

Minutes from the PhD programme council meeting at the Department of Archaeology, Conservation and History (IAKH)

Time: December 15, 2020

Place: Zoom

Participants: Sunniva Engh, Ulrike Spring, Hanne Hagtvedt Vik, Christopher Prescott, Julie Lund, Alexandre Simon-Ekeland, Mncedisi Jabulani Siteleki (present at the beginning of the meeting)

Administrative staff: Ragnar Holst Larsen

1. Status for the PhD-programme at IAKH

Presentation of numbers of active doctoral candidates at the programme and general activity for the year by Sunniva Engh. One correction was made in the attached document, since one disputation had not been counted.

2. Orientation about the evaluation of the PhD.-programs at The faculty of Humanities

Presentation of the external committee, mandate, background material and deadlines, key facts, core goals, main challenges and courses by Ragnar Holst Larsen.

Other elements brought up:

- Site visit in January, Sunniva has sent HF names of supervisors and doctoral candidates that can be interviewed by the external committee.
- It will be interesting to see what the evaluation will touch on. The evaluation report written by IAKH was limited by the report template and it's strict word-count implemented by HF, so hopefully the site visit will be useful.
- The report is expected mid February.

3. Orientation from the heads of the doctoral programme (Vik & Lund) about dissertation seminars and other activities autumn 2020.

- History: The autumn semester's two dissertation seminars were integrated as part of the dissertation writing modules held by The Norwegian Research School (NRSH), in September by the University of Bergen and November by NTNU. In addition to these seminars, there were two local seminars with oral presentations of new PhD-projects, one as a physical meeting and the other held in Zoom. This semester two midway assessments were completed, both digitally.
- Archaeology/Conservation: Martin Furholt substituted for Julie Lund this semester. Three dissertation seminars were held this semester, where everyone presented text. The new doctoral candidates have presented their projects and there has been an increased focus on the methodological aspects with these new arrivals. This semester one midway assessment has been completed. The experience of having it digitally was positive.
- The doctoral candidates have arranged meet-ups in Zoom and Søren Handberg has arranged "forskerkaffe", a meeting places for discussions of opportunities and problems, big and small.
- Both doctoral candidate groups will need to find new representatives for the programme council.

4. Items from the doctoral candidates: Doctoral candidates in the age of covid-19: Solitude, writing pressure, mental health and meeting places.

- There is a desire to go back to hybrid disputations (opponents on Zoom but candidate, audience and head of disputation in the auditorium) and HF will make a decision regarding this sometime in January.
- Some doctoral candidates have expressed frustration regarding the regime of individual assessments of extension applications due to covid-19.

- Hard to find social meeting places during a pandemic, and challenging to get everyone to attend due to all the obligations people have in addition to their work obligations. The conclusion was that the department had potential to improve on the relationships between doctoral candidates and between doctoral candidates and the rest of the academic staff, but that this in the end required active participation and attendance must be part of the education to become a modern scholar.
 - Some of the doctoral candidates in history would have like to have more local meet-ups instead of being part of the dissertation writing at NRSH. IAKH should find a good balance for the dissertation seminars in history moving forward, both for the doctoral candidates and with regards to the use of resources. An idea is to combine NRSH's dissertation writing seminars and local oral presentation seminars, since the pressure of oral presentation and discussions are less profound than handing in text.
 - The difficulty of completing the educational component during Covid-19 was discussed, and the head of research reiterated that the department were flexible in approving alternative activities during this time.
 - The funds for inviting guest speakers to PhD-activities are still available, and the head of research recommends that the funds are split 50/50 between History and Archaeology/Conservation.
 - The Head of Research informed the programme council that doctoral candidates on leave of absence are followed up by the management in cooperation with the Occupational Health Service Unit at UiO.
 - More targeted information and dialogue with doctoral candidates were discussed, and the recognition that a temporary work assignment is an additional stress factor during covid-19.
 - The programme council discussed if the work environment and climate survey (ARK) was a relevant topic for the council, and will look into the matter further before deciding.
5. *Presentation: Ulrike Spring is the new head of the doctoral programme at IAKH. She will present the new leadership and share some thoughts on the way forward for the programme.*
- Focus on dialogue and communication with the doctoral candidates and their needs
 - Highlight the fact that being a doctoral candidate should be a great time and a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.
 - Establish supervisors meeting for inspiration and discussion.
 - More cooperation between doctoral candidates in history, archaeology and conservation, both socially and academic.
 - More attention on the completion grant and how to better follow up this group moving forward.
6. *DialPast – Updates on activities, courses and other relevant items*
- All courses after covid-19 outbreak has been cancelled. DialPast will start up with digital courses in spring 2021 with the aim to have physical courses from May.
 - DialPast has been granted an extension until the end of the spring semester 2022.
 - There are no obvious grant opportunities, but DialPast are looking for possible future opportunities in the museum sector.
 - Christopher Prescott will take over as Head of DialPast moving forward.
 - DialPast will look at the composition on the Board, with future application opportunities in mind.
7. *The Norwegian Research School in History (NRSH) – activities, courses and other relevant items*
- Completed the steering committee meeting and the Theory and Methodological course before the covid-19 outbreak hit.

- All planned activities for 2019/2020 has been completed, but everything has been digital since the completion of the Theory and Methodological course.
- The digital courses has worked well, but are work intensive for the teachers, planners and doctoral candidates.
- The two next courses are planned as physical courses at the campuses of UiO and BI.
- The next steering committee meeting is in February 2021, and there will be a focus on establishing good routines, which is necessary for managing the use of resources.
- The courses are well attended, both from partner institutions, other institutions in Norway and abroad. The courses held in Tromsø in October had a global scale with regards to both topic and attendees.