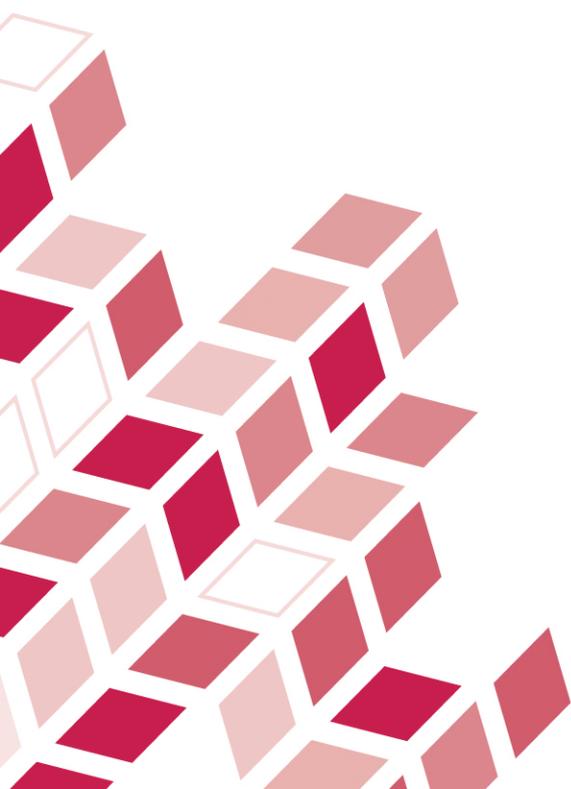


NOKUTs tilsynsrapporter

# Application for accreditation of a PhD program in Behavior Analysis at Akershus University College

April 2010



## Forord

Norske institusjoner som tilbyr høyere utdanning delt inn i følgende kategorier:

1. ikke akkrediterte høyskoler
2. akkrediterte høyskoler
3. vitenskapelige høyskoler
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Kategorien angir institusjonenes selvakkrediteringsfullmakt. Det er kun universitetene som har selvakkrediteringsfullmakt til å opprette studier på alle nivåer: bachelor, master og ph.d. Institusjoner i de øvrige kategoriene kan etablere studier utenfor sine egne fullmakter dersom de, gjennom å søke NOKUT, oppnår slik akkreditering.

Søknad om akkreditering av ph.d.studium vurderes av en ekstern, uavhengig sakkyndig komité etter kvalitetskriterier som bestemt gjennom NOKUTs forskrift. I tillegg til å vurdere søknaden foretar sakkyndig komité også en faglig vurdering ved å besøke institusjonen og intervju sentrale grupperinger der.

Høgskolen i Akershus (kategori 2) sendte inn søknad om akkreditering av doktorgradsprogram i Atferdsanalyse (Behavior Analysis) i april 2009. Sakkyndig komité hadde følgende sammensetning:

- professor Magne Arve Flaten, Universitetet i Tromsø (leder)
- professor Terje Sagvolden, Universitetet i Oslo
- professor Carol Pilgrim, University of North Carolina Wilmington
- sekretær Espen Bjørkedal, Universitetet i Tromsø

Dette dokumentet inneholder rapporten fra den sakkyndige komiteen og tilsvaret fra Høgskolen i Akershus.

NOKUTs styre fattet 19. april 2010 følgende vedtak:

1. *Doktorgradsprogrammet ph.d. i Atferdsanalyse ved Høgskolen i Akershus, tilfredsstillende alle kravene til akkreditering slik de er utformet i § 2-3 i NOKUTs forskrift om standarder og kriterier for akkreditering av studier og kriterier for akkreditering av institusjoner i norsk høyere utdanning (25.01.2006).*
2. *Det forventes at høgskolen gjør seg nytte av den sakkyndige komiteens vurderinger og anbefalinger til videre utvikling av studiet.*

Dette er den første akkrediterte ph.d. ved Høgskolen i Akershus. Kunnskapsdepartementet må godkjenne at høgskolen oppretter studier på dette nivået.

Oslo, april 2010



Terje Mørland  
direktør

# **Application for accreditation of a ph.d. program in Behavior Analysis at Akershus University College**

Report from the expert committee

NOKUTs rapportør  
ISSN [1501-9640]



The report is based on the application submitted by Høgskolen i Akershus (HiAk; Akershus University College, AUC) on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2009 and the committee's visit at Akershus University College on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> January 2010.

Place/date:

SIGNATURES:

Carol Pilgrim, Professor  
College of Arts and Sciences  
University of North Carolina Wilmington

Terje Sagvolden, Professor  
Department of Physiology  
University of Oslo

Magne Arve Flaten, Professor (Head of committee)  
Department of Psychology  
University of Tromsø



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# 1. BACKGROUND AND BASIS FOR THE EVALUATION

## 1.1. *Background*

Akershus University College (AUC) submitted on 14th May 2009 an application to NOKUT for accreditation of a ph.d.-programme in Behavior Analysis. Behaviour analysis is an important field for AUC. The Board at the University College has decided that the group in this field should be the first from AUC to submit an application for a Ph.D. programme. An expert committee was established by NOKUT in August 2009 to evaluate the application from AUC.

## 1.2. *Members of the committee*

In general, applications for accreditation of Ph.D.-granting programmes are evaluated by an expert committee. All members of the expert committee must have competence at Professor level.

The committee for this accreditation task was appointed 18<sup>th</sup> September 2009 and consists of:

Professor Magne Arve Flaten, University of Tromsø

Professor Terje Sagvolden, University of Oslo

Professor Carol A. Pilgrim, University of North Carolina, Wilmington

Magne Arve Flaten was appointed leader of the committee, and Espen Bjørkedal was appointed secretary.

## 1.3. *Organization of the report*

The report is organized according to § 2-3 *Standards and criteria for accreditation of doctoral programmes and institution-based fellowship programmes for artistic development work* in “*Regulations for standards and criteria for accreditation of studies and criteria for reaccreditation of institutions in Norwegian higher education*”, approved by NOKUT on 25.01.2006.

Part 2 of the report summarizes the evaluations from the expert committee. Part 3 of the report describes the evaluation performed by the expert committee, and presents its results. The evaluations are organized as a point by point response to the criteria in § 2-3.

Each section of part 3 is divided into three parts: Description, evaluation and conclusion. The description is mainly from the application submitted by Akershus University College, complemented by information provided to the expert committee at the institution visit at Akershus University College. Part 4 summarizes the conclusions from the expert committee.

Part 5 includes a number of Appendices.

## 1.4. *The Committee’s interpretation of the mandate*

The mandate of the expert committee is to assess whether the proposed application for a Ph.D. programme in Behaviour Analysis at Akershus University College meets all the standards and criteria for accreditation of doctoral programmes (§2-3, NOKUT’s regulations).

The committee shall give reasons for its assessment and provide an unambiguous conclusion in a written report, issued to NOKUT. The report shall be quality-assured before it is issued.

The report shall contain assessments for use by the institution in further enhancement of the study programme.

The formal basis for the Committee's assessment is constituted by "Regulations relating to standards and criteria for accreditation of study programmes and criteria for accreditation of institutions in Norwegian higher education" adopted by NOKUT on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2006.

The committee's assessment should be based on the institution's application and other relevant written material that NOKUT and/or the Committee deem necessary for assessment purposes and the committee's experiences from visits to the institution.

