

Minutes - PhD committee meeting

Date: 19.03.2026, 2.00-3.40 p.m.

Place: room 221, Harriet Holter Building

Present: Alexi Gugushvili (PhD leader, Sociology), Michael Gentile (PhD leader, Human Geography), Anniken Hagelund (Head of Department, ISS), Hilde Solli (representative for external Human Geography candidates), Marieke van der Star (representative for internal Human Geography candidates), Vilde Blix Huseby (representative for internal Sociology candidates), Maja Feng (representative for external Sociology candidates), Katalin Varga (PhD adviser)

Agenda with minutes

1. Discussion: high level of sickness absence among our phds – by Anniken

- Anniken showed some unsettling figures on the sickness absence among the PhDs where the average absence of staff is 5%, but the PhDs' long and short term sick leaves, are at 13%.
- Anniken presented the follow up routines at ISS and discussed preventive measures.
- Following factors were mentioned related to prevention of sick leaves: increasing socio-well-being by creating "kull" of new PhDs; strengthening the supervisor role; dealing with work-life balance, impostor-syndrome; adjusting the teaching-load.
- Teaching can be challenging for many who are new to the task: they call for mentoring, feedback, checkpoints on the way. Need a system change? Set up a system for following up the teaching of new PhDs?

1. News from 'Programme council for PhD' [Programrådet for ph.d.-programmet ved SV-fakultetet - Det samfunnsvitenskapelige fakultet](#)

Alexi's summarized the most important issues (see link to the minutes of the meeting).

2. Quick update on the next pizzaseminar

Topic for the next pizzaseminar is career-planning, date: May 7.

Recommended new topics: work-life balance; impostor-syndrome

3. Follow-up from the PhD evaluation report:

- *Establishing the PhD Forum – PhD Committee as the 'operational anchor' for the Forum*

PhD Forum is to be organized by the candidates themselves, they shall also decide how to run it. ISS gives 20 hours in the time accounting system for organizing and also offers 20 000 kr/year for social events. New candidates should be encouraged to join and both sos and sgo candidates expected to take part.

- *3-years' plan for PhD courses – new ideas on thematic courses?*
- The 3-years' plan increases predictability.
- We need a culture change where PhDs are broadly trained and take less specialized courses.

- Because of the budget cuts we are going to have only two thematic courses a year. SGO topics can be: urban studies, political, economical geography, climate change, mobilities etc. Alexi explores possibilities of agreement with Swedish and Danish universities, something similar what SGO has with the Swedish National Researcher School. Externally founded courses come in addition to these two.
 - *Changes in course descriptions: SOS/SGO9001, SOS/SGO9050 and SOS/SGO9006*
 - *Evaluation of the course is going to be part of the course itself*
4. **Meeting plan for our PhD panel** – frequency, next meeting date (next programme council meeting is 30.04.2026)

Next meeting: 21. May 1 p.m.

5. **From internal Sociology candidates (Vilde):**

- **Medarbeidersamtaler:**
For PhD-studentene på sosiologi har medarbeidersamtalene de siste årene ikke blitt avholdt regelmessig de siste årene. Per nå er det snart halvannet år siden forrige runde med medarbeidersamtale. Innspill om at vi ønsker at medarbeidersamtaler blir opprettholdt en gang i året (slik det egentlig skal). Og også et ønske om å vurdere hyppigere gjennomføring, helst en gang i semesteret.
- Holding «Medarbeidersamtale» (conference) is now divided: work-related issues belong to the department's leadership, while PhD education and PhD supervision related issues belong to the PhD leaders.
- Anniken is going to be informed by the PhD leaders that the Sociology internal candidates didn't have regular "medarbeidersamtaler" in the last years.
- Alexi is planning to have a conference with all sos candidates around mid-way of their education. Michael is planning to have a conference once a year with the sgo candidates.
- The representatives wish to have more frequent check points/conferences.
- **Undervisning**
*En PhD-student ønsker at vi får mer oversikt over tilgjengelig undervisningsarbeid vi PhD-studenter kan gjøre.
 Og at vi får flere tilbakemeldinger på arbeidet vi gjør med undervisning.*

Discussed under nr. 1.

- **Kurs**
*Ønske om informasjon om hvilke ph.d.-kurs som kanskje vil bli nedlagt, og medbestemmelse i det
 Konkrete kurstillbakemeldinger: Peer review kurset oppleves som svært nyttig og ønskes opprettholdt
 Kvalitativ metode-kurset tilfredsstiller ikke ph.d.-studentenes behov, og burde inkludert analysearbeid*

Discussed under nr. 4.