

How pleased are PhD candidates at the Faculty of Humanities with their supervision?



June 2014
STIP-HF¹

¹ This translation into English has not been proof-read. It is published to make the content available for a non-Norwegian speaking audience. If anything about the translation is unclear, please contact STIP-HF.

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Background

At the meeting on March 21, 2014 STIP-HF decided to conduct an independent survey of how pleased ph.d. candidates are with their own supervision situation. This is also mapped in half-year reports and in the midway evaluation, but not anonymously. Through the current survey we aimed to map sides of the supervision relations which are not covered in other types of evaluation. A short survey was distributed, where the candidates were asked to judge their last supervision session and the overall supervision. The survey was made electronically in the webapp skjemaker.app.uib.no and sent out via e-mail to hf-stipendiater@uib.no four times in the course of April 8-24, in a Norwegian and English version.

A copy of the survey is attached.

Results

Selection

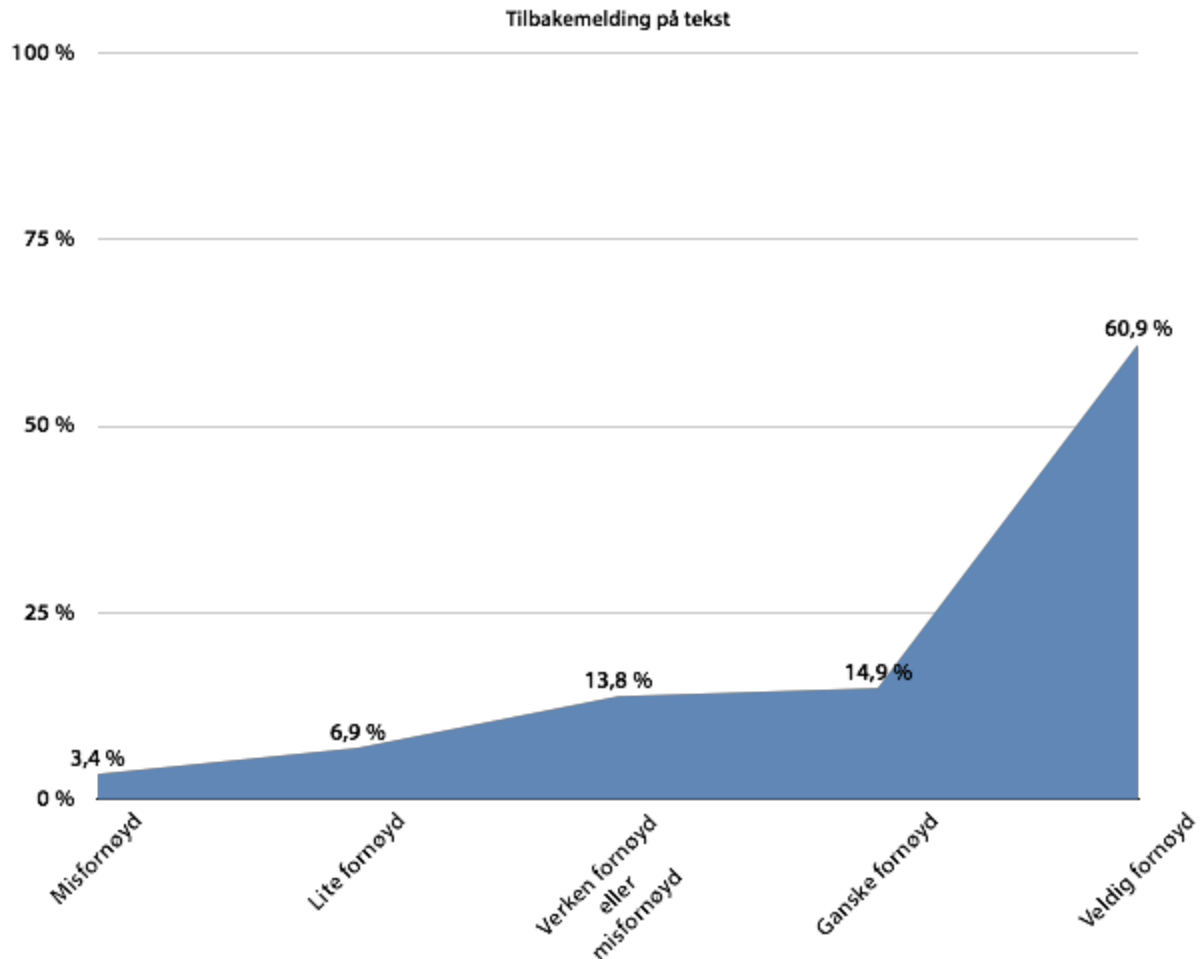
From the total ph.d. population of 192 active candidates (both external and internal) we received response from 101 candidates², which amounts to a response rate of about 52 %. The response rate varies from 33 to 61 % among the institutes. The highest response rate can be found at LLE, where 61 % answered the survey. At IF 58 % of the candidates answered the survey, and at AHKR, 49 % answered. The lowest response rate can be found at the smaller institutes, but as these institutes have few ph.d. candidates, this could be an incident.

