

Health PhD Committee (Health PhD Committee  
meeting)

09-02-2023 15:00 - 17:00

Jens Baggesens Vej 53, bld. 5220, room 014 (basement level -  
lunch room)

# Indhold

Referat .....	1
---------------	---

# Referat

## Punkt 1: Meeting information

Additional absence: Ole Ingemann Hansen.

## Punkt 2: Constitution of the committee and welcome to new members (30 min)

Stine Sofia Korremann was re-elected as chair of the PhD Committee in 2023. Loni Ledderer was elected as deputy chair (since no PhD student was elected and thus not eligible for election as deputy chair). The committee will meet 4 times per year, and makes recommendations on graduate school subjects to the Head of Graduate School and the Dean at Health.

The PhD students were offered to point out a representative to take on a role in settling the agenda for the committee meetings with the chair and the graduate school administration. If interested, PhD students can inform Louise Nygaard Kristensen at [lnk@au.dk](mailto:lnk@au.dk).

Members of the advisory committees 2023:

- **Credit Transfer and Dispensation:**

Academic staff: Ole Ingemann Hansen, Rikke Katrine Jentoft Olsen.

PhD students: Fernando Valentim Bitencourt, Shokouh Arjmand, Mojdeh Mansoori, Tanja Charlotte Frederiksen.

- **Course Committee:**

Academic staff: Lise-Lotte Kirkevang, Ditte Demontis.

PhD students: Malene Kærslund Hansen, Mette Vestergård Pedersen.

## Punkt 3: Well-being initiatives for PhD students at Health (25 min)

PhD counsellor Ebba Nexø (Prof. emerita, Dept. of Clinical Medicine/Biochemistry) presented her counselling work, which includes approx 20 cases per year, primarily from PhD students, but also from supervisors. Most inquiries come from non-Danish/international PhD students and concern e.g. publication issues/doubts (power issues/co-authorship), end of study or the relation between PhD student and supervisor.

Ebba put forward the following recommendation to avoid/handle issues:

1. End of study (publication, material, ownership): Arrange a final meeting to clarify potential issues for the benefit of both parts.
2. Special care for/focus on international PhD students
3. Supervisor issues:
  - "Fake"/"shadow" supervisors who do not have adequate knowledge about the PhD study (e.g. when an associate prof. fills in the main supervisor-role).
  - Co-supervisor interference due to more seniority than the main supervisor.
  - Main supervisor funding and change of supervisor
  - Clinical environment: main supervisor position is a "coin" to a clinical prof. position - lacks focus on what is best for the PhD student.
  - Main supervisor moves to another institution: Practical issue, luckily only involves few PhD students (will disappear with new structure)

- Main supervisor is a researcher from other countries: Other standards than in DK can cause problems between the PhD student and the supervisor (NB! Introduction to rules, regulations and culture).

Ebba Nexø encouraged the graduate school, which was seen as a clear entity in relation to management, programme heads, administration, PhD students, curriculum and courses, to focus on how to make supervisors feel like a part of the graduate school/how the supervisor feels connected to the university and the graduate school, besides having PhD students included in the research group. The aim should be to make supervisors feel responsible to the graduate school and answer to the requirements for supervisors, which requires a close collaboration between the graduate school and the HE departments. Do supervisors consider the graduate school administrative or scientific?

The PhD Committee see the counselling service as a usable and efficient space for solving problems.

The committee discussed the potential need for a supervisor community, and it was mentioned that a "reach out to colleagues"-culture was preferred rather than more meetings. However, the supervisor course was regarded valuable for sharing experiences between supervisors, and as earlier discussed in the committee it could be valuable to follow up on the supervisor course(s) with a theme-day (sharing experiences) 1 or 2 times after the supervisor course has been concluded, especially for international PhD supervisors. NB! Theme-day should be open to all supervisors, regardless of whether they have attended the HE supervisor course or a similar course externally, and should aim to facilitate the supervisors' feeling of belonging to the graduate school.

#### **Punkt 4: Alumni network for Health PhD alumni (30 min)**

Alumni consultant Mette Slot Eriksen, Lise Eriksen from HE Communication and (former) PhD student Pernille Kjeldsen attended this part of the meeting.

Mette Slot Eriksen presented the work of the alumni office, and it was clear that the PhD committee was only partly aware of the alumni offer at AU, which currently counts 40,000 members and aims to create great value for both parts to keep in touch, solve problems in society, career contribution etc. Right now, the alumni office is focused on how to make an attractive offer to Health PhD alumni.