## 2. SUMMARY

The committee finds that the application from Akershus University College satisfies the criteria and requirements for a Ph.D.-programme in behaviour analysis. The regulations for the programme and the programme description have been approved by the Board at Akershus University College. The committee finds the regulations adequate. The programme has the academic level of a Ph.D. programme and other academic activities at the AUC support the Ph.D. programme. The staff involved in the programme, although presently small, have a high academic standard; several professors are highly regarded behaviour analysts, both nationally and internationally. All of the involved staff publish in international journals. The permanent staff involved in the program all work in the field of behaviour analysis, and each staff member has expertise in several of the core subject areas of behaviour analysis. The plan is to admit two Ph.D. candidates every second year into the program. The committee views this number as acceptable but low, and the proposed programme would be strengthened by taking steps to increase the number of admitted students. The Ph.D.-programme at AUC will be the only programme in behaviour analysis in Europe, where more than 150 Masters students graduate every year in the field. Thus, the potential for recruitment is very good. AUC plans to hire two new professors and an adjunct professor, which will strengthen the currently adequate infrastructure. Similarly, the potential for expansion of laboratory facilities, new equipment, and offices seems consistent with long-term planning at AUC, and will be particularly important if the number of students or staff increases. The administration and quality control systems are adequate for the programme.

### 3. EVALUATION OF THE APPLICATION

#### 3.1. *A plan shall be available for the doctoral/fellowship programme.*

##### 3.1.1. **Regulations shall be in place for the doctoral/fellowship programme.**

###### *a) Description*

Regulations for the degree of Ph.D. were approved by the board of AUC on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2009. The regulations describe the objectives of the doctoral education, quality assurance, rules for admissions, the contract, supervision, the educational component of the programme, yearly reporting, the dissertation, the thesis and thesis submission, the evaluation, examination, and other procedures relevant to the Ph.D. programme. The regulations have been submitted to *Lovdata* for registration. The regulations are accompanied by more detailed guidelines related to studies and examinations, employment guidelines, working conditions for Ph.D. students, agreements upon admission to the programme, and progress reports.

###### *b) Evaluation by the Committee*

The AUC regulations are in accordance with the guidelines from The Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions (UHR) and resemble regulations in use at other universities in Norway. The regulations cover all relevant aspects of the Ph.D. programme. The committee has, however, some suggestions for improvements of the regulations: § 5.1. The funding plan could specify the minimum requirements for funding necessary to be accepted into the program. §5.2 and 5.3. By disallowing applicants with less than one year left of their Ph.D. studies, otherwise qualified students with published research from their psychology or medicine studies may be excluded from the programme. §12.1. The number of copies for the thesis should be specified.

###### *c) Conclusion*

The committee finds that the Regulations for the degree of Ph.D. satisfy the requirements for a PhD. programme in behaviour analysis.

##### 3.1.2. **The doctoral/fellowship programme shall have a representative name.**

###### *a) Description*

The name of the programme is *Philosophiae Doctor in Behavior Analysis*.

###### *b) Evaluation by the Committee*

The name of the programme is representative.

###### *c) Conclusion*

The proposed name is adequate and meets NOKUT's criterion.

### **3.1.3. The plan shall demonstrate that the doctoral/fellowship programme possesses an adequate academic level, breadth and depth and coherence within its field.**

#### *a) Description*

The description of the Ph.D. programme (Appendix 2) has been approved by the Board at AUC. According to the programme description, the independent research project that forms the basis for the Ph.D. thesis will correspond to 150 credits. The remaining 30 credits will consist of elective and mandatory educational courses. This is similar to other Ph.D. programmes in Norway.

**Academic level:** The academic level of the research component depends on the scientific quality of ongoing research projects of the core faculty, because the Ph.D. students will participate in and extend this research. The academic level is also dependent on the educational courses offered in the programme. AUC's own learning and simulation laboratory will be a primary site for the Ph.D. students' research, as will a number of ongoing applied data-collection sites in area schools and institutions relevant to staff research and applied interests. PhD. students will also have the opportunity to participate in international projects in the conceptual, experimental, and applied domains of behaviour analysis at the laboratories at University of North Texas (i.e., an operant laboratory with pigeons, and the Behavior and Culture Laboratory with human participants). Additional international opportunities in the various domains of behaviour analysis will be made available through collaborations with Pontificia Universidade Catolica de Sao Paulo in Brazil. Academic breadth, scope, and depth of the research component of the plan is reflected in the scope and depth of the research projects in behaviour analysis, e.g., in (i) early intervention and autism programs (Per Holth, Erik Arntzen, Svein Eikeseth, Sigmund Eldevik, Lise Roll-Pettersen), (ii) empirically supported program research (EST) (Per Holth, Erik Arntzen, Børge Strømngren), (iii) addiction behaviour (Erik Arntzen, Per Holth), (iv) organizational behaviour management and complex systems research (Ingunn Sandaker, Bent Erik Bakken, Torgrim Gjesme), (v) consumer behaviour (Erik Arntzen), (vi) stimulus control and stimulus equivalence (Erik Arntzen, Per Holth), and more. The courses in the educational component include research ethics and professional standards; research methods, including both classic behaviour-analytic methods (e.g., small-N research design) and statistical methodology (e.g., analysis of variance); the philosophical and conceptual basis of behaviour analysis; advanced concepts in learning and complex behaviour; pervasive developmental disorders; complex stimulus control; empirically supported treatments, and more.

**Internal coherence:** The programme overview and rationale describes the interaction and complementary nature of the three defining dimensions of behaviour analysis: experimental, applied, and conceptual. Consistent with the structure of the discipline, the programme will offer courses in conceptual behavioural analysis, as well as in experimental and applied behaviour analysis. In addition, Ph.D. students can participate in research in both experimental and applied programs of study currently conducted at the department.

#### *b) Evaluation by the Committee*

The academic level of the Ph.D. programme is very good and adequate for a Ph.D. level. The faculty of AUC are all productive researchers who regularly publish internationally in peer-reviewed journals, so quality of the research component is ensured. The academic level of the eight courses also seems adequate. The course in research methods in behaviour analysis (PHBA8110) included concepts of variation, reliability and validity, and operationalization;

topics that may represent a review for some students from the BA and MA level. However, the course also involves more advanced topics the committee finds adequate for the Ph.D. level. The academic breadth, scope, and depth of the programme are very good and adequate for the Ph.D. level. The courses cover the experimental, applied, and conceptual themes in behaviour analysis at a rigorous level appropriate for Ph.D. students. The internal coherence of the programme is excellent; indeed, internal coherence is one of the strengths of the proposal, and adequate for the Ph.D. level.

*c) Conclusion*

The academic level, breadth, scope, depth, and internal coherence are adequate for a Ph.D. programme.

**3.1.4. The plan shall set out how the doctoral/fellowship programme is linked with subject areas/artistic subject areas with adequate breath and clear delineation from other subject areas/artistic subject areas**

*a) Description*

The proposal links behaviour analysis to several other fields and defines how behaviour analysis is different from those fields:

**Psychology:** In psychology, description and prediction are considered valid scientific goals and research questions are framed within this perspective. In behaviour analysis, explanations of behavioural phenomena include demonstration of functional relations between environmental variables and behaviour, to achieve the scientific goals of prediction and control. **Biology:** Selection mechanisms, units of selection and interaction, biological basis for behaviour, and motivational operations are some research areas of intersection between behaviour analysis and biology. **Education, including special education:** There are a number of demonstrably effective instructional techniques with a behavioural basis, and an expanding literature on application of behavioural principles in the teaching of basic and advanced academic skills. **Sociology:** Social behaviour, behaviour in organizations, prevention research, the dissemination of cultural practices, and the robustness of social systems are interesting areas of research and application for behaviour analysts. **Economics:** Behavioural economics, consumer behaviour and economic development as evolutionary processes are all research areas that are of interest to behaviour analysts. **General networks theory:** Systems robustness, diffusion of practice, and the evolution and maintenance of cultural contingencies can all usefully be considered as behavioural phenomena. **Political science:** Subjects of interest include the evolution of institutions and laws as metacontingencies. **Medicine:** Behavioural medicine is an interdisciplinary field concerned with the development and integration of socio-cultural, psychosocial, behavioural, and biomedical knowledge relevant to health and illness, and the application of this knowledge to disease prevention, health promotion, aetiology, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation. **Psychiatry:** Behavioural techniques are effective treatments for anxiety, phobias, panic disorders, and other child and adult clinical conditions.