We consider this to be good coverage. The survey was sent out to all ph.d. candidates, with several reminders, in a period of a couple of weeks. Even if we do not claim statistical representativity, we would suggest that the survey provides a good insight in the ph.d. candidates' opinion on the questions that they have answered.

² 81 answered the survey in Norwegian, and 20 answered in English. 31 of the answers were from AHKR, 33 from LLE, and 23 from IF. There were 14 answers from the remaining faculties: Griegakademiet, FOF, SKOK and SVT.

How pleased were the ph.d. candidates with their last supervision session?

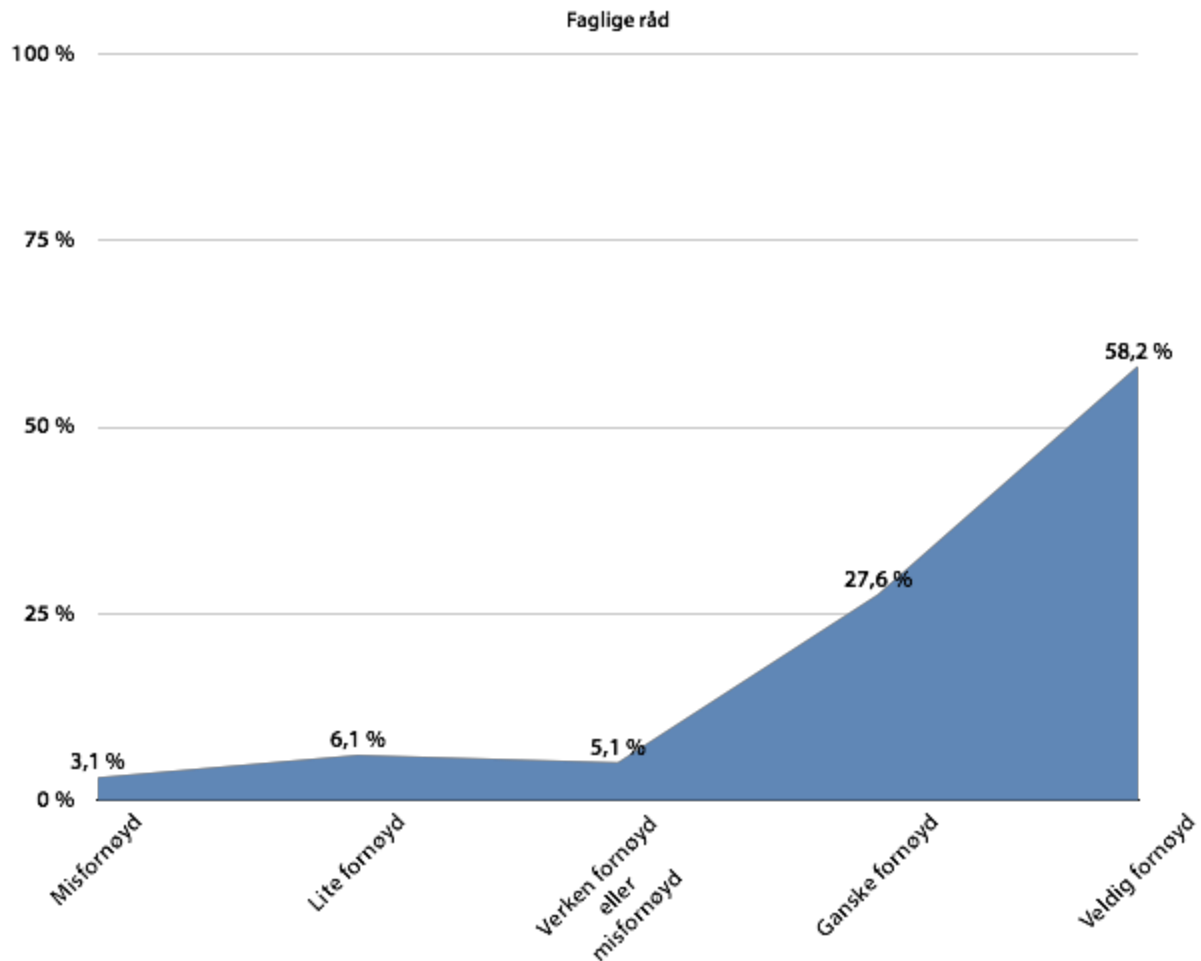
Feedback on text



$N = 87$

Three quarters of the selection were pleased with feedback on text on their last supervision session. About 10 % were not pleased with feedback on text. Most of those who were not pleased belong to IF. Most of those who were pleased belong to AHKR and LLE.

