

Agriculture in Tropics and Subtropics Doctoral Degree Board Meeting Report

15. 3. 2024

Meeting of the TABM Doctoral Degree Board took place on 15th March 2024
The following members of the Board were present.

Present members:

prof. Ing. Bohdan Lojka, Ph.D.
prof. Ing. Jan Banout, Ph.D.
RNDr. Jiří Černý, Ph.D.
doc. Ing. Jaroslav Havlík, Ph.D.
Ing. Martin Kulma, Ph.D.
Ing. Olga Leuner, Ph.D.
Prof. RNDr. Pavla Hejčmanová, Ph.D.
doc. Tersia Needham, Ph.D.
Ing. Vladimír Verner Ph.D.

Guest:

doc. Ing. Hynek Roubík, Ph.D.

Apologies:

prof. Dr. Ing. Eloy Fernández Cusimamani
doc. Francisco Ceacero Herrador, Ph.D.
doc. RNDr. David Honys, Ph.D.
doc. Ing. Pavel Klouček, Ph.D.
prof. Lukáš Kratochvíl, Ph.D.
prof. Mgr. Ing. Markéta Sedmíková, Ph.D.
prof. RNDr. Irena Valterová, CSc.

Secretary:

Ing. Vendula Ludvíková, Ph.D.

Minute taker:

Ing. Barbora Motýlová

Programme of ATS Doctoral Degree Board 15. 3. 2024

- 1) Opening (prof. Ing. Bohdan Lojka, Ph.D.)
- 2) Reports from the attestations of PhD students from September 2023
- 3) Approval of methodologies of the PhD 1st year students
- 4) Miscellaneous:
 - a) Approval of new ATS DDB members – Jiban Kumar, Zbyněk Polesný, Iva Viehmannová
 - b) Approval of RNDr. Irena Schneiderová, Ph.D. as a new external supervisor

1) Opening

The Chairman prof. Ing. Bohdan Lojka, Ph.D. opened the ATS Doctoral Degree Board meeting by greeting all members.

Doc. Ing. Hynek Roubík, Ph.D. (new vice-dean for science, research, and doctoral study) greeted everyone and informed the doctoral degree board about new Ph.D. guidelines. Also, he mentioned that in April is planned a meeting for Ph.D. supervisors focused on common problems, administrative issues, ISPs, submitting thesis, etc.

Prof. RNDr. Pavla Hejcmanová, Ph.D. summarized the last meeting - approving of ISPs and discussing new guidelines for phd thesies. She also mentioned the new directive of the dean and asked members to read it.

2) Reports from the attestations of Ph.D. students from September 2023 (heads of individual departments)

prof. Ing. Bohdan Lojka, Ph.D., Department of Crop Science and Agroforestry:

One student in a first year, her ISP was approved.

Discussed was one student, which is in 3 years study programme. Two years long interruption is ending in March and he will need probably more time to finish his studies. He has 2 papers, waiting for 3rd. But studies are for 3 years + 2 years interruption maximum.

3) Approval of methodologies of Ph.D. students of the 1st year

Malena Torres – approved

4) Miscellaneous:

a) Approval of proposal of new ATS DDB members

Prof. Ing. Bohdan Lojka, Ph.D. introduced three new proposed DDB members - doc. Ing. Zbyněk Polesný, Ph. D. and Ing. Iva Viehmannová, Ph. D. as potential internal members, and Ing. Jiban Kumar, Ph. D. as an external potential member.

He mentioned that this could improve communication among the department and decrease the imbalance between crop-focused and plant-focused researchers in the doctoral degree board.

- **The doctoral degree board approved them as ATS members and will propose them for approval to the scientific board.**

b) Approval of RNDr. Irena Schneiderová, Ph.D. as a new external supervisor

Prof. RNDr. Pavla Hejzmanová, Ph.D. introduced RNDr. Irena Schneiderová, Ph.D.

- **The doctoral degree board approved her as a supervisor and will propose her for approval to the scientific board.**

Additionally, it was discussed that it is expected for the PhD scholarship to be increased to 1.2 times the minimum wage as per government regulation. However, it is currently unclear how to redistribute the current budget, and the government has not clearly specified when this change will take effect. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss potential strategies at the faculty level to address this matter.

Also discussed was the admission procedure, where sometimes required documents are missing (such as transcripts of records). It was suggested that additional documents, such as a motivation letter or recommendation letter from the candidate's previous university or employer, could be required. Additionally, the inclusion of percentiles or rankings from the candidate's previous educational institution or workplace was proposed to assess the candidate's performance. Furthermore, the possibility of restructuring the admission procedure into two rounds was discussed. It was proposed that after a careful review of documents, only select candidates would be invited for a second round. Additionally, if a prospective supervisor lacks interest in the candidate, there is also no reason to introduce him/ her for an interview.

Also mentioned was that better communication across departments would be appreciated. This includes for example sharing minutes from DDB (which are also accessible online) via email. Additionally, faculty members should make a habit of regularly reviewing documents, particularly new supervisors, to stay well-informed. Furthermore, updating the website is necessary, as it currently lists non-existing courses etc.

Also was discussed how to make ATS programme more attractive for potential students.

Conclusion

The chairman prof. Bohdan Lojka, Ph.D., thanked to all the present members and closed the meeting of Doctoral Degree Board.

In Prague, 15th March 2024

prof. Ing. Bohdan Lojka, Ph.D.

Chairperson of DDB ATS