

Case study

Title: AU Mentor, Health

What was done:

This programme establishes contact between PhD-students and employers outside Aarhus University. It gives students at The Graduate School of Health the opportunity to be matched with a mentor from the business community. These mentors are either PhD alumni from AU, Health or employed in companies/organisations that are relevant for the mentees. The matching is of high priority in order to ensure that the mentees receive important guidance about career paths, networking, personal development etc.

There are no formal requirements regarding form and content of the meetings between mentor and mentee. Each pair of mentor and mentee is unique and they are free to arrange their activities accordingly. There are however a few regulations and some recommendations. It is recommended that at least five meetings are held during a period of ten months. This does of course not prevent further contact beyond the ten months. In addition both parties have to sign a contract and agree on the topics for the meetings. These topics can vary, but they have to be relevant for career development, as this is the aim of the programme.

In addition to AU Mentor the Graduate School of Health has founded AU Career Advisory Panel that gives PhD-students from Health an opportunity to receive guidance and feedback from employers in relation to possible career paths. For instance advice on entrepreneurship, commercialisation and patenting, health services etc.

Links to:

- Employer engagement, including employers not traditionally associated with the recruitment of doctoral graduates
- Design and development of a doctoral supplement to cover broader activities, training and experiences with a particular focus on employability & mobility

Motivation and aims:

The goal of the mentor programme is to strengthen the link between students and the business community. By establishing a contact before graduation, the student should be better prepared for the work in the employment sector outside of academia.

Lessons learnt:

It is important that the interviews with the mentors are done properly and that mentees make a very specific application, so that the best matches can be made. Furthermore, it is important to spend time building a good relationship with the mentors, so they stay on the project and take on new mentees. The start-up of the programme has been a long process, because there is a lot of work in finding the right mentors causing waiting lists.

Scalability and transferability:

Inspired by the mentor programme at Health, AU Career PhD has made a similar programme at the other fields of studies at Aarhus University (Arts, Business and Social Science, Science and Technology). This shows a transferability of the programme and the ability to broaden this concept to universities outside of Denmark. In this regard, it is, however, important to note that the

programme requires that mentors from the business community are willing to be part of the programme as the success of the project is build upon interests from both sides.

Further information:

<http://phd.au.dk/gradschools/health/au-career-health/au-mentor-health/>

http://phd.au.dk/fileadmin/grads.au.dk/HE/menteebrochure_ENG.pdf

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Work package titles and themes:

- International dimensions to examination, supervision and the doctoral experience
- Design and development of a doctoral supplement to cover broader activities, training and experiences with a particular focus on employability & mobility
- Employer engagement, including employers not traditionally associated with the recruitment of doctoral graduates
- Approaches to training and support for doctoral candidates and supervisors
- Dissemination and promotion

Note for authors:

These case studies will be made publically available via the project website and may be included in future project publications and reports (printed and online).

Project website: www.doctoralexcellence.dk

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