Course program for the PhD School

The program is a mixture of mandatory and optional courses but are as a whole presented as a full program – the idea being to present PhD students with the right courses at the right time in the program, yet with the option to opt for courses elsewhere if better options are offered.

In the following outline, the courses are presented as 1, 2, and 3rd year courses respectively. This should not be read as a requirement to take the courses in that order or to exclude anyone from taking the courses when it fits into their specific PhD plan. It should rather be seen as an optional (but well thought out) structure, which can help to guide PhD students through program and to support learning the various academic skills at a relevant time throughout the three years of enrolment.

The aim of the program, then, is to present such a structured course program with the purpose of:

1) offering easy access to relevant and high-quality PhD courses at the faculty;
2) building a shared culture of academic curiosity among the faculty's PhD students and
3) providing course offerings that allow PhD students to combine course work with productive thesis writing.

The program is as follows:

Year 1:

Module 1A (September) COMPULSORY : Introductory programme consisting of A1: Introductory Course including Research Integrity (1.5 ECTS);
A2 Learning principles at Faculty of Law (1 ECTS)
A3: Project Management and Work/life Balance;
A4: Respect, Diversity and Mental Health.

This course is similar to the existing introductory course with the added component of an introduction to project management and work/life balance. The aim of this course is to get the PhD students ready to take on teaching, to introduce them to the basics of research practice and the need to carefully plan and manage their workload. Finally, the course also introduces PhD students to the faculty's policy for respect and diversity and how to address issues related bullying. The course also introduces PhD students to the faculty's mental health support program.

Module 1B (December-April) COMPULSORY (5 ECTS): Theory and Methodology track

This course is similar to the old course, but it is proposed here to organize this more as a study group and to involve PhD students more actively in the selection of reading material and presentations. The course aims at giving depth and breadth to PhD students thesis work by helping them to operationalize theory and method.

The course will not only help students to get an overview of theoretical and methodological approaches relevant to legal studies, it will also help them to understand the role of theory and method in science more generally and in legal science in particular.

The course will offer three optional tracks:

1) Private/economic law, including international private law and civil procedure/arbitration;
2) Public law, including criminal law, and international public law;
3) Sociology of law /jurisprudence/interdisciplinary approaches. Students will choose the track that they find most relevant for their project.

As an outcome of this course, PhD students will have drafted a text where they present their theoretical and methodological approach, and argue for their choice. They will also present possible alternative approaches and argue for why they do not use these. These texts should ideally be worked into their theses.

Module 1C (March) COMPULSORY (1 ECTS) – Round table presentation

This course is similar to the existing round table presentation except that it builds into the course that the PhD student should write up a state-of-the-art and present his/her "gap in the existing research" argument. The aim is also to present elements from Module B (see above) in the context of the PhD student's overall research project

Year 2:

Module 2A (September) RECOMMENDED: Research Quality in Legal science

Organized around the findings in the faculty's report on excellence in legal research and examples of research assessment models (e.g., the British REF system and UCPH's own template for research assessment), the PhD students is confronted with criteria for research quality and is introduced to ways of describing research quality, (e.g., the 1-4-star system used in the British REF). The aim is for the PhD students to be able to articulate a vision for their own thesis work.

Module 2B (November) RECOMMENDED: Argumentation and presentation structure in legal science

This course adds a specific legal science-oriented approach to the existing course in academic writing. The ambition for this course is to advance PhD students' ability to articulate and structure their arguments at the right level of generality and precision compared to the demands that apply to their field of research. The course then, aims at advancing PhD students ability to adapt to and refine argumentation and documentation practices compatible with the practice of academic writing style in the best journals and conferences in the field.

The course will help PHD students write conference papers (and thereby prepare for course 2C), and full academic papers. Phd students will work on a specific chapter of their thesis or on one of their thesis papers if they are writing a paper-based thesis. The course will have both a general section (for all participants) and working groups focusing on research outputs oriented towards specific subfields (same division as 1B)

Module 2C (December – June) COMPULSORY (5 ECTS): Specialized thematic conference-based PhD course

While most research centres at the faculty regularly host research conferences, this practice is not reflected in the faculty's PhD program. The aim of this course module is to ensure that a specialized thematic PhD course module is attached to these conferences and that conferences reflect the research being developed at the faculty by PhD students. The aim of this module is to support Ph students in attaining more academic depth in their thesis work by meeting and interacting with internationally leading researchers within their specific research topic. Participating in the conference with a presentation that is based on the PhD students research (could be a chapter or an article) and, importantly, assisting in organizing the program for the

conference will also help PhD students to build his/her academic network. Supervisors should also assist in organizing a scientifically relevant conference.

All research centres must offer one conference/course per year. Smaller research centres (less than five senior researchers (associate or full professors on permanent contract) may co-organize a conference.

The idea behind this PHD course is to create synergy between conference-making that helps make research centres internationally visible within their field and expose PHD students to state-of-the-art research within their field.

Year 3:

Module 3A (September) RECOMENDED: Research communication to the public

This course is similar to the course developed by the faculty's communication department and aims at translating some insight from the PhD student's academic work to an op ed in a newspaper, a blogpost or a comment in a professional non-academic outlet. The purpose of the course is for PhD students to get training in research communication to the public. It will provide insight into journalistic approaches to research communication and prepare for interaction with public media. PhD students should submit a media article about their research for this course, which (for Danish speaking PhD students) will also aim at presentations in the national PhD cup: https://www.phdcup.dk/

Module 3B (October) RECOMENDED: Publication strategy and impact: defining and identifying research problems

This course will help PhD students to think about how they can get the most out of their PhD thesis and also to prepare them for the "publish or perish" conditions of academic life after their PhD. The aim is to develop a sense of how to get the most out of one's research effort in terms of both publications and visibility in academic and professional contexts.

The course will focus on how to identify "good" research problems – i.e. problems that can be used as a vehicle for building research publications and research impact. PhD students will have some experience with this, because the PhD projects that got them accepted into the PhD program have already met the required standard for entry to the faculty. But how does one keep developing research that is both of high academic quality and has societal relevance?

In this course, researchers get introduced to "tricks of the trade" and meet experienced researchers within their own field, who explain their view on how to identify and develop fertile research problems. As part of the course PhD students will write a tentative plan of how their PhD thesis can be branched out into interesting new research topics and articles.

Module 3C (March) COMPULSORY (1 ECTS): pre-defence (evaluation seminar)

This course aims at giving tailor-made feedback to the individual Phd student on his/her thesis manuscript and to support the final write up of the thesis

Module 3D (May/June) OPTIONAL: External funding

PhD students who seek a career at the university after their PhD need to learn how to write good applications for external funding. In this course, PhD students get introduced to the Danish and European funding landscape: the various funding bodies and the various types of funding. They will learn about typical application text components such as "state-of-the-art", "deliverables", Gantt charts, etc. The course will also address application strategy, how to write to a non-legal academic audience and how to build funding experience. Participants will write a draft application during the course and will receive feedback.

General remark to all courses:

The aim for every course is that PhD students write text during the course that they will use in their final thesis. Courses will be structured around tasks and activities that aim to heighten student engagement with the individual course aims by showing how they support thesis work and/or career aims. All courses will seek to advance academic curiosity and critical thinking.