### *b) Evaluation by the Committee*

The Ph.D. programme in behaviour analysis is linked to a number of other subject areas, most notably psychology and biology, through the goal of gaining a scientific understanding of behaviour. Behaviour analysis has a selectionist perspective that is shared with some other fields of science (biology and economics). On the other hand, behaviour analysis has a focus and subject matter that is different from those of other subject areas. The underlying philosophy, the interpretation of data in terms of functional relations between behaviour and the environment, and the methods are different, as the behaviour of individual organisms is the subject of behaviour analysis, not groups of individuals. It is true that most behaviour analysts have a background in psychology. By way of example, the American Psychological Association has a separate division for behaviour analysis, and Ph.D. students in behaviour analysis at the University of Bangor, Wales, are part of the psychology programme. However, the philosophy underlying behaviour analysis, radical behaviourism, is different from mainstream psychology. The research focus on single-subject designs in behaviour analysis is also different from mainstream psychology. Thus, important differences between mainstream psychology and behaviour analysis set behaviour analysis apart as a distinct approach to the study of behaviour.

### *c) Conclusion*

The Ph.D. programme is both adequately linked to other subject areas and sufficiently distinct from other subject areas to constitute a separate Ph.D.-programme.

## **3.1.5. The plan shall demonstrate how the doctoral/fellowship programme is embedded in one or more core subject areas that are identifiable in an international context**

### *a) Description*

The general field of behaviour analysis consists of multiple research areas. These have been categorized by the Association for Behavior Analysis, International as follows:

#### **Abbreviation Research area**

Autism; Behavioural Pharmacology; Clinical; Family; Behavioural Medicine; Community Interventions; Social and Ethical Issues; Developmental Disabilities; Human Development; Gerontology; Experimental Analysis of Behaviour; Education; Organizational Behaviour Management; Teaching Behaviour Analysis; Theoretical, Philosophical, and Conceptual Issues; and Verbal Behaviour.

The faculty at AUC have their main research interests in the fields of autism, stimulus equivalence, empirically supported treatments; and theoretical and conceptual issues. This is supplemented and extended by research done by core faculty at partner institutions. The programme's faculty members are already active contributors to the international development of the field via membership in the Board of Directors of Postgraduate Programs in Behaviour Analysis in Association for Behaviour Analysis International (ABAI). Akershus University College is also one of five pre-approved Universities in Europe by the Behaviour Analyst Certification Board (BACB) at the master level. Graduate programmes in behaviour analysis are represented internationally (e.g., in the US, Canada, New Zealand, Israel, and South Korea) and there are pre-approved BACB programs in Ireland, Spain, Italy and Poland.

*b) Evaluation by the Committee*

The programme is well represented in four of the subject areas of behaviour analysis and all subjects are identifiable in an international context.

*c) Conclusion*

The programme is adequately embedded in subject areas that are identifiable in an international context.

**3.1.6. The plan shall describe the doctoral programme's academic objectives and what the programme qualifies the student for. The plan shall also describe the necessary background for admission to the programme.**

*a) Description*

**Academic objectives**

The goal of the Ph.D. program in behaviour analysis at AUC is to educate candidates who will conduct independent research that leads to a scientific dissertation of a high international standard. The candidate will receive advanced training in theories and methods, which will provide a foundation for independent research in the field of behaviour analysis. The graduated candidate will be qualified for research activities and academic work.

Students will be trained to demonstrate advanced knowledge in the three core areas of behaviour analysis (theory and philosophy, experimental analysis, and application). The program description states that graduates of the Ph.D. programme will have mastered the following objectives:

- describe, discuss and use natural scientific research methods;
- describe and discuss classic scientific concepts, and show how these concepts form the basis of an experimental and applied science of behaviour;
- distinguish description from explanation;
- describe and discuss the relationship between theoretical, experimental and applied scientific knowledge;
- analyze a practical problem with the theoretical knowledge from the relevant research literature;
- justify their analyses with references to scientific literature of a high standard;
- design, implement and manage a research project;
- apply different strategies for measuring and recording the effect of experimental manipulations;
- analyze the results of their research using relevant theory;
- share their knowledge with others in a way that meets the requirements of scientific communication;
- discuss ethical, practical and social implications of their own research and that of others.

**Academic background:** In order to be admitted to the Ph.D. program, the applicant must have a five-year Master's degree or equivalent, which the university college must approve. All applicants are evaluated individually on the basis of their academic results and their research proposal. As a general rule, knowledge at Master's level of behaviour analysis is

required for admission into the programme. However, the admissions committee is free to consider applicants solely on their scientific merits. Candidates with strong academic track records from fields outside behaviour analysis may be admitted to the Ph.D. program, with the provision that they complete specific elective course(s) in addition to the compulsory courses in the Ph.D. program. This additional coursework does not enter into the 30 credits needed to fulfil the requirements of the educational component.

*b) Evaluation by the Committee*

The academic objectives and what the programme qualifies for are clearly described. The breadth and depth of the learning outcomes are adequate. In order to attract external applicants without prior knowledge in behaviour-analytic principles and methods, the Faculty may wish to promote their course in basic behaviour-analytic principles (e.g., the course already offered in the Master's programme).

*c) Conclusion*

The plan adequately describes the doctoral programme's academic objectives and what the programme qualifies the student for.

### **3.1.7. The plan shall describe compulsory and elective components.**

*a) Description*

The educational section in the Ph.D. program must comprise at least 30 credits for each candidate. If specific courses at the Master's level are considered as necessary prerequisites for other courses or the research project, they must be taken in addition to the 30 credits. All courses are given as 10-credit courses. The course in research ethics and professional standards and the course in research methods and statistics are compulsory. This means that 10 credits, or 1 course, are elective. Students can choose among 6 elective courses offered by the AUC faculty, in addition to the possibility of attending courses offered at other universities: Research ethics and professional standards (Compulsory course), Research methods and statistics (Compulsory course), Advanced concepts – research and application (Learning and complex behaviours) (Elective course), Complexity, science and society (Elective course), The philosophical and conceptual basis of radical behaviourism and behaviour analysis (Elective course), Pervasive developmental disorders – diagnosis, aetiology, prevalence and intervention (Elective course), Complex stimulus control – research and application (Elective course), Empirically Supported Treatments (Elective course). The description of course PHBA8110 – Research methods in behaviour analysis was changed after the application was submitted. The change consists of the addition of standard statistical methods (e.g., analysis of variance).

*b) Evaluation by the Committee*

The committee finds the description of compulsory and elective courses satisfactory. A few suggestions for consideration are as follows:

- 2.2: the Faculty should consider rephrasing the requirement regarding candidates who lack the necessary background knowledge, such that "...take a specific elective course

in addition to the compulsory courses” is changed to “...take courses in addition to compulsory courses...”.

- 3: the Faculty should include research ethics as a compulsory course in this section, as it is mentioned elsewhere in the application, and research ethics is compulsory in Ph.D. programmes in Norway.
- The Faculty should delete the sentence “One course is elective”, in case they might want to give courses with less than 10 credits in the future, which would invalidate the sentence.
- 4: the Faculty could include a bullet point that graduates of the Ph.D. programme in behaviour analysis will be required to show that they can publish internationally.
- A time-plan for the compulsory courses could be provided. Holding these courses at regular intervals allows Ph.D. students to plan the educational component of the individual programmes.
- All courses are 10 credits and thus quite large Ph.D. courses. To increase flexibility, attractiveness and reduce workload associated with the courses, AUC may consider decreasing the number of credits for some of the elective courses. That would probably result in better attendance, as each student would need more than one elective course.

