

The Role of the PhD Coordinator at the Department of Economics (ECON), University of Southern Denmark

21st December 2021

The role and function of the PhD Coordinator is to support the objective of the PhD School at the Faculty of Business and Social Sciences to train and educate researchers of a high international quality in a supportive and inclusive setting. The primary role of the PhD Coordinator is to be the person with whom all PhD-related activities at ECON are anchored. This does not mean that the coordinator is responsible for all PhD-related activities or must participate in all activities, but rather that she/he must be informed about them. Moreover, the coordinator acts as an “facilitator”, 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.

The obligations and tasks of the PhD Coordinator include, but are not limited to, the following:

1) Information gathering and dissemination at the department

The PhD Coordinator communicates relevant information concerning the PhD programme. The PhD Coordinator keeps her/himself informed on central and general initiatives and developments of the programme (this does not include information on PhD courses).

The PhD Coordinator should:

- Keep abreast of relevant information and developments concerning the PhD programme;
- Provide information about the PhD programme at ECON.

N.B. For many practical questions on formalities concerning the PhD programme, the PhD student should contact the PhD school rather than the PhD coordinator. This could for example be enquiries concerning the PhD process (evaluations, reports, defence, etc.).

2) Organizational matters

The PhD Coordinator should assist the Head of Department in practical, organizational matters concerning the PhD programme.

The PhD Coordinator should:

- Assist in the formulation of calls for PhD positions;
- Participate in assessments of applications for PhD scholarships;
- Participate in the interviews for potential PhD students;
- Help in the coordination of PhD defences, hereunder chairing the PhD defence.

3) Contact across the PhD School and ECON

The PhD Coordinator keeps contact with the PhD School and supports the department in maintaining and developing a high quality of the PhD programme.

The PhD Coordinator should:

- Be a point of contact between the PhD School, the Head of Department, and the PhD students;
- Provide information to the PhD School on department activities for PhD students, PhD courses, etc.;
- Provide continuous sparring with the Head of Department on PhD related matters, both at the initiative of others (including heads of research units and the PhD students themselves) and on their own initiative.

4) Activities and meetings among PhD students

The objective of activities and meetings for PhD students is to strengthen knowledge sharing as well as inform and educate on selected topics. Activities and meetings are held regularly and in agreement with the Head of Department.

The PhD Coordinator should:

- Offer an appropriate welcome for new PhD students;
- Invite and have Employee Development Dialogue (EDD) with the PhD students on the behalf of the Head of Department;
- Participate in the planning, implementation, and coordination of PhD courses at ECON (but is not responsible for the organisation of them) and serve as a link between the department and the Danish Graduate Programme in Economics (DGPE)¹;
- Ensure that individual research groups organize opportunities for their PhD students to receive feedback on their work (e.g., internal seminars);
- Organize and participate in regular PhD seminars (where all PhD students attend), where the PhD students can present their work;
- Be responsible for arranging and coordinating the annual DGPE workshop;
- Initiate the organization of a job market training programme for those students who wish to go on the international job market;
- Act as point of contact for the Scandinavian PhD Student Seminar Exchange programme in economics²;
- Appoint a PhD Contact from among the PhD students.

The PhD Contact is responsible for:

- Being an extra point of contact for the PhD students;

¹ <https://econ.au.dk/da/research/other-research-entities/dgpe>

² Participating institutions: Copenhagen Business School (CBS), Lund University, Norwegian School of Economics (NHH), Stockholm School of Economics, Stockholm University, University of Bergen, University of Copenhagen, University of Gothenburg, University of Oslo, University of Southern Denmark (SDU), Uppsala University, Aarhus University.

- Appointing mentors (senior PhD students) for new PhD students who can assist new students with basic practical matters (such as how to use the printer);
- Arranging social activities.

4) Counselling

The relationship between the individual PhD student and her/his supervisor(s) is a main building block in a fruitful PhD process. It is the responsibility of the PhD student and the supervisor(s) to build a working relationship. In cases of potential disagreements, conflicts, or other issues the PhD student has the opportunity to seek guidance and counselling from the PhD Coordinator.

The PhD Coordinator should:

- Arrange an annual meeting in the autumn with each PhD student and his/her supervisor for a conversation about the progress of the PhD student;
- Serve 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.);
- Have an 'open door' policy so that PhD students can raise any issues or questions they might have (the PhD Contact can serve a similar role, in collaboration with the PhD Coordinator).

5. Equality and diversity

During the fulfilment of the PhD Coordinator's tasks and obligations, she/he should ensure that all students are treated equally and are given equal opportunities, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.

The PhD Coordinator should:

- Take up any issues with the Head of Department or the Head of the PhD School.