Women's Career Lunch — Catalog of questions for the speakers [1]
— EUGAIN WG2 —

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Format

- The team has ideally 2 moderators, 6 guests, and 1 admin support. Both moderators should have a PhD and at least one should be a female member of academic staff and at least one a senior member of academic staff.

- 8 sessions are proposed, session number 0 to 7, and typically last one hour at lunchtime.

- Each session has one guest appropriate for the session and at least one moderator.

- Sessions can be merged or additional sessions can be proposed depending on the group.

- Sessions 0 and 7 are typically face-to-face and should be catered. Sessions 1 to 6 are supposed to be online.

- Schedule the sessions over the semester but assign a specific day and a certain regularity, e.g. every two weeks or every week.

- The ideal number of participants is approx 10, either exclusively female or gender balanced.

Procedures

2.1 Identify the participants

- Invite Masters students who have completed some modules and have an average grade appropriate for PhD Bachelor students can be included in certain universities they can progress directly to PhD or to motivate them to consider a PhD and continue on to Master's study. Invite more students than places available as not all will accept.

- Send the invitations close to the time of the first module, e.g. one month before. Allow two weeks for registration. Chase up on those that don't respond.

2.2 Identify the guests

- Invite people you know, who will be suitable role models (enthusiastic, motivating, communicative, open) and speak the local language.

- Invite only one guest per session.

- Ideally, the guests should be female, and at least one should be an early-stage researcher.

- At most one guest should be local to the department/institute running the event.

- Invite guests in plenty of time before the first session.

2.3 Communication

- The sessions should be run in the local language.

- Set up a mailing list of participants.

- Guests should receive the Question Catalogue at least 2 weeks before their session.

- Participants and guests should be reminded of each session the day before the session, via email.

Question Catalogue for Moderators and Guests

3.0 Module 0: (Face-to-Face) "IceBreaker" meeting

- Explain the aim of the meeting.

- Allow participants to introduce themselves and indicate their expectations.

- Communicate the goals of the Women's Career Lunch.

- Moderator shares details on their career journey.

3.1 Module 1: (Virtual) What is a PhD?

General questions

- What are the objectives of a PhD?

- What are the requirements for PhD admission?

- What skills will be developed during PhD study with respect to research, teaching, and leadership?

    - Scientific working
    - Time management
    - Conflict management
    - Advising students
    - Project planning & execution
    - Team work
    - Strategic thinking and planning
    - Demonstrating initiative
    - Creativity & innovation

- What are the elements of PhD research?

    - Scientific research — literature review, independent research, research methodology, data management, ethics, scientific writing, dissemination e.g. through conferences, publications, scientific reviewing, collaboration with other institutions, ...
    - Teaching — assist in teaching, prepare teaching materials, ...
    - Academic participation — representation in relevant academic committees

- What is the typical day-to-day of a PhD student?

    - Emphasise the autonomy but stress the importance of talking to others

- What are the requirements for finishing a PhD dissertation?

Personal experience sharing

- Why did you decide to do a PhD and what was your decision process?

- Describe the elements of your PhD process.

- What did you learn through your PhD that was most useful to you?

- What advice would you give to PhD students based on your experience?

3.2 Module 2: (Virtual) Why a PhD for an Academic Career?

General questions

- What does an academic career look like?

- How does the PhD prepare you for an academic career?

- How do you choose a topic for your PhD?

- How does the PhD topic determine your career?

- How long does a PhD take?

- How is the quality of PhD work assessed?

- Who are your partners throughout an academic career path? With whom will you work together?

- How do you choose a supervisor?

- What is important to progress to the next step in an academic career? (Foresight, planning, application/writing a proposal for your own position, developing an independent line of research)

Personal experience sharing

- Did you plan your career explicitly?

- What did you learn during your PhD/in your academic career?

- What would you do differently in hindsight?

- From what mistakes did you learn?

3.3 Module 3: (Virtual) Why a PhD for a Career in Industry?

General questions

- What can a career in the industry look like?

- Is there the possibility to do your PhD in industry? (Cooperation between industry and university/research institute, what are the necessary requirements to fulfill)

- Which skills are acquired during a PhD that are relevant to the industry?

- What benefits does having a PhD give towards a career in the industry?

- Can PhD research lead to a Spin-out company?

- How important is the topic of a PhD for further career opportunities?

- Do domestic and foreign companies consider the merits of having a PhD differently?

- Is the salary with a PhD higher than that with a Master's degree?

Personal experience sharing

- What was your career journey?

- Would your career have been possible without a PhD?

- What influence does the PhD have regarding your reputation in the company?

3.4 Module 4: (Virtual) How to find a PhD position?

General questions

- Where do I find PhD positions?

- What institute suits me? What suits me topic-wise? How do I like the atmosphere? How big is the group? What would my future tasks and possibilities be? What does the supervision of my work look like?

- How do I apply to PhD positions? How do I find good supervision for my PhD?

- Can I choose the topic of my PhD?

- What funding possibilities are available? (Full-time and part-time, project positions vs state-founded positions, scholarships)

- What does the application process look like?

- What is important in the written application?

- What does the PhD application interview look like?

- Can I get to know the group before starting my PhD?

- What can I do during my studies to qualify for a PhD position?

Personal experience sharing

- How did you find your PhD position?

- What did the application process look like?

- From which "mistakes" during your application process did you learn most?

3.5 Module 5: (Virtual) How to handle any doubts or problems before and during a PhD?

General questions

- Am I capable of pursuing a PhD? Am I smart enough?

- Is doing a PhD compatible with family planning?

- What do I do if I am unsure or have problems during my doctorate studies?

- What are the typical questions and concerns students may have about their doctorate studies?

- Will I have enough innovative ideas? What if I am not able to implement my research ideas? Can I change, or adjust, my research focus during the PhD?

- What do I do if I "run out of breath" during the doctorate? Is it just me? (Everyone knows this feeling)

- What do I do if I am dissatisfied with my doctoral supervision? (Time, support, appreciation)

- Am I okay with being one of the few women in the group? What can I do if I receive sexist remarks? Where can I find help for sexual harassment?

- Who can I contact if I have problems? Where can I find advice and support?

- How are the dignity and respect rights of the PhD student applied in your University?

Personal experience sharing

- How did you deal with any doubts you had? How did you deal with the feeling that you might not be smart enough for a PhD?

- What obstacles/uncertainties did you face during your doctorate?

- Who did you get support from?

3.6 Module 6: (Virtual) Considering a PhD abroad?

General questions

- How do I find doctoral positions abroad?

- What do I have to consider when applying for a doctorate abroad?

- Do the requirements abroad differ from those in my country?

- Do I have to speak the local language?

- How do I finance my stay abroad? (apartment/travel expenses)

- Where can I get advice if I want to go abroad? (International Office of the local as well as at the target university)

- What do I have to think about administratively (visa requirements, bank, insurance, etc.)?

- Can I ask doctoral candidates abroad for reports on their experiences?

- Is the doctorate obtained abroad recognized in my country (and in other countries)?

- What distinguishes a doctorate abroad from a doctorate in my country (content, structure, processes, requirements)

Personal experience sharing

- Where have you been abroad?

- How did you organize your stay abroad? Who did you get support from?

- How important was the stay abroad in your career? Would you be where you are now without it?

- What skills did you learn?

- Looking back: what were the pros and cons of your stay abroad?

3.7 Module 7: (Face-to-Face) "Closing & Where do we go from here" meeting

- What was your experience of these sessions?
- Ask participants for suggestions for improvement.