

**Mødedato:** 13. januar 2022 kl. 16:15 – 17:15

**Mødested:** zoom (link in outlook-indkaldelsen)

**Mødeemne:** Ekstraordinært møde i Nat Akademisk Råd

**Deltagere:** Tobias Wang (TWA/BIO) - formand, Kristian Pedersen (KP/dekan, til kl. 17), Andreas Basse-O'Connor (ABOC/MATH), Anne Faerch Nielsen (AFN/iNANO-TAP), Astrid Kligen (ARK/FakSek, referent), Bo Brummerstedt Iversen (BBI/CHEM), Camilla Lønborg Nielsen (CLN/ph.d.-stud.), Ditlev Egeskov Brodersen (DEB/MBG), Jaco van de Pol (JPO/CS), Katrine Vasegaard (KV/PHYS-TAP), Maja Lermark Schøn (MLS/stud.), Michael Drewsen (MD/PHYS), Ole Rønø Clausen (ORC/GEO), Rikke Louise Meyer (RLM/iNANO +BiRC)

**Afbud:** Marianne F. Løyche (MFL/FakSek), Victoria Roose Winkel (VRW/stud.), Niels Dangaard Hansen (NDH/ADM), Cathrine Williams (CW/BIO-JRA), Claudia Scheffler (CS/MBG-TAP), Jes Enok Steinmüller (JES/stud.), Line Marie Christiansen (LMC/ph.d.-stud.)

**Gæster:** --

## Udkast referat

Kl. 16:15 – 16:20 (5 min.) v/ TWA

### 1. Velkomst og godkendelse af dagsorden og referat

Bilag 1: Udkast til referat fra mødet d. 24. november 2021

Dagsordenen blev godkendt. Godkendelse af referatet blev udskudt til næste møde.

Kl. 16:20 – 17:15 (55 min.) v/TWA

### 2. Kommentering af udkast til ph.d.-skolens handleplan

Bilag 2a: Udkast "Graduate School of Natural Sciences – action plan 2022/2023"

Bilag 2b: <https://phd.nat.au.dk/gsns-action-plan/> (baggrundsmateriale på GSNS' hjemmeside)

Rådet drøftede udkast til ph.d.-skolens handplan (udvidet ift. dagsorden). Baseret på drøftelsen udarbejdede rådet vedhæftede skriftlige kommentar (bilag).

Kl. 17:15 – 17:15 (0 min.) /v TWA

### 3. Evt.

Punktet blev udskudt til næste ordinære mød d. 8. februar.

Graduate School Natural Science (GSNS)  
PhD committee

### **Feedback on GSNS' draft action plan 2022/2023**

The Academic Council at Natural Science appreciates the opportunity to provide comments and feedback concerning GSNS' draft action plan 2022/2023, and the council convened to discuss the plan on 13 January 2021. The overall impression is that the action plan is concise and ambitious, and the council acknowledges the clear focus on student well-being.

The council went through all action items, and agreed on providing the following comments and feedback:

#### **Theme 1 (student recruitment and onboarding)**

1. The council views recruitment from other Danish universities as a challenge and supports GSNS' ambition to improve in this respect (cf. action 1.3).
2. In comparison to recruitment from other Danish universities, internationality seems to be less of an issue, and the council recommends that GSNS' considers phrasing the action items under theme 1 more in the direction of "maintaining diversity" with respect to internationalisation.
3. Concerning action item 1.1 and the plan to "define individual goals for each programme", the council recommends GSNS to be aware of and explicit about the implications of and follow-up mechanisms for these goals (e.g. how are initiatives evaluated, and what happens if a programme does not meet its goals?).
4. Council members currently experience difficulties in recruiting PhD students from Britain into GSNS' 4+4 framework because formal approval of course work often imposes problems. This may also be the case for students from other countries. The council suggests that GSNS seeks to reduce barriers for recruiting the best talent.

#### **Theme 2 (GSNS committees and student representation):**

5. The council strongly recommends improving the gender balance in GSNS' committees. Action 2.2 "developing, enforcing, and communicating specific goals" should be phrased more explicitly, at least with respect to gender.

Akademisk Råd,  
Natural Sciences

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Side 1/3



6. The council strongly supports the idea of remunerations for PhD student representatives in GSNS committees (action 2.4).

**Theme 3 (Management of teaching workload):**

7. The council considers teaching as being highly beneficial for the academic development of PhD students and shares the impression that the PhD students generally enjoy teaching and appreciate its educational value. Yet, the council is of the clear impression that the high teaching load demands many resources of the PhD students and represents a source of their experience of being “stressed”.
8. Accordingly, the council strongly supports GSNS’ ambition to remove differences between programmes and to streamline practices within Natural Sciences and particularly among the faculties. There is also an impression that streamlining with respect to other Danish universities could be beneficial.
9. Concerning action 3.1 “*evaluation at faculty level* on how the 280 h/yr workload should be used and to what extent”, the council recommends a more proactive and possibly executive approach, with clear involvement of PhD student representatives in this process.
10. In addition to streamlining the rules concerning teaching workload, the council recommends reducing the average students’ teaching workload to the extent possible, e.g., by at least reducing the number of contact hours per PhD student (cf. action 3.2).

**Theme 4 (Integration of educational elements):**

11. The council agrees that good PhD courses are very useful for the PhD students, both in terms of acquiring academic skills and in terms of networking with peers. Yet, the council shares the impression, expressed in the action plan, that the PhD students are dissatisfied with the content of some of the courses offered. Thus, the council supports action 4.1. (“review PhD course catalogue”) and recommends that GSNS makes sure to include critical feedback from the PhD student in this process.
12. The council recommends offering a course on “Research Ethics for PhD students” as part of the regular course catalogue.
13. The council recommends that GSNS secures as much flexibility as possible concerning choice of courses and is supportive of action 4.2 and 4.3 (“increase awareness of educational elements ... such as summer schools” and “courses outside of AU”). It is imperative that any course activity is of clear benefit to the individual PhD student.

**Theme 5 (Independent initiatives to support student well-being):**

14. The council recommends focussing firmly on the expected added value (including well-being) for the PhD students when establishing a formal PhD network (action 5.1.). Furthermore, the council discussed whether the network is the appropriate

platform for links between students and industry (action 5.4), or whether the different programmes would be the more obvious choice. Again, the council views student involvement to be critical when developing such a network.

Side 3/3

15. The council appreciates GSNS action 5.2 focusing on strengthening supervisor skills and recommends including postdocs when designing and issuing invitations to supervisor courses and workshops.

**Theme 6 (The general PhD study framework):**

16. The council welcomes GSNS' ambition to influence future adjustment of the Danish PhD order (ph.d.-loven).
17. In the light of the short duration of the Danish PhD education compared to other countries, the council suggest focussing on reducing the PhD students' teaching load (without neglecting the importance of teaching for the PhD students' own personal and scientific development, see above) and on introducing more flexibility concerning educational elements (e.g., 30 ECTS as an upper limit).

Best regards

Tobias Wang

Professor, chair for Natural Sciences' Academic Council