

Policy for developing the competences of main PhD supervisors at the Faculty of Arts graduate school

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support the talent-development strategies of Aarhus University and the Faculty of Arts. Supervision and supervision resources are an important feature of the way the faculty's graduate school trains its young researchers, as well as being of central importance with regard to the quality of the research results achieved by PhD students. The faculty wants to assure and develop the quality of its PhD supervision with a view to strengthening its PhD programmes and research results, improving the career opportunities of its PhD students, and equipping them as well as possible to meet the expectations and requirements with which they will be faced in their future careers.

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Background

In recent years PhD degree programmes in Denmark and at Aarhus University have changed a good deal. In 2007 they were placed under the auspices of graduate schools. In the same year the 3+5 and 4+4 schemes were introduced at Aarhus University. PhD degree programmes have also started the process of internationalisation, admitting more PhD students with an international background, increasing cooperation with regard to supervision and PhD courses, and increasing the amount of publication in English. Among other things, the new PhD ministerial order on 1 September 2013 has provided clearer authorisation for double-degree and joint-degree partnerships. The profile of registered PhD students has also changed, resulting in an increase in joint financing with museums, university colleges and other institutions. The industrial PhD scheme is also being developed constantly with the PhD programme in cooperation with companies or public-sector institutions.

On 19.12.2013 the strategy of the Faculty of Arts was adopted, including strategic objectives for talent development and other areas. The strategy states that one of the faculty's strategic objectives is to "Ensure the development and quality assurance of its PhD programmes".

Based on the faculty's strategy and in the perspective of the changes of its PhD programmes, the faculty and the faculty's graduate school will strengthen knowledge sharing with a view to achieving best practice in relation to the PhD programme, as well as equipping PhD supervisors to meet the future challenges which their role will involve. The policy also puts into practice the guidelines of the faculty's graduate

school of 1 November 2012, which state (in point 3.3) that PhD supervisors should take part in development work and competence development at the graduate school.

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Objectives for developing the competences of PhD supervisors:

- Ensuring the competence development of all new main PhD supervisors
- Strengthening the exchange of experiences between main PhD supervisors
- Offering all PhD supervisors a sound knowledge base regarding supervision for various types of PhD student
- Strengthening the focus on assessing PhD dissertations and defences among both main PhD supervisors and potential chairs of assessment committees
- Ensuring that all PhD supervisors are informed and updated about the ministerial orders and regulations on which the PhD programme is based
- Giving feedback to the management of the graduate school, the academic council and the PhD committee

Policy for developing the competences of PhD supervisors:

- Within one year of their initial appointment, all PhD supervisors must have completed a course for PhD supervisors
- Within a period corresponding to the standard three-year PhD course, all PhD supervisors must have taken an active part in the graduate school's PhD supervisor workshops or contributed actively in other ways to the development of PhD supervision by the graduate school
- All PhD supervisors must keep up to date with ministerial orders and other regulations and matters of importance for their PhD students – including participation in meetings in connection with enrolment and other issues

Implementing the competence development policy for PhD supervisors:

The faculty's graduate school is responsible for holding meetings, courses and workshops to develop the competences of PhD supervisors, and for the quality of these activities (the quality assurance of competence development involves cooperation with the PhD committee). The graduate school works alongside the Centre for Teaching Development and Digital Media (CUDiM) with regard to planning, organising and conducting these activities. CUDiM has the resources and (thanks to the studies it carries out, for instance) the research-based knowledge required for this. The faculty's PhD committee, PhD programme directors and experienced supervisors will be involved closely in the preparatory work required to plan the content of PhD competence development activities, which may perhaps be held in cooperation with the individual PhD programmes at the faculty's departments.

PhD supervisor course

The PhD supervisor course is offered once a year from 2014 onwards – perhaps in cooperation with other faculties or institutions. Among other things, the course will focus on the supervisor's role and relationship with the PhD student, project management of the PhD course and other issues. The course will also consider the formal frameworks and policies, the PhD assessment and defence, and examples of practical PhD supervision, cases etc. The course is developed based on the faculty's targeted collection of systematic knowledge about supervision practice at the faculty, incorporating existing supervisor experience in workshops with active PhD supervisors (see below). The course is open to all academic staff of associate professor level. Main PhD

supervisors who have been appointed but who have no previous experience will be given top priority.

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PhD supervisor workshops

The graduate school wants to strengthen its cooperation with PhD supervisors with regard to exchanging experiences, mutually developing competences, and developing PhD supervision academically. Cooperation starts with a range of workshops at which the focus will be:

- Sharing and identifying the basis of experience with regard to the central challenges encountered by PhD supervisors in their supervisory work in general, and in relation to special PhD courses such as the industrial PhD, PhD students from abroad, double-degree agreements etc. This also includes the differences in 5+3 and 4+4 PhD courses
- Discussing a range of the challenges of PhD supervision based on cases and the collection of experiences
- Discussing the challenges of writing a PhD dissertation and other research publications in English as well as publishing articles
- Discussing the internationalisation of the PhD programme and the studies of individual PhD students

Workshops are offered to PhD supervisors with the option of choosing between several dates. The workshops are open to all academic staff of associate professor or professor level.

Other measures

Academic staff with experience of PhD assessment committees at the faculty and other institutions should be included in both the PhD courses and the workshops so that supervision and assessment can be viewed in a joint perspective as far as possible. So workshops and courses should contain an element that focuses on the role of the chair of the assessment committee.

In the longer perspective, the graduate school will develop cooperation regarding specialised PhD supervisor development with other graduate schools or universities outside Denmark with the focus on discipline-specific issues in supervision or thematic problems such as supervision for double and joint degrees.

Development

These measures will be evaluated on a regular basis with a view to developing and ensuring a relevant and sound knowledge base for the work involved. In extension of the PhD supervisor workshops, developments will be followed up by information and discussions under the auspices of the PhD programmes – each department separately, perhaps. Follow-up offers of supervision for PhD supervisors will be considered and offered, depending on the level of interest among supervisors.

Resource consumption

Participation in PhD supervisor courses/workshops etc. will be compensated and registered in accordance with current agreements on working hours. The time involved in taking part in supervisor activities is part of the competence development time of PhD supervisors, and not part of the supervision time.

The planned PhD supervisor workshops will have a duration corresponding to one working day, while PhD supervisor courses will have a duration corresponding to 1-1½ working days. Participants should expect some preparation time, and the total time required will be stated in the description of the activity concerned.