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Newsletter from the Doctoral School of Engineering and Science

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AALBORG UNIVERSITY



NEWSLETTER FROM THE DOCTORAL SCHOOL

Welcome to this newsletter which has a special emphasis on the matter of good scientific practice and the implementation of an oral status seminar.



NEWS

GOOD SCIENTIFIC PRACTICE

The topic of following good scientific practice is as important as ever – likely with substantially more visibility than earlier. The rules and practices we must follow can be found here <http://www.en.tek-nat.aau.dk/research/good-scientific-practice/>.

The guidelines can be found here:

http://www.en.tek-nat.aau.dk/digitalAssets/205/205942_teknat-retningslinjer-for-god-videnskabelig-praksis-og-videnskabelig-uredelighed---red--nov--2015-2_en.pdf. The guidelines explain the procedures.



SELF-PLAGIARISM

AUTOMATIC SCAN FOR PLAGIARISM

With the application of a new software tool (Ithenticate) to check PhD dissertations for plagiarism, we have seen an increasing number of problematic dissertations. When a dissertation is uploaded to VBN, the Doctoral School runs it through Ithenticate. If large parts of it turn out to correspond to other sources, the dissertation is not immediately sent to the assessment committee. Instead a process starts to check whether the dissertation is OK, or if it really *is* problematic. It is very important to stress that no decision whatsoever regarding the dissertation is solely based on the result from a screening tool. There is ALWAYS a scientific employee involved before any consequence is drawn from a given automatic

The most common challenge we have seen for PhD dissertations is that the PhD candidate unintentionally appears to plagiarise from him/herself – self-plagiarism. The easiest way to avoid these problems is to treat all publications (also the ones to which you have contributed yourself) as if they were written by someone else. If you do that, you will hopefully always in e.g. a PhD dissertation write:

Quote from [55]: "This piece of text is a direct copy from the mentioned reference. When using material like this (also paraphrased) it is essential with proper referencing to the text."



ADVICE IN RELATION TO SELF-PLAGIARISM

If in doubt, the PhD student should contact his/her supervisor or the PhD secretariat – the supervisors must keep themselves informed of the rules concerning Good Scientific Practice. Treat any scientific paper, also papers you have contributed to yourself, as if others have written it.

Always, if you for some reason need to reproduce a piece of text directly or paraphrased, refer as shown above.

The extended summary (the "kappa") of a dissertation should be quite short and bring a new perspective to your work – there is no point in reproducing text, results or similar from already published material that you is part of the dissertation as articles.

ORAL STATUS SEMINAR

We have now reached the last and final recommendation from the international evaluation of the Doctoral School, i.e. the introduction of an oral status seminar. The status seminar is planned to happen in connection with the 11 month study plan update. More details will follow so just a few words of the purpose etc.

The status seminar is centered around the 11 month study plan. The seminar is planned to

check. If the dissertation is *not* problematic, it will be sent to the assessment committee. If it *is* problematic, but the problems appear to be unintended, it will be returned to the PhD student for correction. If the problems are more serious, different measures can be applied, e.g. a period of 6 months suspension from handing in a corrected dissertation. The Doctoral School expects the supervisor to play an active role in helping the PhD students with the corrections.

Omitting the reference, clear indication of the text being a quote and the marking using "" is not not good scientific practice. A common mistake is for PhD candidates to see a scientific paper written for example with two supervisors as his/her own material. It is, however, not the property of the student – no matter if the student has done the majority of the work. If there are multiple authors it is also the "property" of multiple persons.

take 1.5 hours with participation of the PhD student, supervisors and an opponent (appointed by the head of the PhD programme). The seminar is chaired by the opponent who will also make a short report after the seminar.

One part of the seminar will focus on the progress and scientific level of the work done so far. The other part will focus on the remaining study time and provide a view on e.g. remaining courses, external research stay, planned publications etc.



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