

PhD News

2/2011

Dear all,

Doctoral education is not only a local or national issue. On the 11 and 12 of April a group of university leaders and experts on Doctoral education representing 31 countries and 6 continents met at Aarhus University in Denmark to discuss the global aspects of doctoral education. The meeting was arranged by the European University Association Council for Doctoral Education (EUA-CDE).

Three important issues were raised and discussed; 1) The Global Research Community: It is necessary to emphasise and promote the multi-polar nature of the community by securing broad access to knowledge globally as well as disseminate local knowledge and locale paradigms of thinking which could challenge academic hegemonies, 2) Critical mass and Capacity building; Mobility schemes and collaborations between institutions should explicitly take capacity building into account in order to mutually increase the excellence of all partners; they should include mechanisms that facilitate the return of scholars to their home country and 3) Stakeholder dialogue; Dialogue with and the support of a wide range of stakeholders is central to developing doctoral education which can make a significant impact in society, including an understanding of the importance of developing local knowledge while also cultivating an international research environment.

These issues indicates the interplay between the local and global in which universities acts as the interface between the global research community and local stakeholders.

The topics of the meeting are in line with the intentions in the revised strategic plan of University of Bergen. So for all of you it is important to remember that you have not only a local and national responsibility for knowledge development and dissemination, but the doctoral education is embedded in a global research community.



Berit Rokne
Deputy Rector

LEADER summer course for PhD candidates

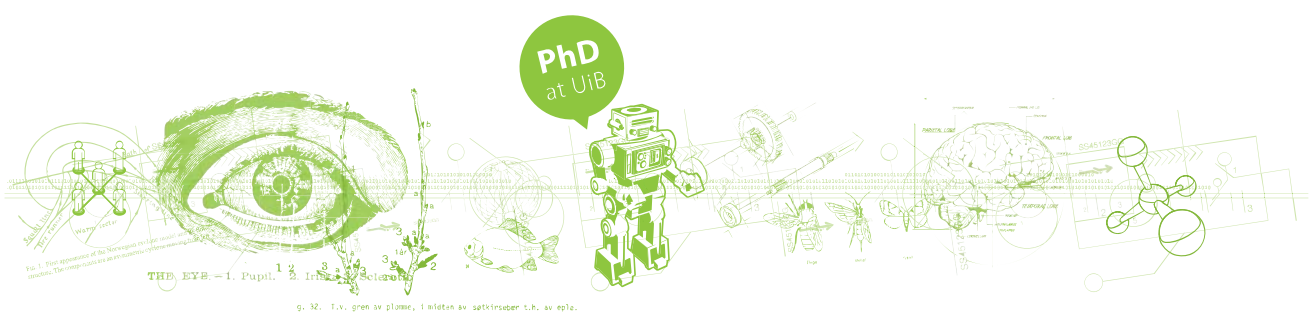
Summer Course on professional skills training, University of Århus, 1-16 August 2011



The University of Århus organises, with support from the Doctoral Task Force of the Coimbra Group, a Summer Course on professional skills training to take place from 1-16 August 2011. LEADER provides PhD students with skills such as intellectual property management, communication, networking, fundraising, intercultural collaboration, entrepreneurship, team work and leadership skills. It will deliver tailored, inspirational, professional skills training through facilitated workshops to small groups of young researchers.

The training will be put into a context and exemplified in seminars led by internationally renowned academic researchers who themselves are engaged in collaborative research within various thematic areas. Colleagues from business and industry will be involved in the delivery of training to ensure diversity of delivery and focus as well as to establish strong outreach potential.

Deadline for applications: 30 April 2011
Application criteria and practical information is found [here](#).



Information Management for Knowledge Creation

The University of Bergen Library takes part in a larger project about PhD candidates and the research process related to information management. They have finished phase one of the project which has resulted in a report.

Project goal and method The project *Information Management for Knowledge Creation* (www.inma.b.uib.no) aims to produce online instructional modules in English to support PhD candidates' search, management and use of scientific information for the creation of new knowledge. The modules aim to make a contribution to the overall PhD programme training in transferable skills. The report from the first phase (in press) presents and compares results from a *scoping* literature review and five focus group interviews of PhD candidates' and doctoral supervisors.

