



Course program for the PhD School

The program is a mixture of compulsory 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 during their PhD studies, yet with enough flexibility to accommodate special needs in terms of substance as well as timing.

In the following outline, the courses are presented as 1st, 2nd and 3rd year courses respectively. This should not be read as a requirement to take the courses in that order nor should it be understood as excluding 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 the course program and to support learning the various academic skills at a relevant time throughout the three years of enrolment.

The overall aim of the course program is to:

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

Each course is designed in a way that encourages PhD students to write text that they will be able to 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.

Year 1

Module 1A: Introduction course

Time: March

Type: Compulsory

ECTS: 1,5 ECTS

Module 1A is in part co-organized with the PhD schools at the Faculty of Humanities, the Faculty of Theology, and the Faculty of Social Sciences. The first day of the course focuses on getting 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. It includes a presentation of PhD Planner and an introduction to the structure of the Faculty of Law as well as the PhD school and PhD Administration.

The aim of the second day of the course is to introduce PhD students to a number of basic concepts, principles and norms regarding responsible conduct in research. This will enable PhD students to understand and reflect on ethical issues and requirements according to their research.

Course responsible: [Sune Klinge](#)

Module 1B: Writing techniques

Time: April

Type: Optional

ECTS: 0,5 ECTS

Module 1B consists of a one-day writing workshop. It introduces PhD participants to specific writing techniques to help ensure a sustainable writing practice.

Course responsible: [Zuzanna Godzimirska](#)

Module 1C: Roundtable presentation

Time: within six months of project start

Type: Compulsory

ECTS: 1 ECTS

The roundtable presentation requires the PhD student to prepare and present a

state-of-the-art overview of their research area and clearly articulate the gap in the existing literature that their project aims to address. The session also provides an opportunity to present how early theoretical and methodological choices are taking shape, including relevant elements from Module B.

The roundtable is held within the first six months of the PhD. The PhD student schedules the session in consultation with their supervisor, books an appropriate room, and invites colleagues from their center.

Find all details about the process under ‘PhD Roundtables at Research Centres (1 ECTS)’ here: [PhD courses - KUnet](#)

Module 1D: Theory and Methodology in Law

Time: August

Type: Compulsory

ECTS: 3 ECTS

This course aims to strengthen the depth and breadth of the PhD student’s thesis work by introducing key theoretical and methodological approaches in law and supporting students in operationalizing these within their own projects. The course not only provides an overview of major theoretical and methodological traditions relevant to legal studies, but also helps students understand the role of theory and method in scientific inquiry more broadly and in legal science in particular.

The module consists of a two-day intensive course for all participants. As the main outcome, each PhD student will draft a text outlining their chosen theoretical and methodological approach and provide a reasoned argument for these choices. Students will also identify relevant alternative approaches and explain why these are not adopted. These texts should ideally be further developed and incorporated into the thesis.

Course responsible: [Sune Klinge](#) & [Zuzanna Godzimirska](#)

Year 2

This Module is designed to equip PhD students with the tools to navigate the complex terrain of contemporary academia and in fostering meaningful and effective contributions to their field of study and research environment.

Module 2A: Prepared for Conferences in English

Time: February-March

Type: Optional

ECTS: 2,5 ECTS

This course comprises a five-week course for PhD students who wish to improve their performance at inter/national conferences: group workshops, individual consultation and individual study. In this course, students will learn to effectively communicate their research through written abstracts and spoken presentations. Participants will 1) draft and refine conference abstracts and proposals, utilizing rhetorical strategies and peer feedback, 2) practice delivering a memorable presentation in English, receive constructive feedback, and review recorded performances with a tutor, and 3) present revised versions of their talks and gain further audience feedback for continued improvement.

The course is organised by the [Centre for Internationalisation and Parallel Language Use \(CIP\)](#) and offered by the PhD schools at Faculty of Humanities, Law, Social Sciences, and Theology at University of Copenhagen.

Course responsible: [Elżbieta Wójcik-Leese](#) & [Sophie Swerts Knudsen](#)

Module 2B: Academic excellence, impact and citizenship

Time: December

Type: Compulsory

ECTS: 1,5 ECTS

Module 2A introduces PhD participants to central components of academic research and citizenship as outlined in *inter alia* the [UCPH Criteria for recognizing merit](#) and the [Ministerial Order on the PhD Programme](#).

The first part of the module introduces PhD students to the criteria used to evaluate

research quality, with particular attention to the concepts of excellence and impact. Drawing on examples from top journals, funding bodies, and assessment committees, experienced researchers will discuss how they understand and operationalize these notions in legal science. Building on these insights, participants will reflect on what excellence and impact mean within the specific context of their own PhD projects and engage in structured discussions about how these expectations shape their research choices.

The second part of the module focuses on academic citizenship and equips students with practical tools for contributing meaningfully to their research environment and the broader academic community. Recognizing the diverse roles academics undertake –such as peer reviewing, providing feedback on ongoing work, serving as discussants, or chairing conference panels – the session explores questions such as: What characterizes a constructive peer review? What constitutes effective scholarly discussion? How does one facilitate a productive panel? Junior and senior scholars will share strategies for navigating these responsibilities, while participants are invited to reflect on how these practices relate to their own development and publication strategies.

Course responsible: [Sune Klinge](#) & [Mikael Rask Madsen](#)

Year 3

Module 3A: External funding

Time: Temporarily paused due to administrative reform

Type: Optional

ECTS: 1 ECTS

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.

Course responsible: [Zuzanna Godzimirska](#)

Module 3B: Research communication to the public

Time: October

Type: Optional

ECTS: 1 ECTS

The aim 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.

Course responsible: [Sune Klinge](#)

Module 3C: Pre-defense / Evaluation seminar

Time: approximately six months before the expected completion of the PhD

Type: Compulsory

ECTS: 1 ECTS

This module provides the PhD student with tailored, in-depth feedback on their thesis manuscript and supports the final stages of writing before submission. The seminar

functions as an internal pre-defense, allowing the student to present and discuss their near-final work with academic peers and receive constructive input on structure, argumentation, methodology, and overall coherence.

The evaluation seminar is held approximately six months before the expected completion of the PhD. In consultation with their supervisor, the student identifies and invites an external scholar to provide feedback on the thesis. During the seminar, the PhD student presents the core elements of the thesis, and feedback is provided by the invited scholar, and other participants. The Faculty's PhD team supports the process by announcing the seminar on the PhD School web page, the Faculty of Law website, and Paragraffen, ordering catering for the seminar and handling travel and accommodation arrangements for the external evaluator, if required.

Find all details about the process under 'Evaluation seminar (1 ECTS)' here: [PhD courses - KUnet](#)