

# PhD News

1/2009

Dear all

First of all, Happy New Year to all of you.

One piece of good news at the end of the year was presented in Nifu Step Report 40/2009, which states that UiB is best in Norway as regards the throughput of PhD candidates. For the 2003 intake, the completion rate five years after starting as a research assistant was almost 70%. We assume that UiB's focus on quality and throughput in the Action plan for doctoral education is very important in this respect. Further implementation of the measures in the Action plan is therefore necessary. Mid-term evaluation is one such measure that will be implemented in 2010.

The Council for Doctoral Education of the European University Association (EUA-CDE) also has great focus on doctoral studies. In 2010, the CDE will re-visit the 2005 Salzburg Principles in order to reflect on the experience from the last five years of reform of doctoral education in Europe. These principles underlined research as the core component of doctoral education and called for stronger institutional strategies and structures to support this research; the vision was to have diverse types of doctoral programmes with transparent structures and the critical mass necessary for a good research environment. One central element in this re-visiting project will be consultation with individual institutions through a number of thematic working groups. During spring 2010, working groups will be appointed to discuss topics such as quality/accountability, internationalisation, recruitment/admission and credit and outcomes. UiB will participate in this process. International collaboration in these matters is of great importance.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a good working year in which quality and throughput in doctoral studies at UiB will see further improvement.



Berit Rokne  
Deputy Rector

## PhD registration:

*All PhD candidates must register by 1 February. [Click here](#) to read more, and contact your faculty if you need help with the registration procedure*



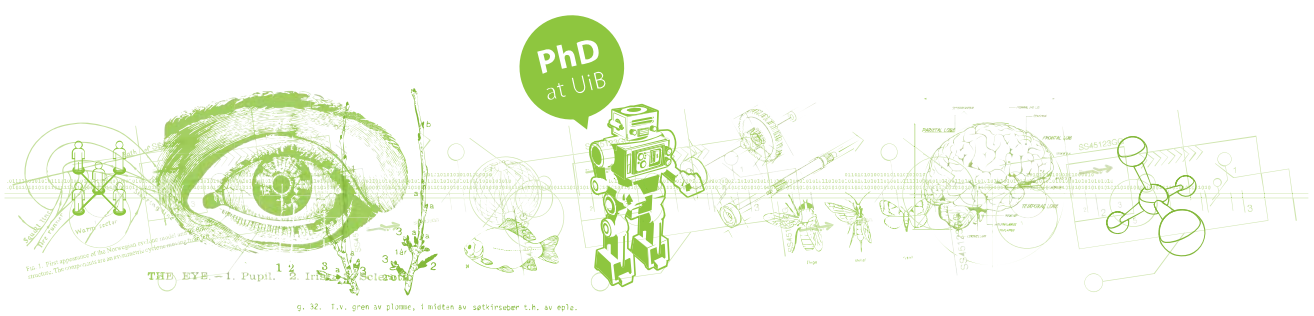
## Yggdrasil - young guest and doctoral researchers' annual scholarships for investigation and learning

**The Research Council of Norway has now announced Yggdrasil scholarships for foreign PhD candidates and younger researchers for stays of 1 - 10 months in Norway in the academic year 2010-2011.**

The [Yggdrasil mobility programme](#) promotes the internationalisation of Norwegian research by offering grants to international PhD students and younger researchers in connection with research stays in Norway.

PhD applicants must be engaged in an organised doctoral programme, and younger scholars must have completed a PhD degree that is no older than six years. The programme includes candidates from all European countries (minus the Nordic countries), as well as applicants from the following non-European countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Egypt, India, Israel, Japan, Mexico and South Africa.

The deadline for applications is 17 February 2010. For more information about the mobility programme and how to apply, [click here](#)!



Report from the EUA-CDE seminar:

## ‘Structuring Doctoral Programmes - a means for continuous improvement’

Vice rector Berit Rokne and science coordinator Beatriz Balino of the Bjerknes Centre at UiB attended the EUA-CDE workshop entitled: ‘Structuring Doctoral Programmes - a means for continuous improvement’ hosted by the University of Zagreb on 10-11 December.

The mission of the Council for Doctoral Education of the European University Association ([EUA-CDE](#)) is to contribute to the development, advancement and improvement of doctoral education and research training in Europe. It was created in 2008 in response to growing demand from European universities for a more structured approach to doctoral schools and programmes.