### *c) Conclusion*

The plan adequately describes compulsory and elective components.

### **3.1.8. The plan shall demonstrate that the work performed by the Ph.D. student is put in a broader academic context.**

#### *a) Description*

Graduates from the Ph.D. program in behaviour analysis will be required to show that they can understand and use natural scientific research methods; describe and discuss classic scientific concepts; and show how these concepts form the basis of an experimental and applied science of behaviour.

In addition to the successful implementation of their own research project, students must show that they can understand their own scientific research as part of a bigger picture, with connections to other research in related fields. Cross-disciplinary collaboration and publishing will be encouraged. The graduates of the program should be proficient in reading and utilizing findings from research literature in fields other than behaviour analysis.

The compulsory and elective courses cover the three main aspects of behaviour analysis, as well as general methods and research ethics.

#### *b) Evaluation by the Committee*

The plan describes the wider philosophical and methodological context of behaviour analysis. The course in philosophy and conceptual bases of behaviour analysis (PHBA 8200) has a section placing radical behaviourism and behaviour analysis in an historical context. It is especially important that the basic statistical methods taught in the Ph.D. programme are the same as those taught in other Ph.D.-programmes, to facilitate cooperation and to enable the

Ph.D. students in the behaviour analysis program to understand and evaluate research in other fields. The trend is for funding agencies to support larger, often interdisciplinary projects. To take part in such cooperation, understanding of basic statistical concepts and methods is necessary. Furthermore, the Regional Committees of Medical and Health Science Research often demand statistical computations of sample sizes as part of the ethical evaluation of research. Young researchers, therefore, need to acquire these basic skills during their Ph.D. courses. With the latest update on the course in methods (PHBA 8110), now involving basic statistical methods like analysis of variance and regression, this criterion is fulfilled. However, 10 credits in scientific method is less than most, even maybe all, similar programmes, and the Faculty could consider expanding the courses on methods and statistics.

*c) Conclusion*

The plan adequately puts the work of the Ph.D. candidate in a wider academic context.

**3.2. The institution shall maintain a stable body of academic staff assigned to the doctoral/fellowship programme**

**3.2.1. The size of the academic staff shall be adapted to the teaching, academic supervision and research work.**

*a) Description*

According to the application, a total of seven 100% positions and four 20% adjunct positions are involved in the programme. Another two 100% positions are announced, or will be announced shortly; one of the positions has already been announced or will be announced in the beginning of February according to information provided in meetings at AUC. The faculty members involved in the programme in 100% positions are Professors Erik Arntzen, Svein Eikeseth, Per Holth and Ingunn Sandaker, and Associate Professors Sigmund Eldevik, Børge Strømngren and Bjarne Øyen. The faculty members involved in the programme in 20% positions are professors Bent Erik Bakken, Torgrim Gjesme and associate professor Lise Roll Petterson. In meetings at the AUC, the committee was informed that professor Iver H. Iversen had accepted a 20% adjunct position in the programme. Thus, according to the application, a total of 7.8 positions are presently allocated to the program, and 4.4 of those positions are full professors.

The two new 100% positions allocated to the Ph.D.-programme will be in experimental behaviour analysis, and complex systems theory and behavioural economics. One of the positions has been temporarily filled with a psychologist with a Ph.D., Espen Borgå Johansen. Hence, the faculty allocated to the Ph.D. program will consist of a total of 9.8 positions, according to the application and information at the meetings at AUC.

Plans are to run the Ph.D. programme as an international collaborative degree with the University of North Texas, USA (UNT), and Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo (PUCSP). This means that the Ph.D. students may do research at the other two institutions, and that supervision may be performed by staff at the other institutions. At least one of the students at the AUC has performed studies at the UNT. Exchange of supervision and research between the institutions is planned.

At the start of the Ph.D. program, 1.05 of a full time position will be allocated to teaching and supervision.

### *b) Evaluation by the Committee*

According to NOKUT regulations, §2.3, an individual should hold a Ph.D. degree or have competence at a similar level in order to teach or supervise in the Ph.D. programme. Bjarne Øyen does not satisfy this requirement. Thus, with the 2.2 new positions that the committee was informed about in the meetings, a total of 8.8 positions have been allocated to the programme, and 7.8 positions are filled or temporarily filled. However, the web-pages listing the staff at AUC should be updated, as there is no mention of professor Iversen. Furthermore, the committee cannot find the announcement for the 100% position on the web-pages of AUC.

The staff teaches at the bachelors and masters levels in addition to the Ph.D. level. Thus, the workload seems quite high, although the committee does not have the number of hours allocated to teaching for each faculty member. The Ph.D. students will be involved in the research programs of the individual researchers, and supervision is in laboratory-groups, which reduces the time needed for individual supervision. The Ph.D. students will teach at the BA and maybe at the MA level. This will reduce some of the workload of the faculty.

Six elective courses of 10 credits each are offered, which seems to place a high teaching demand on the relatively small faculty involved in the Ph.D. programme. A plan for when the courses are scheduled should be made to ensure that the workload is distributed across several semesters.

The allocation of 2.2 new positions to the programme shows that the Board of AUC supports and gives priority to the proposal for the Ph.D. programme. With the new positions, the allocation of Ph.D. students to research groups, and the involvement of Ph.D. students in teaching at the bachelors level, the size of the staff is adequate to the teaching, supervision, and research needs of the Ph.D. programme.

AUC plans to allocate 1.05 positions to the program when the program starts. This covers running one of the Ph.D. courses, supervision of about five Ph.D. students, and administrative work related to the programme. This is a large workload for 1.05 positions, and AUC may consider allocating more resources to the programme.

Plans are to admit only two students into the programme every second year. The programme would thus consist of 4-5 students when it is up and running. The proposed number of students could place serious limitations on maintaining the program, making it difficult to offer most of the planned courses, and possibly resulting in non-optimal use of resources. Further, small numbers could make it more difficult to maintain a stimulating milieu for the Ph.D. students. Courses would include very few students, laboratory groups would be small, and courses might be given too rarely to maintain their relevance and standards. The AUC needs to consider increasing admittance to the programme considerably. Increasing the number of students will not necessarily mean a corresponding increase in the workload of the staff. Since AUC's programme will be the only free-standing Ph.D.-program in behaviour analysis in Europe, and there are more than 150 students in Europe graduating at the Master's level every year, the number of applicants to the excellent programme could be considerable.

*c) Conclusion*

The size of the proposed academic staff is adapted to the teaching, academic supervision and research work.

**3.2.2. The academic staff shall engage in active research work with proper academic breadth at a high international level.**

*a) Description*

The academic staff publishes in international peer-reviewed journals in theoretical/conceptual issues, experimental issues (especially stimulus equivalence), and applied behaviour analysis (presented in appendix 5d). Members of the academic staff hold positions of trust and responsibility in national and international associations and journals: Dr. Arntzen is president of the European Association for Behaviour Analysis. He and Dr. Holth are two of three editors of the *European Journal of Behavior Analysis*.

*b) Evaluation by the Committee*

The staff publishes in all three main areas of behaviour analysis, which is evidence of sufficient breadth of research. They are publishing in international peer-reviewed international journals (e.g., the Psychological Record, European Journal of Behavior Analysis, Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology), within as well as outside of the field of behaviour analysis. The level of the research performed by the academic staff is at a high international level.

*c) Conclusion*

The academic staff is engaged actively in research with proper academic breadth at a high international level.

