

## **Response to the ILLC PhD Programme Evaluation 2019**

Response formulated by the MT under directorship of S. Smets

The institute would like to thank the members of the PVC-committee of 2019 consisting of Nick Bezhanishvili (chair), Debbie Klaassen (secretary), Karolina Krzyżanowska, Ekaterina Shutova and Jakub Szymanik. The committee has provided the institute with a detailed report and with several recommendations about the quality of the ILLC PhD programme, as well as the working conditions and well-being of the PhD candidates at the ILLC.

We will address the recommendations and findings below:

### **On Supervision:**

- The PVC recommends to avoid the practice of assigning a pro forma promotor as much as possible. Since the IUS promovendi has been extended beyond the rank of Full Professor, the assignment of a pro forma promotor has become very rare.
- The PVC asks to make very clear to PhD candidates what supervisors expect in terms of scientific output and other matters. This issue is to be addressed in the annual evaluation meetings between the supervisors and candidate.
- The PVC recommends that supervisors in the faculty of humanities are adequately gratified for supervision activities. The way in which supervision tasks are gratified, is governed by the rules of the faculty, however the ILLC does play a role to make sure that FNWI-supervision-tasks for ILLC PhD candidates by FGw-members are recognized.
- The PVC recommends that the PhD management team should ensure that every PhD candidate has at least two supervisors and the second supervisor should be urged to meet with the candidate at least once every 4-6 months. In reply, we fully agree with this recommendation and the ILLC will ask the PhD programme director to look carefully into the specification of the roles of the supervision team members in the candidate's TSP.

### **On Academic Skill Courses:**

- The PVC recommends that the ILLC continues to control the quality of the skill courses, in particular as there is a worry that we lose the control if ILLC joins the Faculty of Science skill courses. The ILLC will make sure that even if we decide to adopt a course offered via the faculty course-programme, we will stay in control and keep evaluating whether these courses address the needs of the ILLC PhD candidates. The ILLC started already with a one year pilot to try out the Mastering Your PhD course, which has been evaluated afterwards.
- The PVC recommends to schedule the writing and presentation skills courses in the first year of the PhD Programme. On the basis of this recommendation, the PhD Programme has decided (together with the PhD Council) to allow candidates to take the academic writing course within the first two years. The candidate decides when exactly together with the supervisor. As far as the presentation skills course is concerned, it sounds good to offer it early on but the worry is that PhD candidates have to take too many courses during their first year.

### **On Community Building:**

- The PVC encourages the PhD candidates to self-organize PhD Lunches and other seminars for PhD students. The ILLC embraces this proposal and does support the organization for such activities that PhD candidates propose themselves. We have also

discussed this recommendation with the PhD council and they agreed to take steps in this direction. We also discussed the possibility of inviting new PhD students to ILLC's Monday tea/coffee meetings.

#### On the Welcoming Package:

- The PVC strongly advises the preparation of a welcoming package for new PhD candidates and to create a PhD mentoring system. The ILLC has been working on the preparation of a welcome package in the meantime and we foresee that this will soon be ready. The PhD mentor system has been prepared and we have already decided to start it soon.

#### On Teaching and Organisational Tasks:

- The PVC reports on the findings about the point-system for teaching-tasks in place at the faculty of science and mentions that teaching-allocation for PhD students in the faculty of humanities is not well organized. The PVC advises to treat the PhD candidates equal, no matter to which faculty they belong. The ILLC embraces the idea of treating everyone as equal as possible taking into account the legal constraints and differences between the faculties in which the ILLC operates. In the meantime the ILLC revised the point-system at the faculty of science and has made the information about how the allocation of teaching-tasks is regulated in both faculties more transparent on its website.

#### On Career Perspectives

- The PVC asks the MT to look into offering more adequate career advice for ILLC PhD candidates. The ILLC Programme will look closer into this and make sure that the career training that we offer to PhD candidates meets what is required. In addition we will continue with other career related events such as the career lunches.

#### On Legal Advice

- The PVC recommends that PhD candidates with joint appointments in different countries are offered legal advice about their contract and taxes during their intake interview. The ILLC supports this recommendation and will make sure the candidates receive the required information early on. In the welcome package, we are planning to have a list of contacts and to add a UvA contact for legal advice. In the welcome package we will mention explicitly that if one's position is joint with a foreign institution, it is recommended to see the contact person for advice on these matters.