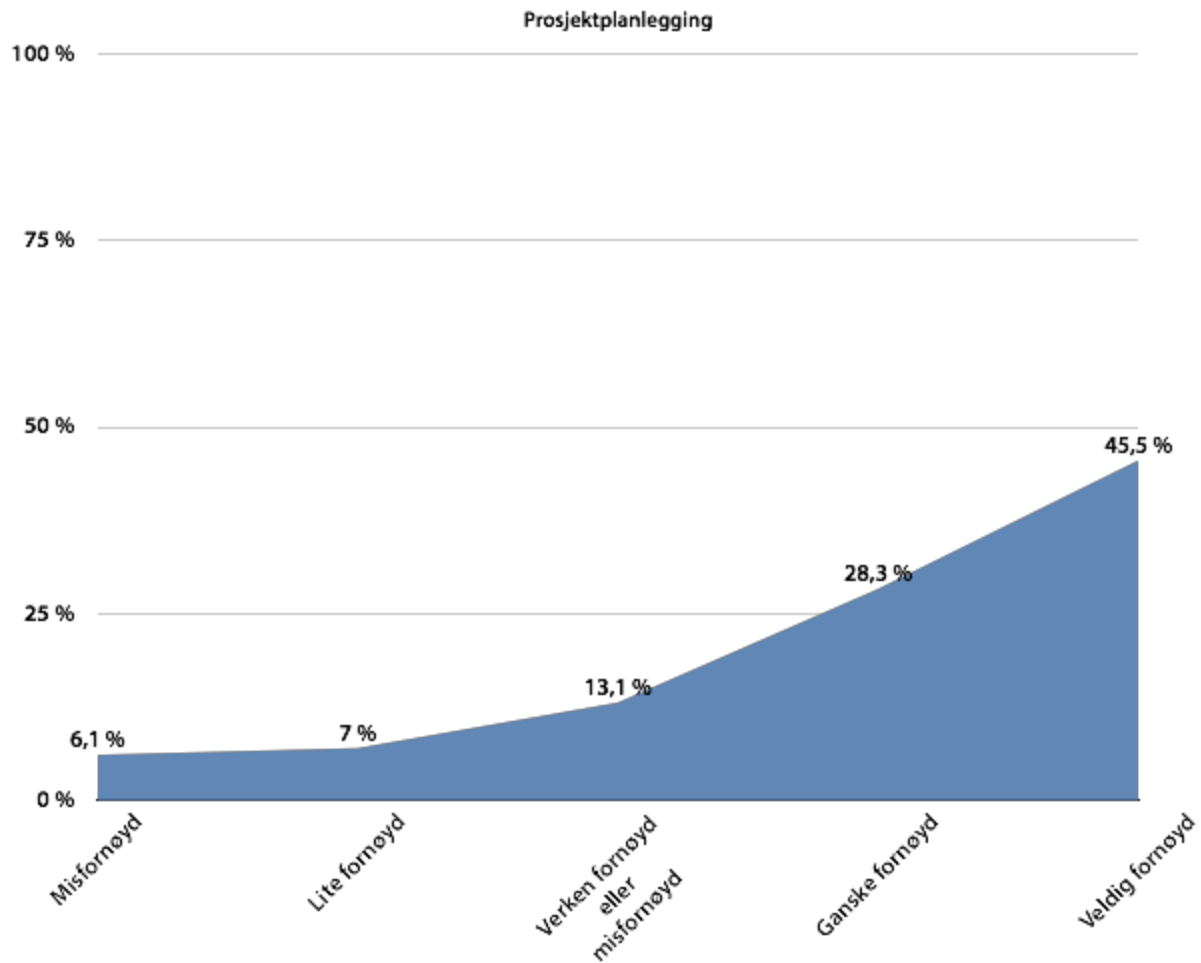
Academic advice



$N = 98$

About 85 % answer that they were pleased with academic advice on their last supervision session. Less than 2 % answer that they were not pleased. Most of those who were not pleased belong to IF. Most of those who were pleased belong to LLE and AHKR.