**3.2.3. The institution shall retain employees in main positions with qualifications within what are regarded as core subject areas for the doctoral programme.**

*a) Description*

The core subject areas of the doctoral programme are specified in the application as theoretical/conceptual issues, experimental behaviour analysis and applied behaviour analysis. The institution has qualified expertise in all these broadly defined areas as represented by the staff holding the 6 main positions, 4 professors and 2 associate professors, and 2 more (associate) professors will be recruited. Most of the faculty have expertise in both experimental and applied behaviour science and the application stresses that there is no natural line of fracture between experimental and applied research.

*b) Evaluation by the Committee*

Theoretical/conceptual issues: Dr. Holth publishes regularly articles on the theoretical basis of behaviour analysis, and Drs. Bakken and Sandaker publish on theoretical issues in large systems. Dr. Gjesme does empirical research related to organisations.

Experimental behaviour analysis: Drs. Arntzen and Holth have done extensive experimental research on stimulus equivalence in healthy volunteers. Dr. Iversen is an internationally recognised researcher in the field of animal behaviour analysis.

Applied behaviour analysis: Drs. Arntzen, Eikeseth, Eldevik, Holth, Roll-Pettersen and Strømgren are all doing research within applied behaviour analysis. This field seems to be the core subject area in behaviour analysis where the group at AUC is especially strong.

*c) Conclusion*

The institution retains employees in main positions with qualifications within what are regarded as core subject areas for the doctoral programme.

**3.2.4. At least 50% of the academic staff assigned to the doctoral programme shall hold full professorships; the remainder shall be associate professors (førsteamanuensis).**

*a) Description*

Full professors in 100% positions in the programme are Erik Arntzen, Svein Eikeseth, Per Holth, and Ingunn Sandaker, full professors in 20% positions are Bent Bakken, Torgrim Gjesme, and Iver H. Iversen, i.e., a total of 4.6 full professor. Associate professors in 100% positions in the programme are Sigmund Eldevik and Børge Strømgren. Lise Roll Pettersen, holds a 20% position, i.e., a total of 2.2 positions.

Two new 100% positions in the programme have been or will be recruited.

*b) Evaluation by the Committee*

At present, 4.6 of the present total of 6.8 positions are full professors, i.e., 67% of the staff are professors. Even if the two new positions are filled with associate professors, 4.6 of a total of 8.8 positions will be professors, i.e., 52% will be full professors. Thus, at least 50% of the academic staff holds full professorships.

*c) Conclusion*

At least 50% of the academic staff assigned to the doctoral programme hold full professorships; the remainder are associate professors (førsteamanuensis).

**3.3. Academic activities at the institution shall serve to support the doctoral programme.**

*a) Description*

Currently, the Faculty of Behavioral Science are responsible for three education programs and one research program, *Learning in Complex Systems*. The Faculty runs the *Bachelor's program in behaviour analysis*, and the *Master of Learning in Complex Systems*, with an explicit behaviour-analytic basis. Both these programs were developed by staff from the Faculty of Behavioral Science, and the *Bachelor's program in social education* has had a behaviour-analytic profile since the early nineteen eighties.

The Committee was assured that the faculty of Behavioral Science has the full support of the institutional leadership in terms of funding and encouragement in the application process. In

the Strategy Plan for AUC, the Learning in Complex Systems research program is described as one of four pillars of the institution's scientific community. The College Board has decided that this research program shall be the first to apply for a Ph. D. programme at the AUC. A strategic plan for personnel recruitment will be finished in the spring semester of 2010. The Faculty of Behavioral Science is in the process of hiring two new full-time faculty positions, with the purpose of strengthening research and development activities in behavioural analysis. The current strength of the scientific community in this program demonstrates that AUC is an attractive employer and will also serve to increase the attractiveness to prospective applicants. Most European candidates for a Ph. D. programme in behaviour analysis apply to programs in the USA. AUC may represent a viable alternative for European students.

The emphasis on behaviour analysis in the bachelor's and master's programs at AUC makes their BA and MA students obvious candidates for the Ph.D. program. Currently, enrolment in the Master of Learning in Complex Systems programme shows that a large number of the students that are enrolled or have completed their Master's degree either have taken the bachelor program in social education at AUC, or have taken the one-year post-graduate programme in behaviour analysis that was a precursor to the Master program. The compulsory courses in the Ph.D. program require a strong familiarity with basic and advanced behaviour analysis.

International and national students with degrees from institutions that emphasize behaviour analysis will be the main target group when recruiting candidates for the program.

#### *b) Evaluation by the Committee*

The BA and MA programmes at the AUC will provide support for a Ph.D. programme in behaviour analysis. The BA programme in behaviour analysis is a good starting point for the MA programme in Learning in complex system that also has a behaviour analytic profile. Good candidates from the MA programme will be well prepared and may enter the Ph.D. programme.

#### *c) Conclusion*

Academic activities at the institution support the doctoral programme.

### ***3.4 The institution shall be actively engaged in national and international cooperation and in networks of relevance to the doctoral programme.***

#### *a) Description*

##### ***National cooperation and networks***

The Master of Learning in Complex Systems recruits students from all over Norway, and is the only masters program in the field of behaviour analysis in the country. The faculty involved in the Ph.D. programme consult for regional habilitation services and specialist services for children with pervasive developmental disabilities, and teach workshops and courses in other colleges (University of Tromsø; Østfold University College; Rogaland University College; University of Oslo; Vestfold University College; Sør-Trøndelag University College). Members of faculty are affiliated with The Norwegian Center for Child

Behavioural Development, The Oslo Center for Early Intervention, Buskerud University College and Rogaland University College. They have contributed to the first comprehensive general text on behaviour analysis in Norwegian, and one of the professors in the program was a co-editor. Members of the core faculty are regular contributors to NTA and to the annual Norwegian Association for Behaviour Analysis (NAFO) convention, and serve on the board of governors of NAFO and on the editorial board of NTA.

### ***International cooperation and networks***

The program is developed and will be run as an international collaborative degree with two partner universities: The University of North Texas (UNT) and Pontificia Universidade Católica de São Paulo (PUCSP). The common goal is to establish a joint degree. Establishing an international joint degree requires that all three partners are accredited by their respective governmental bodies, and hold the right to award a degree at the Ph.D. level. The present application for a Ph.D. in behaviour analysis must be evaluated by considering the resources available at AUC alone. However, there is collaboration with the UNT as shown by joint research efforts, and one of the Ph.D. students at AUC recently had an 89-day research stay at the UNT. Across a number of years the AUC faculty members have developed patterns of cooperation and mutual assistance based on faculty teaching at the partner institutions, common supervision of Ph.D. fellows, and publication of research projects with joint authorship from the partner institutions.

The Program for Learning in Complex Systems participates in an international “Think Tank on Metacontingencies and Cultural Selection”. This think tank first met in Campinas, Brazil in 2005. Akershus University College hosted the second Think Tank gathering in Oslo 2007. A research consortium has been established between UNT, PUCSP and AUC as partners (appendix 5f). Since 2006, AUC and UNT have shared animal (pigeons) laboratory facilities in Texas (Appendix 5f). The consortium also shares computer laboratory facilities for studies of cultural selection (Behavior and Culture Laboratory). Since the program’s start in 2004, Sigrid Glenn from UNT has lectured regularly at the master’s program. Since 2005, Erik Arntzen, Per Holth, Svein Eikeseth, Ingunn Sandaker and Gunnar Ree have lectured at UNT. Erik Arntzen, Svein Eikeseth and Lise Roll-Pettersen have published papers in peer-reviewed journals together with faculty from UNT (appendix 5b).

Besides the formal collaboration with UNT and PUCSP, the AUC has formal collaborations with the University of Stockholm and the University of Ulster at Colerain within the field of behaviour analysis. Informal collaborations between members of the core faculty and researchers at Queens College NYC, the University of Bangor, and the University of Liverpool also exist.