[EUA-CDE](#) organises conferences, training seminars and other events on topics of interest to its members; the commissioning of research and analyses; advocacy; the provision of information and the dissemination of good practice. It also provides policy advice to the Board and Council of EUA on trends and developments in relation to doctoral programmes and research training in Europe. The activities of EUA-CDE are managed through a Steering Committee, of which vice rector Rokne is a member.

The goal of the meeting was to reflect on challenges ranging from creating a structured doctoral education to the daily challenges of running well-established programmes and, in particular: (i) how to reach critical mass, (ii) the balance between research and curricular activities, (iii) how to engage academic staff and doctoral candidates, (iv) what needs to be structured, and (v) how to implement regulations and be accountable while ensuring creativity.

Experiences and ideas were shared at the workshop, which provided a forum for discussion based on concrete examples showing the possibilities and challenges of structuring doctoral education.

One of the goals of doctoral education shall be to attract the best students with a high potential to succeed. The quality of research education is paramount, and a successful doctoral programme will be a magnet for young talent.

*The participants arrived at the following set of recommendations for the development of doctoral education in Europe:*

**From critical to optimum mass:** Achieving a critical mass is important, but becoming too large can also be problematic. By balancing quality with quantity (in terms of the number of students and supervisors etc.), an ‘optimum mass’ shall be achieved for the provision of top doctoral training. The optimum mass will be judged in relation to the goals of the school/programme and will vary widely between institutions, disciplines and research fields.

**Balance:** Ensure a proper balance between the research (creative process) and other curricular activities (e.g. coursework, teaching duties etc) throughout the PhD period.

**Transferable skills:** Train candidates in research and transferable skills, and in mastering creativity, critical thinking and autonomy, as well as personal and professional development, in order to ensure the fitness of doctoral candidates for a range of academic jobs and jobs in research administration (at faculty and department level), as well as in the public, private and industrial job markets with a view to meeting society’s needs.

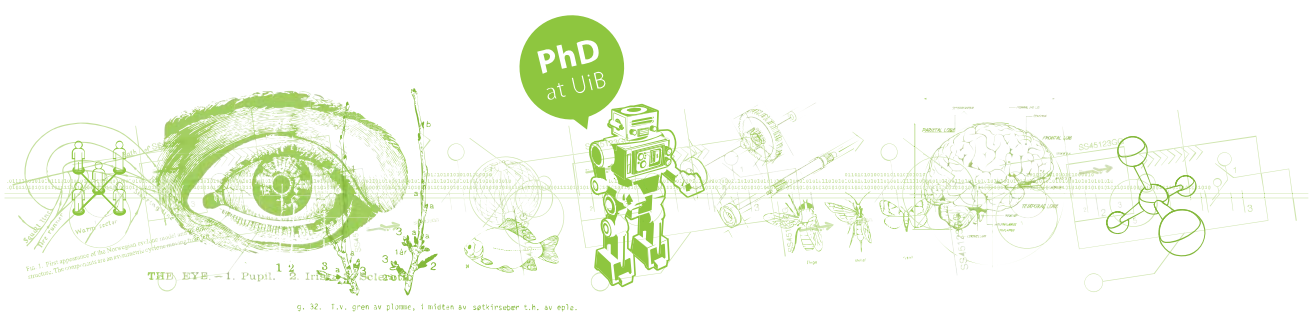
**Strategy and governance:** The strategy for doctoral education shall be embraced by the university management. Governance structures shall be flexible enough to develop autonomy and responsibility among PhD candidates.

**Self-assessment** is needed in order to take account of various aspects of the process: PhD production, publication of research results, the quality of the research produced, supervisors’ skills etc.

**Culture for change/promotion of identity:** Create enthusiasm for the development and optimisation of research education at all levels. Promotion of doctoral education shall be championed by the PhD fellows themselves, who will identify with the doctoral programme rather the department/supervisor.

**Supervisors and mentors:** Coaching of supervisors and mentoring activities will be important elements in the doctoral training scheme.

**Funding:** The organisation and implementation of doctoral training requires dedicated funding.



## Calls for papers on joint programmes at doctoral level

The JOIMAN network (Joint Degree Management and Administration Network) invites academic staff, young researchers and administrators who are familiar with the field of joint programmes at doctoral level to write a paper on issues concerning joint programmes at doctoral level - at policy as well as at development and management level.

Papers should also address the future development of joint programmes at doctoral level. There is also another call for Joint Programmes with non-EU institutions for papers at both Master's and doctoral level. More information at [www.joiman.eu](http://www.joiman.eu)

### Seminar April 8-10th:



Invitation to the Fifth **ORPHEUS** conference on PhD Programmes in Biomedicine and Health Sciences in Europe with the main topic: *'The Advancement of European Biomedical and Health Science PhD Education by Cooperative Networking'* in Vienna, 8-10 April 2010, at the Medical University of Vienna, Austria.

