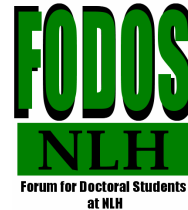


To:
Studiedirektør Siri Margrethe Løksa

Date: 22nd of March, 2006

From: FODOS, Academic Committee

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Introductory modules for PhD-students at UMB

The idea of an introductory course for all new PhD-student at UMB emerged through the Academic Committee of FODOS. The idea was partly stimulated by a concept used by Veterinærhøgskulen/Norwegian School of Veterinary Sciences (NVH) and partly by a wish to prepare and inspire all PhD's at the university for the tasks ahead of them. In addition, an introductory course could facilitate both the University's and FODOS' needs for information flow to new temporary employees.

Following a meeting with the Rector and the Prorectors, including the Study director, FODOS was asked by the Study Department to come up with some ideas for the contents of an introductory course. The concept has been thoroughly discussed in the Academic committee of FODOS.

The aims of an introductory course package at UMB should be:

1. To orient new PhD students to UMB with emphasis on their rights and duties as researchers at UMB
2. To foster the ability of PhD students to apply relevant research methods in their doctoral projects
3. To strengthen the ability of PhD students to communicate their findings.

The course package could be organized as three modules, the first should be compulsory (Module A) and two elective (Modules B and C). We will tentatively refer to them as PhD 400, 401, 402, respectively. The courses can give the students 10 credits, which leaves enough space (minimum 20 credits) for more specialised courses. We have chosen a less extensive model than at NVH since they are revising their PhD course-package due to complaints about overload and missing relevance for numerous students (pers.comm, Einar Lilleeng, Leader of DIOV at NVH). The general ideas about the modules are described below, as well as possible implementation options. The concept presented is not fully worked out, but can be used as a good starting point for the Study Departments when developing the project. FODOS would be pleased to participate in any discussion regarding the further implementation of such an introductory course.

Yours Sincerely

Stein Joar Hegland, Leader of Academic Committee FODOS

Mariel Aguilar Støen, Member of Academic Committee

Mari Sundli Tveit, Representative in University board

Ronnie Babigumira, Representative in NOVA

Tina Bringslimark, Representative in FON

Andriy Kupyna, Leader of FODOS

OVERVIEW OF INTRODUCTORY MODULE-CONCEPT

UMB PHD-INTRODUCTORY MODULES EVERY AUGUST- AND JANUARY MODULE/BLOKK

MODULE A, PhD 400

1st week: Introduction week

Compulsory, 2 credits

MODULE B, PhD 401

2nd and 3rd week: Quantitative and qualitative data analysis and Case Study

Elective, 4 credits

MODULE C, PhD 402

4th week: Academic writing

Elective, 2 credits

Details about the modules

MODULE A: Introduction week, PhD 400

1st Week

Aim: Introduce new doctoral students to UMB-life and inspire them for the tasks that lay ahead. Furthermore, describe PhD students' rights and duties at UMB including ethical questions, regulations and quality control-system, the organization of daily work, the possibilities for organising compulsory work and general rights of temporary employees.

Credits: 2

Compulsory

-Tuesday, information day:

1. What doctoral students mean to UMB, by Rector.
2. PhD-students as researchers (statistics, duties and expectations, feedback-seminars) by Pro-Rector for Research
3. PhD-students as students (PhD-regulations, courses available) by Pro-Rector for Education
4. Administration (Help-functions for doctoral students: employed vs. quota-students; Central administration vs. Institute administration; Organisational map of UMB; Duty-work)
5. What is FODOS? (Your rights: important issues, engage and get your duty-work) by FODOS-leader
6. International opportunities (NOVA, research stays, funding), by the PhD-students NOVA-representative and the international research bureau at UMB

Free Lunch; meet up with FODOS-mentors.

7. Do the Campus-game (building and facilities) together with mentors.

Social gathering at Café Klubben

-Wednesday, Research ethics

1. Ethical considerations related to research, by Jan Helge Solbakk (j.h.solbakk@medisin.uio.no)
2. Co-authorship
3. Considerations related to storage of data and data gathering
4. Intellectual property rights

-Thursday, Communication day

1. Academic publishing and communication, by the last winner of the Research Award
2. Popular communication, by Gro Elden
3. Communication with media and politicians, by a communication consultant
4. Educational communication: give good lectures, by the last winner of the Study Award

-Friday, Library day*

1. Databases and searching information
2. Reference Programs

*Friday ends with FODOS-party for new and old PhD-students!

MODULE B: Science methodology, PhD 401

2nd and 3rd week

Aim: This module would be designed with the aim to foster the ability of PhD students to apply relevant research methods (quantitative and qualitative) in their doctoral projects. Introduce frequently used statistical methods and guide students in practical use of statistical software.

Credits: 4 (course) +2 (term paper)

Elective

Contents:

It could be organized as an intensive snapshot- type of course with a length of one week for lectures and presentations of design, methods and software, and one week for working with a “hands-on” approach (statistical software*). After that the students would write a term paper supervised and evaluated by professors at the different departments. This form of organisation of the course could help students to establish a network of professors that are able of supporting a wide variety of thematic areas and research approaches and through this to strengthen and foster interdisciplinary research, one of the strongest elements of the profile of UMB**.

Keywords: research questions, examples of the process from research questions to final publication, research strategy and design, use of qualitative and quantitative methods, collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, use of secondary data, interdisciplinary research, statistical software.

Resource persons: Solve Sæbø (who has already supported many PhD-students)

* As an example, in this module, students would be introduced to R a free software environment for statistical computing and graphics. Our preference for R is for a number of reasons. It is free, open source, highly customizable, and its applications cut across disciplines (thus independent of departments/institutes and future working places).

However, enough resources for guidance are necessary to get students over the user-threshold for R. The case study/term paper can alternatively be more conceptual for those that are more interested in design of studies rather than performing statistical analysis.

**UMB has to date considerable expertise in this type of courses, but they are directed to the master level, FODOS suggest that this expertise should be widened to the PhD level using existing experiences (for example EDS 300 Research Methods, AOS 240 Research in Social Sciences, ECN 351 Research in Development Economics, ECOL 300 Ecological Scientific Methodology, EDS 320 Scientific communication seminar, STAT 310 Design of Experiments and analysis of variance, STAT 330 analysis of categorical data, and others)

See also <http://fodos.umb.no/information/AC/UMBkursforslag.pdf> for an earlier suggestion by FODOS.

MODULE C: Academic publishing and presentation, PhD 402

4th week

Aim: To facilitate the writing process of scientific papers and documents (thesis, books, reports) and learn techniques for scientific oral presentations.

Credits: 2

Elective

1. Invite editor of scientific journal for 2-3 days (e.g. Per Lundberg, Oikos)
2. Presentation techniques, two days with focus on presenting your own research