Results

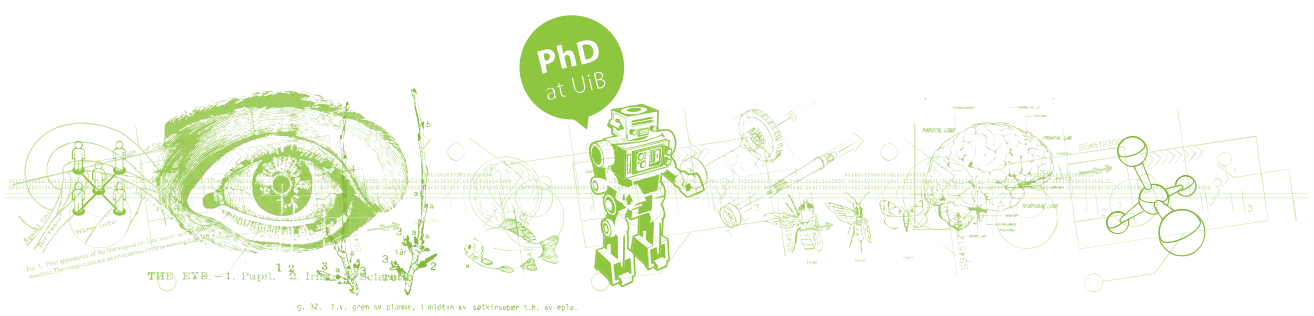
The literature review shows differences between disciplines when it comes to practice in information seeking. The factor that influences this practice the most is the PhD project's research questions. Interdisciplinary research questions set the highest demand to information competence, because the source material complexity increases when interdisciplinary approaches are applied. PhD candidates' citation practice shows trends towards using resources that are digitally available, and a reduction in use of printed material. Furthermore, the research literature shows that it is considered discrediting to display insufficient information skills in a professional context. Building up professional recognition and disseminating one's own contribution is dependent on having a research network, collaboration and co-publishing. The candidates' ability to deal with information could be improved by better knowledge of databases and use of their functions. Extended knowledge about obtaining and evaluating information will lead to a rise in quality, especially when it comes to the literature review chapter in a PhD thesis. Candidates express a strong wish for independent learning.

The focus group study confirms and gives further insights into the results from the literature review. Seven main topics were identified through the interviews:



- 1) The candidates see it as important to contribute to original research and they experience a strong feeling of autonomy in this respect.
- 2) The candidates are concerned with time-saving, and expect to be able to use efficient methods to find research literature. The demand for quick results can result in changes in research practice within some subject areas.
- 3) The candidates express that they have secure methods for getting hold of identified literature, but are unsure about how they can obtain an updated general overview over the literature.
- 4) The concept of academic integrity when using sources varies between the different disciplines. Within some research disciplines this is seen as connected to academic writing skills, while within other disciplines it is something that is seen as connected to methodological problems in source interpretation. The candidates consider that they have good referencing skills. By contrast, supervisors think that the candidates' reference skills are inadequate.
- 5) Publishing is not seen as important within all disciplines. In the disciplines where publishing is seen as important, the candidates have different motivations. Some publish to promote their own career, while others see it as a learning process.
- 6) Formal quality criteria, like the impact factor, do not seem to be of significance for choosing what literature to read. On the other hand, within some disciplines, such criteria do have an impact on the choice of where to publish.
- 7) The candidates identified the following library research support areas: reference management, literature searching, enhancing candidates' academic and social interaction, and an introduction to the library resources for international candidates. They ask for both discipline specific and interdisciplinary library research support.

The content and design of the online modules will be based on the results from the literature review and the focus group study.



Researchers Grand Prix

Researchers Grand Prix is a competition between young researchers where they present their research project in an entertaining manner, trying to explain the crux of their project in only 4 minutes.

Researchers Grand Prix will be organized as part of the Research Days in September and the Bergen competition is held on Friday 23 September. The national finale will be held in Bergen the week after. All PhD candidates who would like to participate in this should sign up for the competition. The candidates elected to present their project in the Bergen local Grand Prix will be coached before entering the competition. You may present in English or Norwegian, but all coaching before the competition will be done in Norwegian. The audience and the elected judges from various scientific fields will decide on the best performance and the winner will take part in the national finale. To sign up for the competition within the 2 May read more [here](#).

New strategy plan adopted

After a lengthy process, with the strategy on the agenda for several meetings, the university board finally approved the strategy plan. The plan, which will take effect from 2011 to 2015, emphasizes quality and all its relevant aspects throughout the document.

Need funding?

The department of research management organizes several information days on how to apply for different funding sources:

May 6: Proposal writing course with Sean McCarthy, 9-15:00 at Vilvite. Registration [here](#).

May 24: Register [here](#) to learn all about this summer's new EU funding opportunities including ERC and Marie Curie stipends and the thematic programs in Health, Environment, Food and Agriculture, Energy, Social Sciences and Humanities and Information and Communication technologies.

June 16: information day on Marie Curie proposals (individual post doc stipends and networking actions for PhD education and researcher exchange) Register [here](#)

Debate on research schools at UiB

The debate on research schools at UiB was lively and engaged around 50 staff and early stage researchers who showed up to listen to the presentations and debate the evaluation of research schools.

Research schools at UiB are organized in different manners and offer a great variety of activities to the PhD candidates. It is clear that some research schools are mostly organized around courses while others are strongly organized in relation to common research themes. As a strong supplement to doctoral education it is clear that the research schools have contributed to improving quality of doctoral education at UiB.



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