



## **Joint meeting for Building Stronger Universities (BSU) assignment holders: PhD co-supervision and course development**

### **Organised by the four thematic Building Stronger Universities (BSU) Platforms:**

- Platform on Environment and Climate – EC ([bsuec.org](http://bsuec.org))
- Growth and Employment Platform – GEP ([bsuge.org](http://bsuge.org))
- Platform on Human Health – PHH ([bsuuh.org](http://bsuuh.org))
- Platform for Stability, Democracy and Rights – PSDR ([bsusdr.org](http://bsusdr.org))

**Time:** 12 November 2012, 10.00-13.00hrs

**Place:** University of Copenhagen, CSS, Øster Farimagsgade 5, Building 9, Meeting Room 9.22.2

**Chair:** Carl Erik Schou Larsen (Coordinator, GEP)

**Participating assignment holders:** Henrik Bregnhøj (UCPH/PHH), Henrik Hansen (UCPH/GEP), Kirsten Thomsen (DTU/GEP), Kristine Juul (RUC/EC), Nanette Hale (UCPH/PHH), Niels Ørnbjerg (UCPH/PHH), Nina Qvistgaard (DTU/GEP), Peter Furu (UCPH-PHH/GEP/EC), Thilde Langevang (CBS/GEP), Torben Birch-Thomsen (UCPH/EC), Søren Jeppesen (CBS/GEP)

**Other participants:** Anne Christensen (Director, DFC), Arne Skov Andersen (BSU Project Manager, Universities Denmark), Bjørg Elvekjær (Coordinator, PHH), Carl Erik Schou Larsen (Coordinator, GEP), Dorte Holler Johansen (Work Package Leader, PHH), Eva Thaulow Nielsen (Project Coordinator, DFC), Flemming Konradsen (Chair, PHH), Pia Pannula Toft (Communication Advisor, PHH), Susanne Lildal Amsinck (Coordinator, EC)

### **General procedures and guidelines re: assignments on PhD co-supervision and course development**

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***Please note that the following outlines are standard procedures and special internal agreements with a platform might occur.***

#### **How are the assignments advertised?**

The platforms circulate their assignments through newsletters, homepages and other networks.

#### **How are the PhDs students selected?**

The PhD students are typically selected through a dialogue between a platform's South and North representatives. Whenever possible, a North representative participates in the interview, physically or on-line. Typically, the co-supervisor from a Danish university is not assigned at this stage; hence s/he is not involved in the selection process.



**What is the co-supervisor's role in designing the PhD project?**

The principal supervisor(s) (from the student's home country) has the main responsibility for the project. The co-supervisor from a Danish university plays an important role in ensuring that the study is of expected high quality and uses the latest available information. Together they form the supervisor team.

The co-supervisor is typically not involved in selecting the student. In most cases, s/he will be involved in the process of defining the study in more details, including scope, methods and process. This is done in close collaboration with the principal supervisor. The co-supervisor is in charge of the study tours to Denmark. It is important that the number and timing of the study tours is planned early in the process. The initial planning of the PhD project includes preparing the detailed budget.

**How much time the Danish co-supervisor is expected to invest in the project?**

The contribution from the co-supervisor at the Danish university is estimated to one month per year for three years, unless otherwise agreed. The respective platform pays the salary for this month from its core budget. The salary is paid on an annual basis subject to receipt of progress/completion report from the co-supervisor. (The co-supervisor will receive a standard format as an attached to the assignment agreement).

In addition to the one month's work, the university where the co-supervisor is employed in has an obligation to provide an equivalent amount of in-kind staff time assistance. For more details about the co-financing obligation, please see the attached note '*Opgørelse af medfinansieringsforpligtigelsen i BSU*'.

**How many study tours to Denmark should be included in a PhD project?**

Unless otherwise agreed, the duration of a PhD project is three years. Each PhD project includes up to three study tours to Denmark. The number and the length of the study tours should be agreed upon by the PhD student, the principal supervisor and the Danish co-supervisor. Please note different regulations and restrictions depending on duration of stay and frequency of visits to Europe, read more under '*DFC briefing*' below.

**How often should the co-supervisor and the PhD student meet?**

It is advisable for the co-supervisor to meet with the PhD student in the beginning of the process in order to get to know each other. The co-supervisor can visit the student and the principal supervisor at their university or a shorter study visit to Denmark can be arranged. To ensure a balanced process and division of labour, it may be a good idea to invite the principal supervisor to join the student during such a visit, subject to available funds. Please consult the host platform if you would like to invite the principal supervisor to Denmark.

**Who is in charge of finding the right PhD courses?**

The principal supervisor has the primary responsibility for finding the relevant courses for the PhD student. The student follows the rules and requirements of the university where s/he is registered. Typically, it is his/her home university unless a double degree<sup>1</sup> is pursued.

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<sup>1</sup> Subject to a consensus in the team of the PhD student, the principal supervisor and the co-supervisor, the possibility of pursuing a double degree can be explored. It is the responsibility of the team to contact relevant parties to clarify procedures and proceed accordingly.



BSU will advise a course based structure for PhD projects but if the home university does not have such a requirement, courses are not mandatory. The main goal of the BSU is to build capacity in students' home universities so they can offer relevant PhD courses. Therefore, remember to explore the possibilities in the student's home country, including courses organised by the other BSU platforms. The student can also participate in courses arranged in other BSU countries, subject to agreement between student and the supervisor team and available budget.

### **Paying for PhD course**

PhD courses in Denmark are not free of charge for students registered at other universities abroad or in Denmark. Check your budget for funds to cover course fees during study stays.

