

Creating Career Opportunities for PhDs in Life and Health Sciences

Lausanne consensus document

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Career development

- The PhD is the entry to careers within and outside of academia as supported by the ORPHEUS standards.
- There is a need for well- trained professionals who have PhD degrees in many aspects of society. PhD training should thus focus on producing competent researchers who are trained for challenging careers in academia, in clinical practice, in industrial sectors, in healthcare and in other settings.
- PhD graduates with additional training can help shape public policy, analyse and interpret public data, commission research, implement public policy, design appropriate public organisations and lead others.
- PhD graduates should be instrumental in further developing and applying knowledge and intellectual abilities, personal effectiveness through transferable skills in healthcare, educational institutions and systems, and industrial entities.
- PhD education should include advanced formal research training embedded in an international research context and should strive towards an interdisciplinary approach.
- Discussion of employment opportunities and skills should be intricately promoted throughout a PhD education.

Supervision

- ORPHEUS in its standards acknowledges that supervisors need not only to be experts in their fields but that additional skills are required for effective supervision.
- The supervisor and the institution should help develop all needed competences and if necessary direct a PhD candidate to those who may offer him/her additional knowledge about career opportunities.
- Depth of practical expertise, critical reasoning and understanding needs to be complemented with abilities to collaborate, to demonstrate leadership and to promote research integrity.
- There should be formal training courses for supervisors and supervisor performance should be assessed.
- ORPHEUS conference recommends that the ORPHEUS leadership explores opportunities to encourage or organize formal supervision training for PhD supervisors.

PhD programme

- Intended learning outcomes (ILO) should be defined individually for each PhD candidate.

- At the beginning of the PhD a portfolio of the PhD candidate's skills should be set up and this should be further developed during the PhD.
- A training and supervision agreement should be signed between PhD candidate, supervisor and doctoral school.
- Of the 15% of PhD programme assigned to courses substantial amount should be used for appropriate transferable skills.

Standards

- The previously distributed clarifications to the ORPHEUS/AMSE/WFME were discussed and with certain amendments agreed to.
- It was pointed out that in some cases there are discrepancies between the standards and the national regulations in many countries. This could form the basis for ORPHEUS together with local representatives making contact with the respective regulatory bodies.

Labelling

- The ORPHEUS labelling project has as its main goal to encourage institutions to improve their PhD program.
- The ORPHEUS labelling project is one way to reward PhD programmes that provide relevant career development.