CoPhS Nordic Conference on PhD Supervision

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Accessible Supervisor Education through Modularization and Collegiality

Round table discussion

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Abstract (250 words)

PhD students' inherent request for better supervision, due to a low success rate attaining PhD degrees and captured through quality ensuring efforts such as multiple questionaries, indicate a need to develop the supervisor education to become more accessible while also increasingly engage the collegium of supervisors. The research supervision course at Luleå University of Technology has since 2014 gradually developed to an annual course equal to 4,5hp or 120 hours of work, with a 25% study pace and a limit of 24 participants. The course is divided in 6 study periods all ending with a course day, either on campus or online.

The participants are generally satisfied with the course and over 80% complete it. The relatively long time-span have made it possible for the participants to learn about different academic cultures and to work with questions that take longer time, such as concrete supervision activities. So why change it?

The aim is to modularize the course, targeting separate roles in the advancement as a supervisor, while reducing the prerequisites. This aligns better to the appointment procedures, following the career steps for supervisors, and spreading the workload over a longer period making it easier to follow/complete the course. The latter may be the most important aspect, making it more accessible to the supervisors that have the highest workload and/or need it most according to subject evaluations.

Our plan is therefore a modularization consisting of five modules targeting different supervisory levels, with seminars for supervisors and a mentorship program in addition.

Participant engagement (150 words)

The round table discussion will start with a short presentation on the design and motives of the suggested modularized supervisory education program at LTU. The floor is then opened for discussion around the overall setup and the concrete modules, such that the following aspects are covered:

- PhD student and faculty requirements on supervisors

- Stages and levels of supervisory education and training

- Prerequisites and pedagogical level (basic, advanced, or research) of each module

- Engagement of the faculty collegium of supervisors

- Methods to develop supervisor education and training (flipped, hybrid, mentorship, etc)

- Flexibility to increase accessibility

LTU are developing this now and the plan is to launch the new program from the fall 2025, so we wish to use this conference and its participants to get feedback on our plans. The round table discussion we will therefore focus on supervisory education and training, to allow a more concrete program to be formed.

Literature

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