

The Langnet Operating Guidelines

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1. The Purpose of Langnet

Langnet is the co-ordinating body of all graduate schools and doctoral programmes doing research on language in Finland. The purpose of Langnet is to promote high-quality research training by providing support and opportunities for co-operation to both doctoral candidates and supervisors. Through the Langnet network, PhD students can take courses at different partnering universities within Finland. Langnet also provides a forum for international co-operation. According to Langnet's doctoral students, Langnet is particularly valuable in providing peer support, helping students get established in the research community, making available high-quality supervision and a wide range of programmes related to language research.

2. The People at Langnet

The key contributors within Langnet are doctoral candidates and their supervisors. Langnet also aims to draw upon the expertise and knowledge of other researchers who have defended their thesis and are not yet supervising others. The board, the director and a co-ordinator are in charge of administration.

2.1. PhD Candidates

The Langnet network is made up of doctoral candidates who have been accepted into affiliated doctoral programmes and graduate schools.

Langnet's doctoral candidates write their doctorate for their home university, but also belong to Langnet and can take part in all of its activities. The main task of a doctoral candidate is to complete a doctoral dissertation and other studies that form part of their doctoral degree. The main responsibility for the completion of the doctoral dissertation lies with the doctoral candidates themselves.

2.2. Supervisors

The supervisors of Langnet's PhD candidates are all part of Langnet. PhD candidates can ask any Langnet supervisor for guidance on questions relating to their thesis. Contacting other supervisors should be discussed beforehand with the candidate's own supervisor. Every Langnet PhD candidate is entitled to receive regular individual guidance from their supervisors. In addition to individual guidance, it is reasonable to expect one of the PhD candidate's supervisors to attend seminars etc. in which the thesis of the PhD candidate is discussed.

The supervisor must act according to academic protocol both in individual dealings with candidates as well as at all Langnet events. Criticism must be pertinent, responsible and encouraging. Every Langnet supervisor is trusted to do something that benefits a graduate school during their four-year term in Langnet. An example could be teaching in one of Langnet's courses, organising a guest lecture, holding a seminar or a meeting, or some other act that enhances the activity of the school.

All Langnet supervisors are entitled to vote at meetings of the supervisors.

2.3. PhDs

Alumni and other interested PhDs are welcome to take part in Langnet activities, even if they are not currently supervising their own postgraduates. In this way they can stay in touch with the nationwide language research community, and bring their own expertise to the network. New supervisors may be recruited from this group.

3. Administration

Langnet is administered by a board and director, assisted by a co-ordinator. An advisory body is made up of PhD supervisors. Langnet's home university is the university where its director is employed.

3.1. The Board

The Board is made up of the directors of the various doctoral language programmes. If the director of a doctoral programme is not a language specialist or otherwise cannot take part in Langnet's activities, the doctoral programme may appoint another representative to the board in their place. Where necessary the local doctoral programme can appoint a deputy representative.

Doctoral candidates are also represented on the Board. The director is responsible for setting up the Board and serves as chairperson. The co-ordinator is responsible for drawing up an agenda for meetings and acts as secretary.

New members can be recruited to the Board, when needed, during its term of office. In this case, it is for the Board to supplement and nominate the new members. The Board can delegate a matter which is in their jurisdiction to the director or another party to address or resolve. On far-reaching and fundamentally important matters the Board can take up the resolution of a matter that would otherwise be within the director's authority.

The Board's duties are to:

- develop and guide the network's activities and to make any decisions regarding the network;
- deal with questions of principle such as the scientific goals and pedagogical objectives of the network;
- assess the network's impact, productivity and budgetary efficiency;
- get funding for the network;
- decide the allocation and use of the network's grant money;
- enhance the co-operation and flow of information between the parties taking part in the network's activities;
- advance interaction and co-operation within Finland as well as internationally;
- approve the structure of the network;
- approve the work plan and budget;
- choose a deputy chairperson of the board from amongst the members;
- make decisions about actions taken when the director is unable to manage their duties;
- verify and, if necessary, update the documents which regulate the network; and
- handle other plans and proposals that significantly affect the network's operations.

The Board can choose to appoint an executive committee from amongst its members to take care of certain of the issues under the Board's authority.

In each meeting, the Board aims to decide the time for the next meeting. The date may also be settled via e-mail. The board will also meet if summoned by the chairperson, or should they be prevented, by the deputy chairperson, or by at least three board members making a written petition for a meeting to examine a matter within the Board's jurisdiction. Invitations must be sent at least two weeks before the meeting. The Board is quorate when the chairperson or the deputy chairperson and at least half of the board members are present. If necessary, the Board may also make decisions via e-mail, internet or telephone conferences.

3.2. The Director

The supervisors meet to appoint a director of the network, who is expected to be a language professor and a respected member of the academic community. The director is appointed to a four-year term or another time period as determined by the funding agreement. The director of the network may delegate an item or items to the board or coordinator to be addressed or resolved.