The PhD committee came up with the following input for a PhD alumni offer at Health:

- Once graduated, PhDs no longer have access to their AU e-mail, which can be problematic for scientific purposes (e.g. pending publication/collaboration).  
Solution: Alumni e-mail ("@alumni.au.dk") for scientific purposes to illustrate the continuing affiliation with AU.
- Access to AU Library databases after graduation.
- Regular meetings/gatherings to stay in touch (informal) and share experiences, status on work life etc.
- Hosting special interest groups and/or theme meetings.
- The current newsletter has a very broad target group (all AU alumni), which makes it difficult to reflect yourself in it. Rather do a local alumni club (faculty-wise) with special interest groups (e.g. Health research networks) to make more narrow-targeted content to newsletters and create valuable interaction. E.g. include former PhD students as a special interest group to define valuable offers to the target group.

- Career planning: Meet people with alternative career paths in the alumni network. E.g. if you want to change field of research, this is your chance to discuss it with peers.
- Mentorship programme with alumni as mentor, PhD student as mentee (based on example from Lægeforeningen/Danish Medical Association).
- "Coffee-roulette" (example from European Network for Radiology): every 6 weeks matched with a peer for 15 min (Zoom meeting w/ suggested topic for discussion). Random matching.

As of now, Health has no local alumni club, but Lise Eriksen at HE Communication is the local alumni coordinator. It remains to be decided who should run alumni activities etc. at Health, if relevant.

### **Punkt 5: Briefing from the (retiring) chairperson (5 min)**

No briefing.

### **Punkt 6: Briefing from the PhD Association (5 min)**

The PhD Association informed about the following:

- The PhD Association is having difficulties keeping an adequate number of PhD students (actively) in the association.
- The PhD Association gets questions related to Integrated PhD, more specifically concerning paternity/maternity leave, insurance issues etc. The graduate school cannot solve legal issues for PhD students at part A, as these students - just as Research Year students - are not employed by the university.
- The PhD Association is working on a survey regarding communication barriers for international PhD students.
- The PhD Association presented a case re. systematic reviews (complaint letter) and GDPR rules. This is a legal issue not to be solved by the graduate school.

### **Punkt 7: Briefing from the advisory committees (5 min)**

Course Committee: No meetings/cases since last meeting.

Committee for Credit Transfer and Dispensation: Since the last meeting, the committee has made a single equivalence assessment (application based on a 1 year master degree).

It was mentioned that other countries traditionally have a longer PhD education than the Danish 3-year programme (e.g. 7 year PhD programme in Zürich, Switzerland), which can create hard competition for PhDs with a 3 year education. The theme to be discussed in PAND (PhD Association Network Denmark).

### **Punkt 8: Briefing from Head of Graduate School (5 min)**

Helene Nørrelund, Head of Graduate School, asked for comments regarding PhD Day 2023. The committee commented on the following:

- Technical issues, including poster presentation issues
- Keynote Sarah Hill (good presenter)
- Themes and how these were allocated (allocate presentations acc. to presenters within the same field to generate more qualified questions)

Inputs from the PhD Committee:

- From a PhD student perspective, the day is considered a duty more than a value to the PhD (give more than gain), as PhD students have many other occasions for practising research dissemination. Keep the mandatory attendance (plenum talks, networking etc.), but make the presentations elective.
- Allocate more time for presenters in plenum (as plenum sessions create a feeling of belonging to a whole), and less time for individual presentations.
- Consider whether it is necessary for *all* PhD students to submit an abstract - or just those PhD students doing a presentation?
- Suggestion for a theme of the talk in plenum: How to do good presentations.
- Make sure to have plenty of time for networking in the programme, as this is an important occasion for meeting with other PhD students, academic staff etc. to learn about the (broad) science conducted at the Health faculty.

### **Punkt 9: Items for the coming PhD committee meetings in 2023 (10 min)**

The following themes will be discussed during 2023:

- AUH/HE strategy on health scientific research: We will invite PhD students involved in this work for the next meeting (e.g. PhD student Ellen Hollands Steffensen).
- Career opportunities: Will be discussed at the September meeting
- Going abroad:
  - Financial support - private deposit: It seems problematic for PhD students to pay themselves before getting reimbursement for financial support (e.g. 60,000 DKK). Alternative solution(s) to be discussed.
  - Data – how long, where do they go after ending the stay, how many apply for funding etc.
  - Arranging the stay: Spouses and children. Applying for funding, administration, VISA etc.
- Course ECTS: Next meeting/May.
- Extension due to Covid-19: Clear rules/eligibilities (e.g. who can still apply/re-apply?). Update on number of applications (no. of granted cases and related costs, areas of research etc.).