Erik Arntzen and Per Holth are editors of the *European Journal of Behavior Analysis*, which entails a large international network.

Akershus University College has an extensive international network, both through participating in EU funded projects since 1998 and through personal research networks developed over the years (appendix 5b). In 2009 the Association for Behaviour Analysis, International held its congress in Oslo, and members of the faculty at AUC were central in the organization of the congress.

### ***b) Evaluation by the Committee***

The faculty at AUC collaborate nationally with partners in clinical work, teaching, and in research and publications. The faculty at AUC also have extensive international academic

networks that involve teaching and research. The faculty at AUC are nationally and internationally recognized as leading experts in the field of behaviour analysis. Their extensive national and international collaborations are directly relevant to the Ph.D. programme.

### *Conclusion*

The institution is actively engaged in national and international cooperation and in networks of relevance to the doctoral programme.

### ***3.5 Infrastructure shall be adapted to the organisation and tuition and related to the doctoral programme's objectives.***

#### **3.5.1 Research fellows shall be provided with requisite and appropriate working conditions, e.g. office space/production premises, equipment, machinery and equipment.**

##### *a) Description*

During the last two years, parts of the AUC building have been upgraded. The university college has one laboratory with 10 pcs for the Faculty of Behavioral Science. Ph.D. students have access to an equipped work space at the university college. Some Ph.D. students will have an office of their own, while others will share an office with one or two other employees. Ph.D. students have access to the same facilities, laboratories, equipment, library facilities, and services as the permanent staff.

Part of the research conducted by the staff at AUC is in applied behaviour analysis and is performed at institutions or schools in the area.

##### *b) Evaluation by the Committee*

The current laboratory space reflects the research interests and size of the current staff, where all basic experimental research is done by having subjects solve problems on pcs. However, the Committee was assured by the Officers of AUC that plans exist for more laboratory space required for accommodating future research interests and the increased staff. All ongoing experimental research is run on computers and it is possible to increase activity in the laboratory by dividing the large experimental room into several cubicles. Laboratory space should be sufficient for accommodating 2 new Ph.D. students every second year. If the program allows more than 2 Ph.D. students every second year, then laboratory space and equipment may need to be expanded. Financial resources are in place to buy new equipment if needed, and there is support from institution management to the programme. Since the applied research is carried out in institutions and schools outside AUC, there is considerable room for more Ph.D. students than the two students allowed into the programme every second year.

##### *c) Conclusion*

Research fellows are provided with requisite and appropriate working conditions (e.g. office space/production premises, equipment, machinery, and equipment).

### **3.5.2 Library services shall be readily accessible and commensurate with the academic content and level of the doctoral programme.**

#### *a) Description*

The library at AUC is a major part of the section for library and research administration. The library opening hours are from 0830 – 1800 on work days, and from 10-14 on Saturdays. The library resources are also accessible via the library web-site via VPN off-campus as well. There are 10 librarians and two library assistants. All the librarians hold bachelor degrees in library and information science. All the librarians have additional university courses in different subjects such as literature, languages, arts, library and information science, ICT, and education. One of the librarians is in a masters program in library and information science. The library collection encompasses about 65 000 volumes, 400 serials and periodicals, 2000 e-journals, and 32 databases. The library holdings reflect AUC's educational programs and include subject areas such as education and teacher training, psychology, social sciences, nursing and allied health sciences, arts, and product design. Within the educational programs the library covers literature within the fields of vocational and adult education, special education, organizational learning, working life learning, and educational leadership. In the field of psychology there is an emphasis on behavioural psychology. Both students and faculty staff may recommend books and other materials for purchase.

#### *b) Evaluation by the Committee*

The committee finds the library services satisfactory.

#### *c) Conclusion*

Library services are readily accessible and commensurate with the academic content and level of the doctoral programme.

### **3.5.3 Research fellows shall be provided with access to ICT services of adequate scope and quality.**

#### *a) Description*

*The Section of ICT Services* at Akershus University College provides services and support to students, academic, and administrative staff. The university college has computer equipment made available for students and employees. All employees can choose between stationary or portable computers. AUC has a high-capacity internet link (gigabit Ethernet) to the Norwegian ISP: UNINETT. On campus there is access to a wireless network in addition to wired network at all work stations/offices. AUC provides file storage, including storage of large amounts of research data. AUC also provides backup services. The university college offers, in addition to standard software, software especially relevant for research, such as EndNote and the statistical program SPSS. Auditoriums with video transfer equipment and smaller mobile video transfer units are available. Ph.D. students will be supported by the university college's section of ICT services on equal terms as all permanent staff.

#### *b) Evaluation by the Committee*

The committee finds the ICT services to be satisfactory.

*c) Conclusion*

Research fellows shall be provided with access to ICT services of adequate scope and quality.

**3.5.4 Technical and administrative support services shall be satisfactory.**

*a) Description*

The university college administration is divided into two departments: Department of Administration, and Department of Academic Affairs and Research. These two departments are further divided into smaller sections, each headed by a Head of Section. Ph.D. students will be supported by the university college's administrative and technical staff on equal terms as permanent staff.

AUC uses MSTAS as the database for keeping student records but is scheduled to transfer to FS (Felles studentsystem) in 2009/10, the same database system being used at Oslo University College. All Ph.D. students will be registered in FS by the Section of academic affairs.

*Frontier* is the virtual learning environment adopted by AUC.

Applications and admissions will be handled by the admissions office in the central administration. Administrative support for external funding is handled by the international section where a 50% position is allocated to research applications. A 40% position in the faculty administration will be handling other issues relating to the Ph.D. programme.

*b) Evaluation by the Committee*

The scientific staff report they have support from both faculty and central administration. A 40% position allocated to the programme should be sufficient, considering the size of the programme. However, AUC is in the process of a merger with University College of Oslo, which they believe will have synergetic effects regarding administration. In case the merger is not realised, there will still be collaboration between the institutions.

The committee finds the technical and administrative support satisfactory.

*c) Conclusion*

Technical and administrative support services are satisfactory.

**3.6 The institution shall state how the doctoral programme is quality assured within the institution's quality assurance system.**

*a) Description*

The quality management system for the Ph.D. program has three components: (1) quality assurance of procedures regarding admission and employment as a Ph.D. student at AUC, (2) the general quality assurance system at AUC, and (3) quality assurance regarding students' learning outcomes, regarding progression in their doctoral work, and regarding the Ph.D.

program itself. Quality assurance efforts in the various areas are interdependent, and there are procedures governing all areas.

### ***1. Quality assurance of procedures regarding admission and employment as a Ph.D. student at AUC.***

AUC's Regulations for the degree Philosophiae Doctor (Ph.D.) contain provisions governing admission, the Ph.D. contract, supervision and education, reporting procedures, and questions concerning the dissertation, defence of thesis, and final approval. The regulations were approved by the Board of AUC on February 25th, 2009 and have been submitted to *Lovdata* for web publishing, making them accessible to the general public. The regulations also describe the organizational level of decision for various questions, and the rules for appealing decisions. AUC has a set of Employment guidelines and working conditions for Ph.D. research fellows at AUC (Appendixes 4a - h).

### ***2. General quality assurance system at AUC***

The university college has developed an Institutional Quality Assurance System, accredited by NOKUT (the Norwegian Agency of Quality Assurance in Education) 8<sup>th</sup> December 2005. The quality assurance system at AUC is currently under revision and the Ph.D. program will be incorporated in the system (Appendix 4). A statement of the yearly reports on quality in studies is obtained from LMU (the Learning Environment Committee) before it is presented for and approved by the University College Board. The university college has implemented an external program supervisor scheme as part of the quality assurance system. Studiekvalitetsutvalget (the Quality of Education Committee) reviews all curriculum/ study plans (appendix 4b).