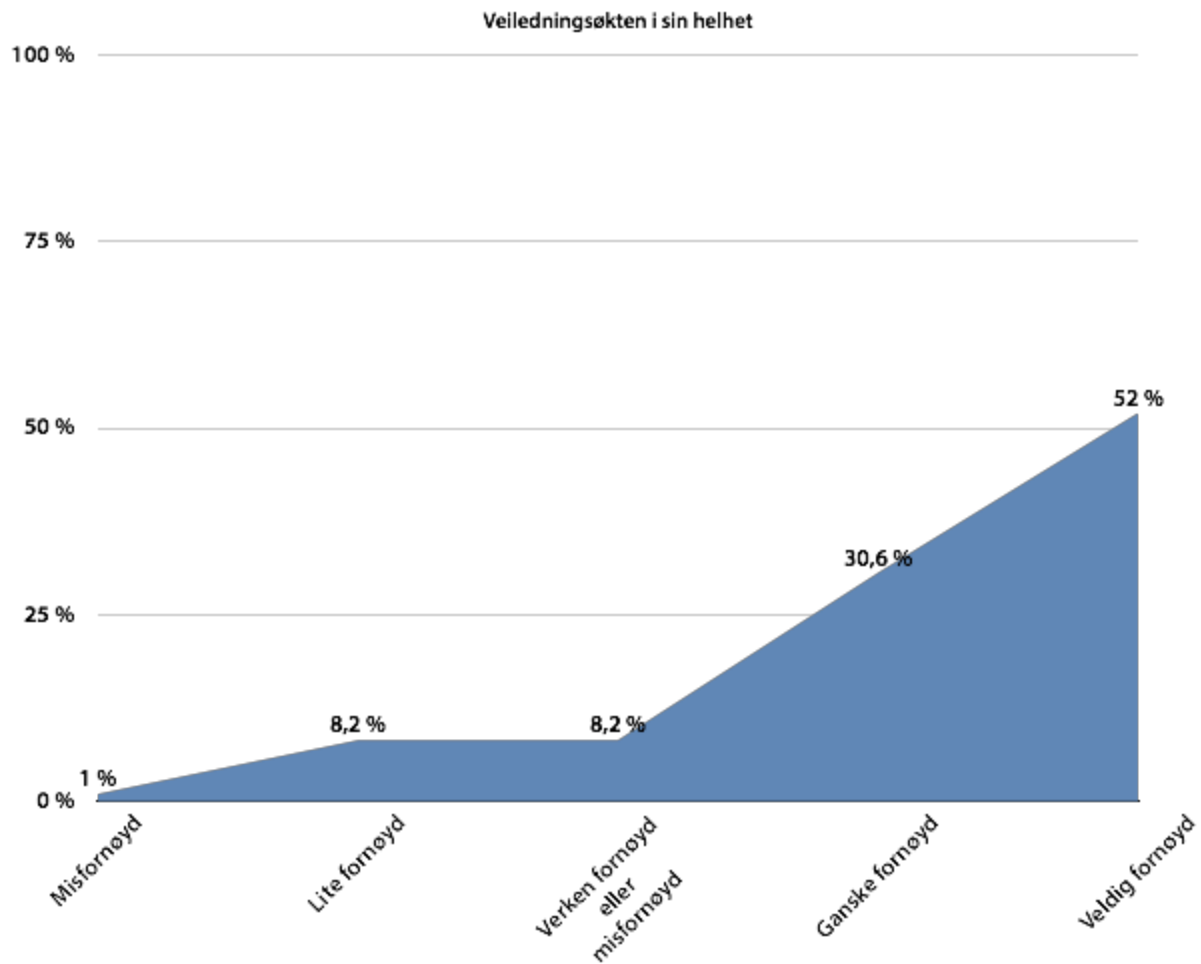
Project planning



$N = 99$

Almost 74 % report to be pleased with project planning. 14 % report not to be pleased. Most of those who were not pleased belong to IF. Most of those who were pleased belong to AHKR.

