

Response ILLC MT to 2018 PVC Committee report

First of all, I would like to thank the members of the 2018 PVC committee, Benno van den Berg, Elia Bruni, Debbie Klaassen (secretary), Aybüke Özgün, and Floris Roelofsen (chair), for the time and energy they have invested in the committee.

Second, concerning the concrete recommendations of the PVC 2018, here is the response of the ILLC management:

1. We are supportive of the first recommendation which asks the ILLC PhD Programme to organize a more selective screening as part of the admission process. It would be best if clear rules are installed concerning the required level of both spoken and written English for all candidates who enter the programme.
2. We are supportive of the second recommendation and ask the ILLC PhD programme director together with the ILLC office to closely monitor that the supervision situation of all candidates complies with the Doctorate Regulations in this respect, and to signal problems to the ILLC management team when needed.
3. While we are happy to have the PhD progress tracking websites in place, we will continue to revise and update them.
4. The ILLC PhD Programme regularly evaluates the academic skill courses on offer. Taking into account the previous course-evaluation input, adjustments have already been made in the time-management course and the new evaluations of this course are positive.
5. We are supportive of the fifth recommendation and are working to develop a welcome package for new PhD candidates. The ILLC management highly values the work done by the PhD council for community building and financially supports many of the council's activities (e.g. Lunch Seminars, Yoga classes, PhD Day).
6. We are happy to hear that the career lunches are much appreciated and we will continue organizing them. At the same time we will ask the ILLC PhD programme director to think of ways (e.g. as part of the Training and Support Plan) in which we can raise more awareness among supervisors about the need to discuss career perspectives regularly with their students.
7. The ILLC management is currently evaluating the point system that we use to keep track of the PhD candidate's teaching tasks. When next discussing the system's advantages and disadvantages with the PhD council, we will take into account the PVC-recommendation concerning the need to further clarify the system and the request for more flexibility in case a course requires more work than anticipated. The ILLC management will separately reflect on ways in which it can reward substantial organizational tasks (such as e.g. membership of an active PhD council).
8. The different types of research grants hosted at the ILLC do create differences in PhD travel budgets, duration and conditions of employment contracts and differences in the monthly income of PhD candidates. While the ILLC hosts and monitors these projects, the existing non-uniformity in working-conditions is inherent to the diversity of the current situation and cannot be avoided. While each PhD candidate's rights and duties concerning both research and teaching are specified in the Training and Supervision plan, any further explanations about the different employment conditions within the PhD community can be given either by the supervisor and/or the PhD programme director. Concerning the PVC's recommendation to normalise where possible, we note that the ILLC@FNWI does offer minimal extra financial support to PhD candidates on specific types of external grants. Further, the ILLC insures that all PhD candidates who are admitted to the PhD programme have access to the necessary

research infrastructure which includes an annual travel budget for conferences and summer schools.

Note that the website of the PhD programme hosts a section in which ILLC's regulations about industrial internships are clearly specified.

9. We are very supportive of this recommendation to take extra measures to prevent work-related stress among PhD candidates. The ILLC will continue to provide help in case we are made aware of a problem. ILLC already organizes individual coaching sessions when needed and, together with the Faculty of Science, we have already been looking into the possibilities for 'walk-in coaching sessions' and/or 'intervisie' training with PhDs. This will be further worked out together with the PhD Programme director and discussed with the members of the PhD council.