



VRIJE
UNIVERSITEIT
AMSTERDAM

GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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, direct them to the right people if facing issues (see ['How to handle issues'](#) on the GSSS website). This could be done by just being present at the office regularly and having small talks with 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 their experiences, and share this (anonymized) with the GSSS or with the department management team (head of department, research manager).
- Attend GSSS activities such as the induction program, lunch sessions, borrel sessions, poster presentation conference, Christmas dinner, and writing weeks, and make PhD peers enthusiastic to attend. Suggestions for new activities are also 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.

Financial compensation

For the tasks described above, we grant a compensation of max €400 per year allocated to the buddy in the Graduate Fund. This can be used for fieldwork, conference visits, and external courses, along with 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 as part of the Graduate Fund application.

PhD buddy recruitment

- The PhD buddy position is open to any PhD candidate who has 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 their tasks. The GSSS will search for a suitable candidate. The current buddy is open to suggesting a successor in consultation with the GSSS. Self-candidacy is also possible. Usually, the vacancy is not advertised.