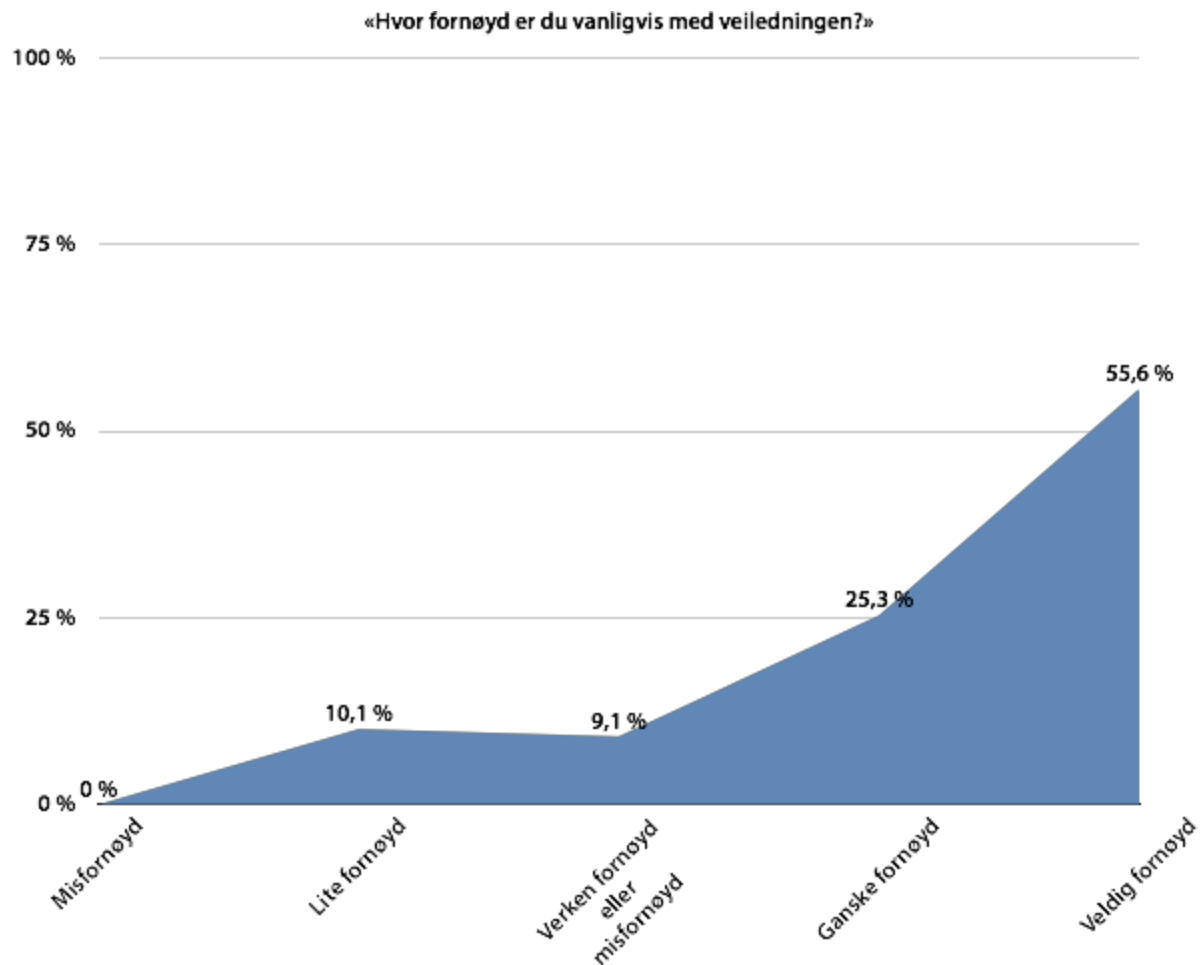
The overall supervision



$N = 98$

Almost 83 % report to be pleased with the overall supervision. About 9 % report to not be pleased. Those who are not pleased belong to IF and LLE.

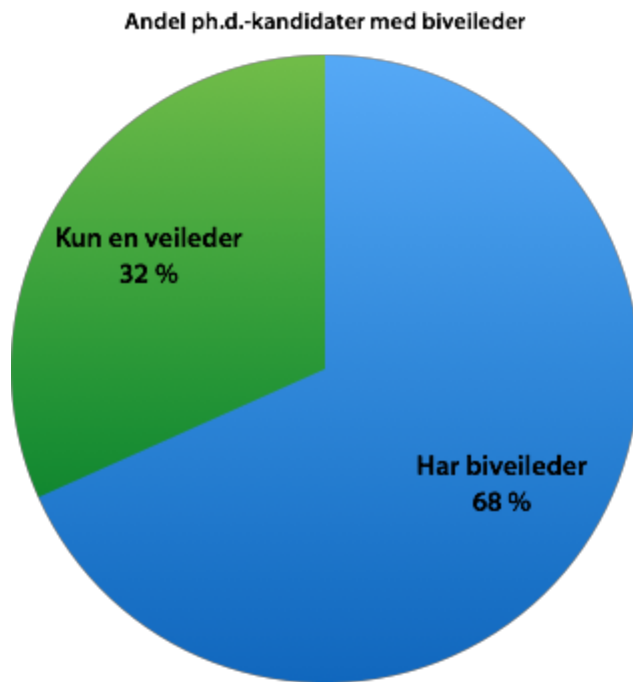
In general, how pleased are you with your supervision?



$N = 99$

About 81 % answer that they are usually pleased with their supervision. About 10 % answer that they are less pleased with supervision, while none (!) answer that they are displeased. Most of those who report to be very pleased and pretty pleased belong to AHKR. Most of those who report to be less pleased belong to IF.

Co-supervisor

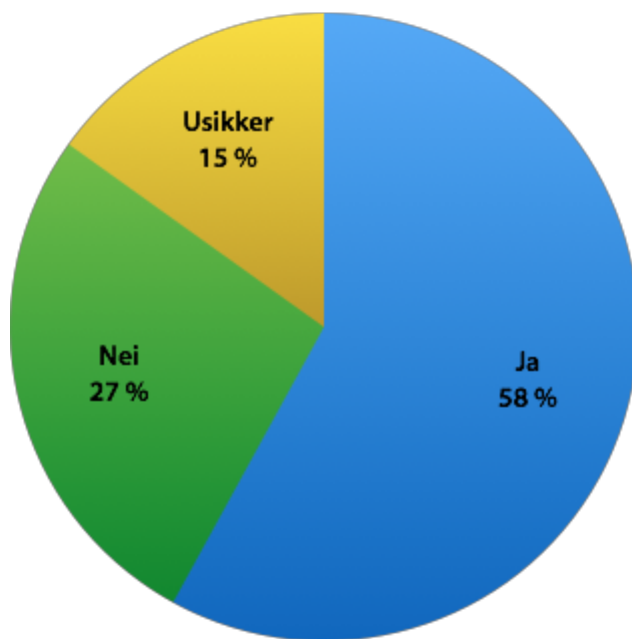


$N = 101$

At AHKR 87 % of the ph.d. candidates have a co-supervisor; at GA 80 %; FOF 50 %; LLE 67 %; IF 47 % and SVT 50 %.

