

Meeting with Prorector, 26 Jan 2021

Present from NMBU: Siri Fjellheim, Ragnhild Solheim, Solveig Fossum-Raunehaug, Anna Lewandowska-Sabat, Line Oksnes

Present from SoDoC: Vinay Nannuru, Micah Lucy Abigaba, Olga Mikhailova, Anders Dugstad, Bikal Ghimire, Emil Jarosz, Gard Frækaland Vangsnes, Giorgia Carnovale

General notes

It is especially important now to talk to supervisors and try to find a reasonable solution for alternative routes/plan B. NMBU is working nationally on extensions for PhD-students and postdocs but it is very uncertain if we will get more funding for further extensions. There is a need to be prepared for the fact that we will not get more funding for extensions, and for the fact that if you are not finish within 3 yrs you need to work without salary.

The extensions (normally 2 months) are only viable for the lockdown in March-June, and is not enough at all.

SoDoC stressed the concern for the pandemic's impact on their education, and on the PhD and Postdoc's careers.

For some there is opportunity for concentrating on writing papers, however as results from delayed lab- and field work, and activities that are person-to-person related are impossible to conduct, it will have an impact on publishing the articles. There is also concern for the quality of the thesis work, and how it will affect the further career. The students need to be assured that if they change their study plan due to i.e. not be able to perform the lab work, that it will be accepted.

It is difficult to get enough information for new postdocs.

It is a restraining situation for everyone to work from home – only a few digital meetings and courses, and little social contact. Many have children home from school a lot of the time and this has an effect on the work. Some PhDs experience good support from their supervisor, however other report that they are not supported by their supervisors.

SoDoC requested that NMBU management bring the information to the ministry/politicians, and that NMBU help push for improved conditions (extensions etc.) for the PhD candidates and Postdocs.

NMBU confirmed in the meeting that efforts are continuously being made to push ministry and NFR, but not always with success. NMBU will continue to work on the issue of more funding.

Mental health

Cancelling social activities that have been organised is hard to accept, even if it was due to corona restrictions.

SoDoC requested a need for workshop on how to manage stress and mental health issues. With the restraint of not knowing what will happen and with uncertainty about more extensions, and with other sectors getting support from government. The students feel forgotten. The Research Support Office will look into this.

Survey to map effects of the pandemic on progression of PhD/ Postdoc. work

We think that a new gathering of information about the concern and effects of the pandemic may possibly be in order at this point. The survey must go to all PhD and Postdocs, with only a few questions (5), and make sure to add the three links from today's presentation. NMBU were concerned that there had been too many surveys, however, SoDoC ensured that it would be a good thing to launch a survey at this point from NMBU central administration. The results from the survey are almost complete, and will be discussed in the appropriate forum.

The corona pandemic webpages:

- [Rights in case of delays due to illness / closed kindergartens / schools due to corona.](#)
- [Frequently asked questions for NMBU students.](#)