

Reception of PhD students (employed in PhD positions)

Two separate meetings are held when new PhD students arrive. Invitations to these meetings are sent in a combined e-mail to the PhD student before his/her first day of work. It is important that time is allocated on the first day to receive him/her. The meetings are as follows:

- I) An information meeting with the administration shall be held on his/her first or second day. This is a purely administrative meeting at which the PhD student receives information from the administration at the department in the same way that other new employees do. A separate procedure is being drawn up for reception of new employees.
- II) The second meeting is between the PhD student and his/her supervisor(s) with the focus on discussing the project and what shall be included (to the extent possible). Remember that a draft of the project plan must be submitted within six weeks of starting. Limit this meeting to one hour and arrange further meetings if necessary.

This initial meeting between the PhD student and his/her supervisor(s) shall lay the foundation for a collaboration that will last for at least for the next three years, and which shall be based on trust.

The following topics should be raised at this meeting:

- a) **Clarify expectations:** As a supervisor, what do you expect of your PhD student? What can he/she expect from you when it comes to involvement, contribution, supervision, etc.? Who requests supervision? Should you or the PhD student take the initiative? Remember that the PhD students come from vastly different cultures and some do not dare to do anything unless the supervisor takes the initiative, while others grew up in a flat structure with no clear hierarchy. Even if you say that he/she can contact you when necessary, we know from experience that in some cases this does not happen. In some cultures, asking for help is a sign of weakness. Set a meeting schedule to begin with so you have time to get to know each other and establish trust. We recommend using the form for clarifying expectations at a future separate meeting.
- b) **Project content/description:** Check that the PhD student is familiar with the [Supplementary regulations for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor \(PhD\) at BFE](#) and present the [template for the project description](#). Agree on the overall goals and sub-goals of the PhD project.
- c) **Career:** What does the PhD student think about his/her future? What are his/her ambitions? You can touch on this and say that, as this is something we focus on at the faculty, we will discuss this in more detail at future meetings. Encourage the PhD student to participate in various activities related to career development, e.g. events arranged by TODOS (the interest association for PhD students at UiT) as well as provisions arranged by the faculty/university.
- d) **Courses:** Raise the topic of which courses should be included in the PhD programme. This may change over time in line with the PhD student's plans for his/her future career (see point c).

- e) **Required duties:** [How much and what](#) type of courses shall the PhD student teach (or what should the required duties be) and when will this be planned? The supervisor should clarify this with the Head of Department prior to the meeting.
- f) **Follow-up:** How should the follow-up work? How often should you have meetings (see point a)? New PhD students are often unsure of what they are getting into and will often need closer follow-up to begin with. We recommend agreeing fixed times for meetings and that the supervisor is clear about what he/she expects the PhD student to submit before the meetings. As the PhD student “owns” his/her PhD project, we strongly recommend that he/she submits an agenda prior to each meeting and then sends minutes afterwards. A copy of these minutes is distributed to all the supervisors, including those who did not attend the meeting. This ensures everyone is informed and has the same starting point. The minutes serve as a good way of ensuring that all parties have the same understanding of what was discussed. If confusion/conflicts arise, it’s also important that this is documented.
- g) **Inclusion:** Include the PhD student in the research group as soon as possible so that he/she feels part of a larger research community and encourage him/her to participate in joint events and coffee/lunch breaks, etc. Discuss the work environment and culture in the research group/at the department. Make specific agreements concerning where and when the PhD student should meet. What time do you and your colleagues eat lunch/drink coffee?

This document is based on the groupwork implemented during the seminar on research supervision at BFE on 8 January 2020. It was drawn up by the HR Manager and Vice-Dean for Research Education at BFE and approved by BFE’s Research Committee on 23 April 2020.