

## **The PhD-coordinator role and function at the Department of Sociology, Environmental and Business Economics (SEBE), University of Southern Denmark (October 2018)**

Following the general guidelines of the PhD-School at the Faculty of Business and Social Sciences at University of Southern Denmark, the primary role and function of the PhD-coordinator is to act as an “ombudsman”, who mediates issues related to the everyday life of PhD-students. As such the PhD-coordinator initiates and supports activities for strengthening the terms and conditions of the PhD-students. However, it is not the responsibility of the PhD-coordinator to secure the progression of PhD-projects or to intervene in the scientific and academic supervision.

Specifically, the obligations and tasks of the PhD-coordinator at the Department of Sociology, Environmental and Business Economics (SEBE) amongst others include:

### General tasks:

- Serving as PhD student’s contact person in relation to regulations and working conditions
- Serving as a mediator in conflicts and expectations alignment between the PhD-student and the department leadership (i.e., the department head, the leader of the research group etc.) as well as the PhD-supervisors
- Communication of relevant information and changes concerning the PhD-program to the PhD-students.
- Providing information of potential PhD-applicants and current PhD-students about SEBE’s current and future PhD and post-doc vacancies
- Observing the overall progress of the PhD-project of each PhD-student (especially in the first year of the PhD-project)

### Start of PhD-program:

- Welcome and introduction for PhD-students at SEBE in addition to the introduction by the supervisors and the research groups
- Providing assistance in setting-up budget plans for the whole PhD-period together with each PhD-student within the first half year including costs for PhD-courses, stay abroad, conferences etc.
- Setting-up “mentorships” for younger PhD-students being supported by older PhD-students

### Set-up of meetings:

- Arrangement of one meeting per semester with the supervisors of a PhD-student to discuss general problems of the respective PhD-collaboration (also together with the PhD-student, if required)
- Arrangement of regular individual meetings with each PhD-student (at least two times a year) to discuss general issues and potential problems (e.g., external funding of stay abroad in cooperation with SEBE-research support office)
- Promoting regular meetings with all SEBE-PhD-students together (at least two times a year) to encourage the social connection among the PhD-students
- Arrangement of one meeting per year with all supervisor at SEBE to exchange supervision experiences and discuss current supervision issues

### Set-up of events:

- Organization of the annual PhD-day
- Arrangement of irregular events for potential postdocs at SEBE together with SDU research support unit about future career options. Furthermore, regular support should be provided if PhD-students aim for a post-doctoral career (e.g., evaluation of third-party-funding opportunities)

### Equality

In connection with the ongoing contact with the PhD students, the PhD coordinator (and the individual supervisors) ought to be aware of whether gender, nationality, age or other group-based matters with the PhD students leads to special challenges or special behavioral patterns deemed

inappropriate in relation to the PhD student's course. If the PhD coordinator observes this, he / she should discuss this with the Head of Department and / or PhD school leader to initiate initiatives to address this.