

Guidelines for the yearly ISP update and department representative talks

Updated 2025-10-28 by Martin Berggren, director of postgraduate studies at INES

Introduction

By tradition at INES, the PhD student, department representative (IR) and main supervisor meet at the end of each year, in connection with updating the individual study plan (ISP). If a co-supervisor takes active part in daily supervision, then are also welcome to join.

Two meetings should be held: first a meeting between the PhD student and IR alone, which is a confidential meeting focused on the work environment and the general progress. The second meeting involves also the supervisor(s) and is focused on the ISP.

The IR schedules the two meetings, preferentially on separate occasions, each 45 min or longer/shorter as judged needed by the IR.

Recommended timeline

At earliest convenience; early Nov if possible:

- PhD student reviews the ISP and updates the straightforward parts (courses taken etc).
- IR schedules the two meetings.
- PhD student and main supervisor meet to discuss the ISP.

Mid Nov – Dec:

- The two meetings are held.
 - The IR needs to get an updated ISP at least two days before the first meeting.

January:

- Updates of ISP based on the meetings (PhD student, supervisor and IR need to agree)
- PhD student locks the ISP, prints and signs it, and collects signatures from main supervisor, IR, prefekt and, if possible, also the co-supervisor(s).
- PhD student hands in the signed ISP to Asli (deadline 1st of February)
- IR sends a short report from the IR talks to Martin (deadline 1st of February).

Meeting between PhD student and IR – focused on work environment

This meeting is confidential. Whereas the IR should take notes, they should only include aspects from this meeting in the “Report from the IR” (see below) if agreed upon with the PhD student. This meeting is analogous to the staff appraisal dialogue for other staff categories, but different in the sense that it is decoupled from the salary setting cycle.

Guiding questions:

1. How is the progress of your work going in general? (Details saved to the second meeting)
2. How does the cooperation in the research group work? Any need for changes?
3. Describe the physical and social working environment.
4. Do you think that you, as PhD student, have insight into the departmental work and the opportunity to influence?
5. Are there any problems in your environment related to equality?

Meeting between PhD student, supervisor(s) and IR – focused on ISP

The IR must go through the ISP carefully before the meeting. This meeting is not confidential, but everything said on this meeting can be included in the “Report from the IR” (see below) without need for anyone’s permission.

Important things to address are:

1. Has the ISP been filled in satisfactorily, i.e. with the required information and with enough details?
2. What is the status of the papers? Is the research plan reasonable and is the time plan followed? If not, why and what can be done about it?
3. What is the status of the problem analysis + first year seminar and the midway seminar?
4. How does supervision work? Is there any need for changes in the way of working and cooperating within the team?
5. What is the status and plans regarding courses? Have the mandatory courses been completed, and if not, when are they planned to be taken? How many course credits have been completed, and have they been reported to LADOK? (If not, please ensure this is done before finalizing the ISP) Is the plan for taking courses reasonable and is the time plan followed?
6. When is the defense planned to take place (needs to be less precise for 1st and 2nd-year students than for 3rd and 4th-year students)
7. Plans for teaching and other departmental tasks?
8. Have extension forms for department work, teaching or other duties been handed in? (Before the end of the year, all such extensions must have been requested)

Report from the IR

The department representative should take notes and write a short report after the second meeting (preferably around 1 page). All points raised above can be addressed to the extent that the IR judges relevant. At the end of the report under a separate heading, the IR should give advice on measures to be taken, and indicate if a follow-up meeting with the director of studies is required. The report is sent to the PhD student, the main supervisor and to Martin.

NB! If the IR thinks that the content of the report might break confidentiality between IR and PhD student, then they should let the PhD student get a chance to see the report and comment it before it is sent to the study director.