### ***3. Quality assurance of learning outcomes, progression and the program itself***

Systems designed to document quality in the Ph.D. programme will be implemented. These systems will ensure the quality of the teaching and the actual learning outcomes for the students. Quality systems comprise: (a) The scientific profile of the program; (b) The thematic and pedagogical coherence of the program; (c) quality of education and learning outcomes; (d) Procedures for tracking study progression and academic standing; and (d) Procedures for supervision and tutoring – including supervision contracts.

Since the Ph.D. program is an international collaborative program, separate *cotutelle* contracts may be agreed upon. A *cotutelle* is an individual contract between the respective supervisors from different universities and the Ph.D. student. It regulates supervision on the Ph.D. level, the responsibilities and the dissertation. (For more information in Norwegian see the report from UHR: Felles gradssamarbeid og cotutelle, 30, juni 2007)

#### ***b) Evaluation by the Committee***

The institution's quality assurance system secures the admission and employment procedures, and aspects of the programme. The committee finds the quality assurance system for the Ph.D.-programme adequate.

#### ***c) Conclusion***

The doctoral programme is quality assured within the institution's quality assurance system.

## 4. CONCLUSION

### **4.1. Does Akershus University College meet the standards and criteria for accreditation of the Doctoral programme in Behavior Analysis?**

Yes. The committee finds that Akershus University College meets the standards and criteria for accreditation of the Doctoral programme in behavior analysis.

### **4.2. The Committee's recommendation on areas of further development of the programme**

- The description of the courses should be updated in accordance with the committee's recommendations in 3.1.7.
- In the educational component of the Ph.D.-programme, a total of only 10 credits are in scientific methods and statistics. This is very little compared to other programmes, and AUC may consider to increase this part of the educational component, as mentioned in the committee's evaluation in 3.1.8.
- The staff allocated to the Ph.D. programme is sufficient with the two new 100% positions in place. The committee recommends that AUC fill both positions in the near future.
- A plan for the compulsory courses should be provided to allow Ph.D. students to plan the educational component of the individual programmes.
- The number of elective courses offered is very high with the relatively small staff involved in the Ph.D. programme. It is not specified how often or which courses will be given. Students should be informed about the planned schedule of course offerings. The quality of a course is not sustainable if the course is not given frequently.
- The number of students that AUC plans to admit into the programme is very low, which means that significant resources could be wasted in the teaching and supervision of very few students. Increasing the number of students will increase the research output, and laboratory group supervision does not mean a corresponding increase in the number of hours put into supervision. Furthermore, admitting so few students will not foster a stimulating research environment for the Ph.D. students. The Committee advises AUC to admit more students into the programme and to seek external funding toward this end. The Committee foresees that the students admitted into the programme will to some extent be from other European countries, as the Ph.D. programme at AUC is the only of its kind in Europe.

## 5. APPENDIX

### **5.1.1. REGULATIONS RELATING TO STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION OF PROGRAMME OF STUDY AND CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION OF INSTITUTIONS IN NORWEGIAN HIGHER EDUCATION, § 2-3,**

(Issued by the Norwegian Agency for quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) 25 January 2006 pursuant to the Regulations concerning accreditation, evaluation and recognition no. 1040 issued 8 September 2005 by the Ministry of Education and research pursuant to the Act relating to Universities and University Colleges)

#### **2-3 Standards and criteria for accreditation of doctoral programmes and institution-based fellowship programmes for artistic development work**

##### **2-3 (1) A plan shall be available for the doctoral/fellowship programme.**

1. Regulations shall be in place for the doctoral/fellowship programme.
2. The doctoral/fellowship programme shall have a representative name.
3. The plan shall demonstrate that the doctoral/fellowship programme possesses an adequate academic/artistic level, breadth and depth and coherence within its field.
4. The plan shall set out how the doctoral/fellowship programme is linked with subject areas/artistic subject areas with adequate breath and clear delineation from other subject areas/artistic subject areas
5. The plan shall demonstrate how the doctoral/fellowship programme is embedded in one or more core subject areas that are identifiable in an international context
6. The plan shall describe the doctoral/fellowship programme's academic/artistic objectives and what the programme qualifies the student for. The plan shall also describe the necessary background for admission to the programme
7. The plan shall describe compulsory and elective components.
8. The plan shall state that the fellow's work/project is incorporated in a wider academic context.

##### **2-3 (2) The institution shall maintain a stable body of academic staff assigned to the doctoral/fellowship programme**

1. The size of the academic staff shall be adapted to the teaching, academic supervision and the research/the artistic development work.
2. The academic staff shall engage in active research/artistic development work with proper academic breadth at a high international level.
3. The institution shall retain employees in main positions (hovedstilling) with qualifications within what are regarded as core subject areas for the doctoral/fellowship programme.
4. At least 50% of the academic staff assigned to the doctoral/fellowship programme shall hold full professorships; the remainder shall be associate professors (førsteamanuensis).

**2-3 (3) Academic activities at the institution shall serve to support the doctoral/fellowship programme.**

**2-3 (4) The institution shall be actively engaged in national and international cooperation and in networks of relevance to the doctoral/fellowship programme.**

**2-3 (5) Infrastructure shall be adapted to the organisation and tuition and related to the doctoral/fellowship programme's objectives.**

1. Research fellows shall be provided with requisite and appropriate working conditions, e.g. office space/production premises, equipment, machinery and equipment.
2. Library services shall be readily accessible and commensurate with the academic content and level of the doctoral/fellowship programme.
3. Research fellows shall be provided with access to ICT services of adequate scope and quality.
4. Technical and administrative support services shall be satisfactory.

**2-3 (6) The institution shall state how the doctoral/fellowship programme is quality assured within the institution's quality assurance system.**

## **5.2. Programme for site visit (identify no names)**

Institution / study place: Akershus University College/ Lillestrøm. Date: 28. and 29. January 2010.

<b>DAY 1:</b>		
<b>Time frame</b>	<b>Time</b>	
15/ 30 min	09.30 – 10.00	Meeting for the committee alone to prepare
45 /60 min	10.00 – 11.00	Meeting with the <b>Institutional Management</b>
	11.00 – 11.15	Break
45 / 60 min	11.15 – 12-15	Meeting with <b>students at masters degree</b>
	12.15 – 13.00	Lunch <i>The committee have lunch alone</i>
45 / 60 min	13.00 – 14.00	Meeting with <b>PhD- students /scholars</b>
	14.00 – 14.15	Break
45 / 60 min	14.15 – 14.45	Department Meeting with <b>external partners</b>
	14.45 – 15.15	The committee have a short meeting to sum up the day, after the sum up we travel back to Oslo to have dinner
<b>DAY 2:</b>		
45/ 60 min	09.30 – 10.30	Meeting with <b>scientific personnel</b>
	10.30 – 10.45	Break
45/ 60 min	10.45 – 11.45	Meeting with <b>professional management</b> at the
45 / 60 min	11.45 – 12.30	<b>Inspection to look at the facilities and the infrastructure</b>
	12.30 – 13.30	Lunch <i>The committee have lunch alone</i>
45/ 60 min	13.30 – 14.30	Meeting with <b>administrative personnel</b>
	14.30 – 14.45	Break
60 min	14.45 – 15.45	Meeting with the <b>Institutional Management</b>
No time schedule for the final meeting		Meeting to sum up both days and to decide on the future work plan for the committee and the secretary Concluding meeting

### **5.3. MANDATE FOR THE EXPERT COMMITTEE ON ACCREDITATION OF STUDY PROGRAMMES**

Adopted by the Board of the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) on 29 March 2006.

