



OPEN CALL

PhD fellowship:

Transferable skills and transfer of learning in health sciences education: a curriculum intervention study

An open and funded 3-year PhD fellowship is available on the development of transferable skills and transfer of learning in higher health sciences education.

Supervisor will be: Associate Professor Mette Krogh Christensen, Centre for Health Sciences Education, Aarhus University, Denmark (main supervisor), and a co-supervisor depending on the applicant's suggested subject of the PhD project.

Project summary

Discrepancies between the skills taught in higher education and those valued by employers are recurrently noted. However, the idea that "transferable" skills – or "soft", "generic", "future" or "21st century" skills such as leadership, communication and interpersonal skills – should be part of the set of learning outcomes all students are expected to acquire during their time in higher education is not new. Despite the many high-level intentions to promote acquisition of transferable skills in higher education – expressed through the Bologna Process and in many national higher education strategies – the reality of teaching and learning on the ground in the universities seems, at best, variable. As transferable skills are higher cognitive skills, they are to be nurtured during the graduation period, and innovative methodologies based on experiential and student-centered approaches are recommended.

Dato: 3. oktober 2017

Side 1/2

In a complex and changing society, transfer of learning from one context to another is a needed capability in students. This capability concerns 'within-education' transfer of learning across different types of courses in a study program and it concerns 'outside-education' transfer of learning from a learning environment to a work environment. Transferable skills could play a key role in the students' ability to apply in one particular context competences learned in another context. In addition, teachers' ability to convey transferability most likely influences transfer of learning.

We assume transfer is achievable; however, the realization of it is not trivial. There seems to be an urge for research into 1) ways in which transferable skills are taught and implemented in the health sciences education study programs in the 21st century, and 2) ways in which students develop and make use of transferable skills across study programs and in the transition out of university, and 3) ways in which transfer of learning takes place in higher education.

The overall aim of this PhD project is to provide substantial and novel insight that may answer one or more questions such as:

- 1) What is the role of transferable skills in modern curriculum at university?
- 2) How can we observe and evaluate transferable skills and transfer for learning in health sciences educations?
- 3) How do higher education teachers best support and facilitate the development of transferable skills and transfer of learning?



4) Which curriculum interventions are needed to support and facilitate the development of transferable skills and transfer of learning?

We are looking for a suitable PhD-candidate who can conduct a research project that addresses the above challenges through solid empirical studies drawing on qualitative or mixed-methods research methods such as interviews, observations, and survey.

Side 2/2

The project should include an intervention study aiming to produce fundamental and novel insights into how transferable skills and transfer of learning can be taught, learned, and applied in health sciences educations.

The applicant is encouraged to frame and delimit his or her approach to the PhD project within the broader framework described in this call for proposals.

Key criteria for the assessment of candidates

- A relevant MSc or MA degree in the fields of Education, Social or Organizational Science (Education Science, Psychology, Sociology, Communication, Political Science, Anthropology etc.), or Health Science (Public Health etc.).
- Fluency in written and spoken English and Danish.
- Excellent communication skills in English and Danish including documented writing skills, and if possible published work.
- Experience with qualitative research methodologies; preferably an empirical or experimental master's thesis or other hands-on experience with qualitative data collection and analysis.
- Fine grades at master's level.
- Rich in initiative and a strong motivation for research.
- Well-developed team collaborative skills.
- Keen interest in teaching and learning in higher education.

Note that the successful candidate will have to apply for and get approved for enrolment at Aarhus University Graduate School of Health (<http://talent.au.dk/phd/health/>), in a separate procedure before starting as a PhD student. The PhD fellowship project must be ready for application for the February 2018 application round with an expected start on the PhD programme from May 2018.

Information about PhD at Aarhus University can be found at <http://talent.au.dk/phd/aboutthephdatau>.

For further information, please contact Mette Krogh Christensen (mkc@cesu.au.dk; +4586205227).

Application

Applications must contain the applicant's CV, a short outline of a project idea (max. 2 pages), a motivation letter (cover letter), list of publications, diploma and transcripts of records (grades etc.), and at least one letter of support/1-3 professional referees. Please submit applications by **October 30, 2017** by email to Mette Krogh Christensen (mkc@cesu.au.dk). Interviews will be held in November.