Inclusion in a research network

Møter veileder forventinger om inkludering i fagmiljø?



$N = 101$

Other thoughts

The survey also contained a blank field where one could fill in thoughts and comments. There were approximately as many positive as negative comments in this feedback.

Among positive comments were engagement, flexibility, and a clear and direct communication. People also find it positive to have a co-supervisor, and one person particularly mentions the positive aspects of having a co-supervisor with other aspects, from another institute.

Regrettably, there were also comments on negative experience in supervision relations. Too little supervision, unclear feedback, too close relations, focus on details were among these comments, and some mentioned that it is unclear what one might expect from a supervisor. Some regret that poor supervision relations are hard to solve as the research network is small. Some mention that supervisors do not include the candidate in the research network or even oppose their participation (!).

Among other contributions we find views on the candidate's relations to their supervisor and others in the research network: one can extend their network by searching out informal supervisors at the university, e.g. by contacting researchers in their own field and in fields with similar research practice. Courses in supervision for supervisors are called for. One respondent writes that ph.d. candidates fuss too much about supervisors and should take more responsibility themselves.

Summary

STIP-HF is pleased with how the survey was received by the ph.d. candidates and how it was conducted.

Most ph.d. candidates at the Faculty of Humanities report to be pleased with their supervision, while some candidates are displeased or less pleased, either with parts of the supervision or with their supervision in general. There seems to be differences between the institutes, but we have not studied the significance of these differences.

There is a different percentage of candidates that have a co-supervisor at the different institutes.

We hope that the results of this survey, including the positive and negative feedback that was given in the comment field, will be considered at faculty and institute levels. This survey has looked on supervision from a ph.d. candidate perspective. It could be interesting to know more about what the supervisors

themselves consider to be good supervision, and which expectations s/he has to the supervision situation, in a similar survey. A survey like this could also be distributed among students and supervisors at Master level. We are aware that supervision must be understood in a wider frame than how ph.d. candidates experience their own situation. All parts would benefit from a broader focus on supervision culture.

Appendix: Questionnaire

How pleased are you with your supervision?

13/06/14 10:15



UiB

How pleased are you with your supervision?

STIP-HF wishes to get an overview of how pleased ph.d.-candidates at the Faculty for Humanities are with their supervision. With the data obtained from this survey, we will be able to deem where supervision is good, and where it can be improved. Hence, your answer is of great importance. Your response is anonymous.

You can contact us directly by sending an email to stiphf@uib.no.

If your main supervisor is at another institution, and your co-supervisor is at UiB, please assess the latter.

Thank you for your time and effort!

Which department do you belong to?

- ☐ The Grieg Academy
- ☐ Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies and Religion
- ☐ Department of Philosophy
- ☐ Department of Foreign Languages
- ☐ Department of Linguistic, Literary and Aesthetic Studies
- ☐ Centre for Womens and Gender Research
- ☐ Centre for the Study of the Sciences and the Humanities

Think back to the last time you had supervision with your main supervisor. How pleased were you with the...

	Displeased	Less pleased	Neither displeased nor pleased	Pretty pleased	Very pleased	Can not answer
Feedback on your text	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic advice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Project planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The overall supervision	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Displeased	Less pleased	Neither displeased nor pleased	Pretty pleased	Very pleased	Can not answer
In general, how pleased are you with your supervision?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you have a co-supervisor?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I wish I had, but it can not be done

Does your supervisor meet your expectations of being included in a research network (e.g. are you given tips of conferences and seminars, or article projects, and are you introduced to other researchers)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

Do you have other thoughts about your supervision that you want us to know about?

Send



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