Pursuant to the Act relating to universities and university colleges of 1 April 2005 and the Ministry of Education and Research's regulations concerning accreditation, evaluation and recognition pursuant to the Act relating to universities and university colleges of 8 September 2005, the Expert Committee is assigned a mandate to:

Assess whether Ph.D. in Behavior Analysis at Akershus University College meets all the standards and criteria for accreditation of doctoral programmes (§2-3, NOKUT's regulations)

1. Give reasons for its assessment and provide an unambiguous conclusion in a written report.

The report shall contain assessments for use by the institution in further enhancement of the study programme.

The report shall be quality-assured before it is issued.

2. Issue a report to NOKUT.

The formal basis for the Committee's assessment is constituted by:

Regulations relating to standards and criteria for accreditation of study programmes and criteria for accreditation of institutions in Norwegian higher education adopted by NOKUT on 25 January 2006.

The Committee's assessment will be based on the following:

The institution's application and other relevant written material which NOKUT and/or the Committee deem necessary for assessment purposes.

The Committee's experiences from visits to institutions.

The assignment is concluded by NOKUT's decision.

NOKUT  
Postboks 1708 Vika,  
0121 Oslo

Vår ref.:

Deres ref.:

Dato: 23. mars 2010

## **Kommentarer til rapport fra vurderingskomité phd-søknad fra HiAk**

HiAk mottok den endelige evalueringsrapporten fra sakkyndig komité fra NOKUT 12. mars 2010. Rapporten er basert på HiAk sin phd-søknad august 2009, tilleggsmateriale og institusjonsbesøk februar 2010. Rapporten og dens konklusjoner gir HiAk verdifulle innspill i den videre utviklingen av phd-programmet i atferdsanalyse.

Vedlagt følger HiAks kommentarer til rapporten til sakkyndig komité. Kommentarene som gis tar utgangspunkt i de anbefalinger sakkyndig komité ga i sin endelige rapport (NOKUTs rapporter ISSN 1501-9640).

Med hilsen

Jan Grund  
Rektor

Olgunn Ransedokken  
Prorektor

## HiAk's comments to the final report from the Expert Committee

Akershus University College (HiAk), received the final evaluation report of the Expert Committee from NOKUT on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2010. The report is based on HiAk's application dated August, 2009, various additional written materials, and the Committee's institution visit. Akershus University College wants to thank the Committee for thoroughness and systematic feedback. The evaluations and the conclusions all represent valuable help for the university college to improve the Ph. D. program.

In the summary of the evaluation report, the Expert Committee says that it "finds that the *application* from Akershus University College satisfies the criteria and requirements for a Ph. D. in behaviour analysis". The Committee also concludes that Akershus University College meets the standards and criteria for accreditation of the Doctoral program in behaviour analysis. In the evaluation report, the Committee provides suggestions and recommendations on areas of further development of the program. These recommendations are dealt with below, in the order in which they appear in the report.

The following is based on the text from the application and from the Committee's final report. Our comments are limited to the areas where the Committee makes specific recommendations.

### 1. Regulations

The application includes a complete set of regulations for the program. The Committee recommends that some changes are made in the regulations. The HiAk regulations are in accordance with the guidelines from The Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions (UHR) and resemble regulations in use at other universities in Norway. The regulations cover all relevant aspects of the Ph.D. programme. The Committee's suggestions for improvements of the regulations concern § 5:

- regarding § 5.1. The Committee recommends that the funding plan could specify the minimum requirements for funding necessary to be accepted into the program.
- regarding §5.2 and 5.3. By disallowing applicants with less than one year left of their Ph.D. studies, otherwise qualified students with published research from their psychology or medicine studies may be excluded from the programme, and this is regarded as undesirable.
- regarding §12.1. The number of copies for the thesis should be specified.

HiAk's comments:

*The recommended changes in the regulations are matters to be decided by the College Board. The proposed changes will be considered and adopted by the College Board in their earliest meeting, and submitted to Lovdata.*

#### 1.1. Admission

On the matter of admission requirements, the application (p. 52) states that "Candidates with strong academic track records from fields outside behavior analysis may be admitted to the Ph.D. program, with the provision that they take a specific elective course in addition to the

compulsory courses”. The Committee recommends that this is changed to “...take courses in addition to compulsory courses...”

HiAk`s comments:

*The recommended change clarifies an important point. The admission requirements are decided by the University College, and the text will be changed according to the suggestion from the Committee.*

## **2.0. Program description and courses**

Regarding the general part of the program description (pp. 51 - 57 in the application), the committee points out that the Faculty should include research ethics as a compulsory course in this section, as it is mentioned elsewhere in the application, and research ethics is compulsory in Ph.D. programmes in Norway.

HiAk`s comments:

*This omission is a clerical error, and it will be corrected in the program description made available to prospective applicants.*

## **2.1. Compulsory and elective courses**

The application states that some courses are compulsory, while others are elective. In the general program description, which states that “one course is elective”, the committee suggests that The Faculty should delete the sentence. This is in case they might want to give courses with less than 10 credits in the future, which would invalidate the sentence.

HiAk`s comments:

*This deletion will be made. However, at HiAk the smallest course unit for an exam currently is 10 credits, and the courses in the Ph. D. Program must conform to this.*

## **2.2. Learning outcomes**

In the general program description (p. 53), learning outcomes for the graduates are listed. The Committee recommends the inclusion of a bullet point stating that graduates of the Ph.D. programme in behaviour analysis will be required to show that they can publish internationally.

HiAk`s comments:

*International publishing is a cornerstone of scientific development. Ph. D. candidates in this program will be required to contribute to the behavior analytic body of knowledge in the various ways accepted by the scientific community. This addition will be made.*

## **2.3. Scheduling of compulsory and elective courses**

The Committee points out that a schedule for the courses should be provided. Holding these courses at regular intervals allows Ph.D. students to plan the educational component of the individual programmes.

HiAk`s comments:

*A plan for the elective and compulsory courses will be provided.*

### **2.3. Course size**

The Committee points out that all courses are 10 credits. The Committee states that to increase flexibility, attractiveness and reduce workload associated with the courses, HiAk may consider decreasing the number of credits for some of the elective courses. The reason they give is to improve attendance, as each student would need more than one elective course.

HiAk`s comments:

*While recognizing the validity of this suggestion, in the light of the restrictions on course size mentioned above, we currently see no alternative to keeping the courses at 10 credits.*

### **2.4. Research methods and statistics**

The Committee evaluates the course in Research methods and statistics as satisfactory. The Committee, however, suggests that HiAk may consider increasing this part of the educational component (p. 14 in the report). They emphasize the importance of skills in the basic statistical methods taught in the Ph.D. programme being the same as those taught in other Ph.D.-programmes.

HiAk`s comments:

*This is an important concern. The decision to keep the educational component at a total of 30 credits constrains our freedom of movement in this matter. However, we expect that the research projects of the Ph. D. candidates will provide education and training to a satisfactory level, when they work closely with competent supervisors. We will especially monitor the candidates' skills and competencies in research methods and statistics, and review the results of the current organization at a point in the future, with a view to making changes as needed.*

### **3.0. Faculty**

The Committee concludes that the faculty allocated to the Ph.D. programme is sufficient. They approve of the two new 100% positions which will be filled in the near future.

HiAk`s comments:

*The university college is currently at work filling these positions The web pages of the program will be updated with the most current information, including Dr. Iversen' adjunct position.*

### **4.0. Admission – number of candidates**

The Committee recommends that AUC admit more students into the programme, and to seek external funding toward this end. The Committee foresees that the students admitted into the programme will to some extent be from other European countries, as the Ph.D. programme at AUC is the only of its kind in Europe.

HiAk`s comments:

*We recognize the validity of this recommendation. Scientific, pedagogical and economical considerations all speak for a larger student community in the program.*