- Regarding goal-posts and possible benchmarks for the Graduate School: The academic quality is the key point. We might help international applicants improving their success rate.
- Reinstating the ability to help internal applicants financially would be welcome. It should not happen on expense of the other funding ear marked for well-being of the students.

### 3. Assessment of dissertations

- a) The legal phrasing concerning the role of the supervisor in the assessment committee has previously been discussed both amongst the Programme directors and in the PhD committee. This item on the agenda bring all parts together to see if the change in wording of the Graduate School Guidelines is sufficient.

Agency should be placed on the committee chair. There are different wishes on the role of the supervisor. The programme director has a responsibility of ensuring the appointed chair is up to date with all relevant requirements.

A subcommittee is established in order to write a revised suggestion:

- Lisanne Wilken, Charlotte Appel, Kalle Kusk, assisted by Anders Gade and Anna Plaskett from the administration.

- b) Diversity in the assessment committees was discussed. It is recommended to change anachronistic binary wording in rulesets regarding duality of gender. (Change “both” to “more than one”). It was also raised by committee members that in the long run we might also consider broadening the concept of diversity to include more than gender.

#### 4. Assessment of applications

The PhD committee has discussed whether GSA could be better at clarifying expectations of the project applications. What measures are taken in the programme committees to differentiate between 3- and 4-year candidates. Could templates make it easier for applicants?

Most programs divide applications initially between 5+3 and 4+4. These two categories are usually not evaluated on the same terms, but applications follow the same templates and ruleset.

Making mandatory templates for the project description might level the playing field for applicants. Network based approaches of borrowing successful applications usually benefits local applicants significantly. However, separating the two schemes administratively will render it impossible to move applicants from one scheme to the other.

There were also questions raised to the

An alternative is the appeal for potential applicants to get in contact with supervisors beforehand.

Most programme directors were open for a template based solution on a trial basis. Some applicants show creativity in their research design through open-form applications. Differences between disciplines might make details in the template hard to agree upon.

A middle ground solution is proposed: Expand the webpage with expectations to the project description. This should happen on behalf of the PhD committee.

The PhD committee concludes that now is not the time to go down the road of formally requiring templates. However, improved communication about requirements and support to the applicants is a good idea.

#### 5. PhD students' communication with the public

Short presentation by Rithma Engelbrecht on the topic of expectations regarding PhD students' communication with the general public.

There are PhD courses in managing communication with journalists. This is a newly developed course being offered for the first time this semester.

The communication teams in Aarhus and Emdrup offer concrete advice to students who have been contacted by journalists.

It was discussed how best to stress the importance of a dissemination course. The option of adding an additional mandatory course to the guidelines was discussed. There was no full agreement amongst neither senior staff or students on whether the proposed course should be mandatory or not.