The director's duties are to:

- direct, supervise, and develop the network's operations and be accountable to the board and funding partners for its productivity;
- ensure that all funds allocated to the network are used according to the criteria set by the board;

- prepare items to be considered by the board in co-operation with the co-ordinator;
- promote collaboration between the units participating in the network, improve the internal and external communications of the graduate schools, and strengthen relations within the operational environment;
- promote co-operation between Langnet and other doctoral training programmes, research teams and research institutes, and strengthen the network's international influence and co-operative relations;
- be responsible for writing funding applications to cover operation expenses and salaries;
- serve as the co-ordinator's immediate superior;
- act as chairperson at meetings of the board;
- address and resolve other items not specifically assigned to another party.

3.3. The Co-ordinator

The university leading the network selects a co-ordinator, who is expected to hold a doctorate in a language-related field. The position is normally part-time, and set for a fixed period determined by the board. The co-ordinator can delegate an item to be addressed or resolved by the board or the director. If necessary, the co-ordinator's tasks can also be delegated, by separate agreement, to doctoral student representatives on the board.

The co-ordinator's duties are to:

- co-ordinate the network's operations following the instructions of the director and the decisions of the board;
- prepare and present items at board meetings, and act as secretary;
- ensure the expeditious flow of both internal and external information;
- prepare funding applications and reports;
- ensure the implementation of the action plan;
- plan and develop network operations;
- help to develop and share good work practices;
- advise doctoral students and supervisors as needed;
- handle other tasks determined by the board.

3.4. Doctoral Student Meetings

Doctoral student meetings are held at all Langnet events, and can also be called when needed, for example in connection with language-related academic events. Doctoral students may also conduct virtual meetings via e-mail. Doctoral students choose a representative and deputy representative to serve on the board.

3.5. Supervisor Meetings

Meetings with supervisors are convened by the board approximately every second year, or when needed, for example in connection with language-related academic events. The director of Langnet is chosen at a meeting of the supervisors, and the meeting can also be called upon to advise the board.

4. Langnet Activities

The active duties of Langnet include creating networks between language researchers, providing information on events organized by members of the community, and organizing its own events. There are also various research-driven theme and resource groups in Langnet, and new ones may be started as needed.

4.1. Events Organized by Langnet

Events organized by Langnet offer high-quality and wide-ranging postgraduate training in language-related fields. For the most part, Langnet doctoral students have the right to participate in all Langnet-organized training. Training may also be offered for supervisors.

Participation in Langnet training is free of charge. No fees are paid for academic guidance or occasional smaller tasks, but compensation may be provided for larger teaching units, by agreement. Travel and accommodation expenses are covered either by the doctoral student's or the supervisor's home university or by Langnet when possible.

Langnet encourages member universities to make their events free of charge to all Langnet members. Cost-sharing between Langnet and the participating universities is discussed case by case, taking into consideration the financial situation.

4.2. Notification of Activities

Sufficient and timely information about all Langnet activities should be posted on the Langnet web page and shared via e-mail. As a rule, Langnet will inform all of its students and supervisors about all of its activities. All activities must be reported to the director and co-ordinator.

Event organizers are primarily responsible for publicizing their events, and the co-ordinator will ensure that information about events reaches the target audience and others for whom the event might be helpful due to their research and teaching interests.

4.3. Registering Study Credits

The amount of work required for a Langnet course or event is indicated by the number of study credits. Upon request, Langnet will provide a transcript indicating the courses completed and the corresponding number of study credits. Langnet teachers are responsible for providing study co-ordinators with information about student's progress. However, Ph.D. students are themselves responsible for ensuring the courses are registered at their respective home universities before they defend their dissertations.

5. Funding

Langnet aims to acquire external funding from both national and international sources. Costs arising from organizing and participating in events are shared between Langnet and the participants' home universities, depending upon the circumstances. Where funding permits, Langnet may provide financial support for students wishing to attend international conferences and events or wishing to conduct field research.

6. Collaboration

Langnet collaborates with national and international doctoral programmes, graduate schools and their networks and other research communities. The collaboration may be official or unofficial in nature. The director oversees all official collaboration.

7. Principles of Good Academic Practice

Everyone participating in Langnet must follow the principles of good academic practice, as stipulated in the guidelines produced by the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (see Responsible Conduct of Research Guidelines 2012, www.tenk.fi).

These principles include complying with the standards set by the academic community and properly acknowledging the work and achievement of other researchers. In particular, Langnet supervisors should always provide feedback that is pertinent, responsible and encouraging.

If a Langnet student or supervisor feels that they have been treated in a way that violates the standards of proper academic conduct, they should contact the co-ordinator or a Langnet representative at their home university without delay. Infractions of these standards will be handled according to the guidelines produced by the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (see above).

8. Validity

These guidelines are effective as of 29 April 2016 and are valid until further notice. Section 4 of the guidelines was updated at a board meeting on 26 September 2016.