ORPHEUS, the Organisation for PhD Education in Biomedicine and Health Sciences in the European System, is an associate member of the Council of Doctoral Education of the European University Association (CDE-EUA).

Cooperation, joint programmes and networking are by far the best and, in many smaller scientific communities, the only way of improving the quality of research and PhD programmes.

More details about the Conference are available on the Conference's [homepage](#)

## Joint meeting between the university research committee and the committee for academic affairs

On 15 December, a joint meeting was held between the university research committee and the committee for academic affairs. At the meeting, the members discussed doctoral education, mid-term evaluation and the accreditation of doctoral education in Norway.

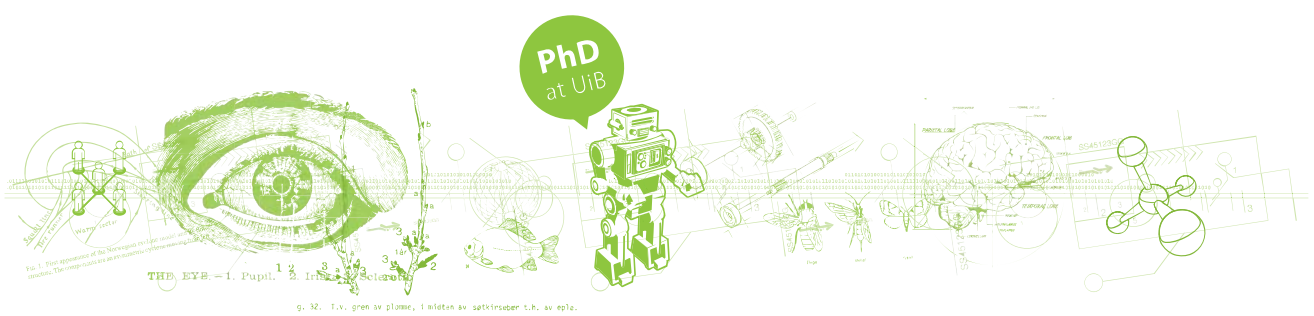
Mid-term evaluation is one of the measures in the action plan for the doctoral programme adopted by the University Board last year. Several faculties have good experience of arrangements of this type, and the measure will now be introduced for all candidates at UiB and implemented by all faculties. It was therefore discussed how the measure can be designed and implemented in the best possible way.

In the discussion, it was especially pointed out that mid-term reviews should not be negative control reporting. They should also highlight positive aspects of the work on PhD education. It was also underlined that the faculties should have freedom to implement this scheme in a manner that takes into account differences between academic cultures and traditions.

In addition to mid-term evaluation, the committees also discussed the criteria for accreditation of doctoral education in Norway. UiB is asked to provide input to the Ministry of Education and Research regarding the discussion about the criteria for accreditation of doctoral programmes. The government wants to strengthen the quality of the doctoral programmes in Norway and will review the accreditation criteria in order to clarify the requirements for doctoral programmes.

UiB emphasises that the research environment must be of high quality and that it is an advantage that there are a sufficient number of doctoral candidates in the doctoral programme to prevent candidates from being isolated.





## Update about the Coimbra Group:



## Mak-UiB agreement on joint degrees signed

**An agreement on joint degrees and joint cooperation has just been signed in Jinja, Uganda, where The University of Makerere and the University of Bergen held their evaluation conference on Mak-UiB cooperation.**

UiB's Vice Rector Astri Andresen emphasised the importance of agreements for joint degrees as instruments for research and educational collaboration. Together with Vice Chancellor Venansius Baryamureeba, she closed the evaluation conference by signing the agreement.

Master's students and doctoral candidates who are enrolled in joint programmes or are part of a cotutelle arrangement under this agreement will receive one diploma from each institution and one joint degree.

## Doctoral Studies & Research Task Force in the Coimbra Group

The Task Force shall support and advise the Coimbra Group universities in connection with the organisation of doctoral studies, support and management of research programmes and the transfer of the outcomes of research to society and the economy.

The Task Force will seek to contribute to European policy making in connection with the further implementation of the Bologna reform of the third cycle of higher education and the promotion of closer links between the European Higher Education Area and European Research Area.

UiB is part of the Task Force, and PHD-News will follow the work and bring you updates about activities and seminars in the network.



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