

PhD buddy system

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Usually, a buddy system is a cooperative arrangement in which two people are paired together or work together in a team and assume responsibility for each other's well-being and safety. It is a method of induction and knowledge sharing used to welcome and orient a new PhD candidate. The Graduate School is expanding the function somewhat, and the buddy is available to all PhD candidates in a department for low-threshold support.

PhD buddy tasks and responsibilities

- Welcome new PhD candidates and show them around, introduce them to other PhD candidates and other department colleagues (especially the secretary), explain practical things (like the coffee machine, printing, access management), introduce them to the department culture and the faculty structure, and inform them about the (informal) activities organized within the department. Try to include them as much as possible to give a new PhD candidate a warm and informed start.
- Have a sense of what is going on with peers and signal problems, suggest them whom they could talk to to raise the issue (if needed, contact the GSSS to see where you can direct someone to – see also 'PhD Trustee and how to handle issues' on the GSSS website). This could be done by just being present at the office regularly and have small talks with the peer PhD candidates. In addition, the buddy makes some effort to reach out to the PhD candidates who are less often present at the department or campus, or are abroad. A buddy could initiate a meeting, a survey, (informal) one on one meetings with peers to hear from their experiences, and share this (anonymized) with the GSSS or with the department management team (head of department, research manager).
- Attend GSSS activities like the Induction Conference, Pizza Sessions, Poster Presentation conference, Christmas dinner, Writing Marathons, and make PhD peers enthusiastic to attend. Suggestions on how to fill out (topics for) these activities are always appreciated.

PhD buddy additional tasks: PhD community building

- Organizing additional activities that help the PhD candidates form a community within the department, beyond signaling problems and struggles of peers. For example coordinating PhD reading clubs, presentation sessions or a feedback structure among PhD candidates, or other related activities that benefit the sense of PhD community within the department.
- Organizing regular informal meetings like lunch or coffee break, drinks, dinners.
- Any other effort that helps build the PhD community within the department.
- Organizes a workshop (with the other Buddies) within the Induction Conference.

Financial compensation

For the tasks described above, we grant a compensation of max 400 euro per year allocated to the buddy in the Graduate Fund and can be used for fieldwork, conference visits and external courses along the Graduate Fund guidelines. The amount will be granted after revision of a short report to be submitted by the PhD buddy to the Graduate School one applies for the Graduate Fund.

PhD buddy recruitment

- The PhD buddy position is open to any PhD candidate that passed the GNG procedure, who knows the department well, and who is regularly physically present at the department.
- The position is open as long as one is an active PhD candidate, for a minimum of one year and a maximum of two years.
- A PhD buddy is recruited as soon as the current PhD buddy stops his/her/their tasks. The GSSS will search for a suitable candidate. The current buddy is open to suggest a successor in consultation with the GSSS. Self-candidacy is also possible. Usually, the vacancy is not advertised.