

Motivation and work organization

Topics for discussion

- Motivation factors
- Effective work styles
- Working patterns
- Scheduling of activities
- Organization of multiple activities (PhD-courses, “Duties” for the department, Own research work) - Priorities and deadlines



Summary – Motivation factors

- **Training for research work**
- **Deeper understanding of your field of interest**
- **Access to scientific work and papers**
- **Good opportunity of taking a PhD in foreign country**
- **Support by strong groups and senior personnel**
- **Want to be a professor**
- **Not routine work – new challenges (every day)**
- **Travel and meet interesting people**
- **Valuable for industry**
- **Teaching**
- **Prospect of contributing to the knowledge of mankind**



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Summary - Effective work styles

- **Short term goals – weekly or monthly deadlines**
- **Process orientation**
- **Satisfied every day**
- **Concentrate your work**
- **You need to know what to be done both in long and short term**
- **Working/reference group – get deadlines**
- **Prioritize the work**
- **Record and summarize your progress**
- **Don't only work on one task at a time, can be efficient to swap between tasks**
- **Learn from international collaboration**



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Summary - Working patterns

- **Synchronize your working hours with the rest of your group**
- **Be focused on your research work**
- **Not too social but neither too isolated**
- **Write your main activities every day – good for your own discipline and for your conscience in the weekend**

Summary - Scheduling of activities

- **Duty work – office hours**
- **Emails – condense time spent on answering**
- **Regular meetings with the supervisor – known schedules and milestones**
- **Course work**
- **Most productive when don't switch tasks too often**
- **Plan office hours when you are a teaching assistant**
- **Group meetings together**

Summary - Organization of multiple activities (PhD-courses, “Duties” for the department, Own

- **Assume you have a 4 year contract including department work**
- **Prioritize between:**
 - PhD-courses
 - Teaching assistance (courses, laboratory, lectures)
 - External projects with deadlines
 - Paper submission deadlines
 - Personal milestones

Focus and expectations

Topics for discussion

- **Responsibility for taking initiatives**
- **Suitable start-up activities**
- **Supervision (frequency and duration) - expectations**
- **Department work (labs, guidance of assignments and final-year projects, lectures) – duties or possibilities?**
- **Special difficulties experienced as a new PhD student**

Responsibility for taking initiatives

- **Students are responsible**
- **Supervision responsible for directions of work**
- **First weeks – supervisor responsible for getting things started and to introduce candidate to the facilities and colleagues and fellow students**
- **Supervisor gives initial ideas and startup activities**
- **Research plan? Students responsible – ideas developed in discussions with supervisor**



Suitable start-up activities

- **Literature review**
- **Discussions with the supervisor**
- **Spend time adapting to the lab**
- **Familiarizing with colleague – know the expertise of your nearest colleagues**
- **Fully understand the university**
- **Get to know your fellow students – may give inspirations to new ideas**
- **Start with duty work – get to know the staff, students and how the teaching works/is organized**
- **Start working on your PhD project**
- **The research plan should be an active document**



Supervision expectations

- **Give definition and scope of project**
- **Guidance on methodology**
- **Help identifying conferences/journals/special interests**
- **Split huge problems to manageable problems**
- **Frequency**
 - Once per week
 - Whenever it was required
- **Duration**
 - one hour
 - make time more efficient and valuable by preparing a small report before meeting?



Department work – duties or possibilities?

- **Main impression appear to be that it is duties**
- **Use students to help solving sub-tasks in your own project**
- **Team work with your supervisor?**
- **Standard time is 3 years – you get extension of up to one year**
 - Any values of having more time
- **Could you learn something by lecturing?**



Special difficulties experienced as a new PhD student

- **Social life**
- **Housing**
- **Add problems to the progress report**
- **International section – may help with practical issues**
- **Lack of support from technical staff**
- **Information “pamphlet”**