## **Danida Fellowship Centre (DFC) briefing on procedures for study stay in Denmark**

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### **Who is the contact person at DFC?**

Contact person at DFC is Eva Thaulow Nielsen ([et@dfcentre.dk](mailto:et@dfcentre.dk)).

### **What is DFC's role and responsibility?**

DFC is responsible for contacting the Danish Immigration Service and Danish Embassies for visa/residence permit application, and other logistics regarding the study tour. In addition to the visa/residence permit, this includes booking of flight tickets, travel in Denmark, insurances, payment of allowances and accommodation in the Copenhagen area. Outside Copenhagen, the Danish host university is in charge of arranging the accommodation; however, DFC should approve the accommodation standard.

### **Who should initiate the process?**

Once the timing and duration of the study stay in Denmark is agreed upon between the PhD student and the supervisor team, the Danish co-supervisor sends an official invitation (signed by the co-supervisor) to the PhD student with a copy to DFC. The PhD student forwards a copy of their passport page with picture and personal information to DFC with a copy to their Danish co-supervisor. After this is done, DFC will take over the logistics. It is important to provide DFC with contact information on all involved parties (PhD student, co-supervisor, Platform Secretariat, others) and specify the internal division of labour and responsibilities to ensure that the right people are informed about the process.

### **When should DFC be contacted?**

If the study stay is longer than 90 days, the student needs a residence permit and DFC needs to have the required documentation at least three months before the start of the study tour.

If the study stay is shorter than 90 days, the student can travel with a Schengen visa and DFC needs to have the required documentation at least six weeks before the start of the study tour.

Respect the deadlines and be well prepared. DFC cannot work faster as the process depends on the procedures at embassies and the Danish Immigration Service. Remember also that changes always delay the process. And remember that official holidays like Christmas and New Year will also delay the process.



It should also be noted that persons travelling with the 90-day Schengen visa can only be able to apply for a new visa after six months. This should be taken into consideration when planning the project and related study tours. Co-supervisors should also check whether the PhD student has obtained a Schengen visa within the last six months before the planned study tour.

**What kind of documentation DFC needs?**

DFC needs to have the official invitation from the Danish co-supervisor, copy of the student's passport (full name, picture, passport number and expiry date) and the student's email address. DFC can initiate the process for applying for visa/residence permit only after receiving all the required documents.

**Who writes the invitation to the student?**

The Danish co-supervisor writes and forwards the official invitation to the student with a copy to DFC. It is important that the invitation is written on the respective Platform's letterhead to ensure that it is clear to DFC, which Platform the student belongs to. Remember to sign otherwise the invitation is not legal.

**Who is responsible for covering the fees?**

DFC takes care of the required payments and fees. The amount will then be directly debited from the respective platform's budget allocation after informing the platform.

**Study visits versus faculty exchange**

It is important to inform DFC whether you are arranging a study visit for a student (study visit) or a staff member (guest visit). DFC has different rates for their services. A fee for arranging a guest visit is 4000 DKK per visit in 2012. An adjustment of the rates is expected in 2013. Accommodation at DFC hostel is more expensive for non-students.

**BSU co-financing obligation**

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Flemming Konradsen gave an overview of the Danish universities' co-financing obligations referring to the note '*Opgørelse af medfinansieringsforpligtigelsen i BSU*' from the Danish Universities that was approved by the MoFA on 19 October 2012. The note will be officially circulated among the Danish universities shortly.

The co-financing falls under four categories: Management, implementation of activities, other external funding for existing likeminded projects, and other input provided for general institutional capacity building outside the budget. The BSU Secretariat in cooperation with the four platforms will agree on joint procedures for reporting the in-kind co-financing.

**PhD course development – experience, lessons learnt and best practices**

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The participants shared experiences, lessons learnt and best practices regarding PhD course development. Following issues were highlighted:



- Communication with South partners is difficult and time consuming. It is difficult to establish the initial contact to the institution.
- Visiting the partner institution to discuss the assignment is a good way to establish contact and start process.
- Ensuring the ownership is crucial in ensuring that the course will be carried on after the BSU team leaves.
- It is important to build upon the existing courses at the Master's level. Best results are achieved if the assignment holder has an opportunity to visit the partner institution in the pre-planning phase. Discussions, needs assessment and brainstorming with the partners will increase local ownership, and help designing courses that match the local needs.
- A few activities have already taken place where several platforms have joined hands. E.g. T-o-T PhD supervisor workshop in Ghana and Tanzania had participants from different platforms. Coordination has been a challenge in the initial phase, but there is no doubt that there is a great potential in expanding this kind of collaboration.
- The aim of the BSU is to build capacity in the partner institutions in the South. Therefore, it is important that assignments are designed to allow a proper hand-over from the assignment holder.
- Establishing partnerships under the new BSU initiative take time. It should be considered to allocate more time for course development in order to ensure longer-term involvement from the assignment holders and a more genuine participatory process.

It was agreed that it is important to keep collecting best practices. Existing best practices will in due course be found in the platforms' annual reports. Also the DDRN report '*Project management in research capacity building partnerships - Guidelines*' written by Carsten Nico Hjortsø (2010) can be a useful reference. These guidelines are based on the experience and lessons learned from the Danida funded ENRECA (Enhancement of Research Capacity) projects.

#### **Further coordination and cooperation**

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A complete list of present BSU assignment holders from the Danish universities will be prepared and circulated to facilitate relevant contacts and coordination.

A follow-up BSU assignment holder meeting will be organised in spring 2013. The aim of the meeting is to continue sharing experience among assignment holders, giving feedback to the platforms and contributing to the planning of the BSU Phase II activity plan.