

Danish PhD Scholar benefits from NDRI experience

Danish PhD scholar Merete Poulsen spent six months working and studying at the National Drug Research Institute. Here Merete, who is supervised by Associate Professor Suzanne Fraser and whose research focuses on alcohol and other drug use and the social category of sexuality, outlines her academic visit.



My name is Merete Poulsen and I'm currently doing a PhD at the Centre for Alcohol and Drug Research, Aarhus University, Denmark.

I recently had the pleasure of an academic visit at the National Drug Research Institute (NDRI) Melbourne office. During this time I had my own workstation in the PhD/postgrad area, together with five other Australian PhD students and one other Danish PhD student.

Professionally, I worked on my Danish project during my stay. Besides this, I participated in self-structured reading groups with the other PhD students. We took turns to organise these meetings and choose one or two theoretical/methodological readings related to our projects. These meetings and our discussions proved very valuable for me. I also attended seminars organised by academic staff especially for the PhD students. These presentations comprised various topics including the practicalities of doing and finishing a PhD and professional life afterwards, all of which provided great insights. On a monthly basis I also had the chance to go to the Victorian Substance Use Research Forum (VSURF) seminars. In these seminars original research was presented by researchers from various universities and other Victorian drug and alcohol research institutions.

On top of this, I had the privilege of discussing my own research and papers with Associate Professor Suzanne Fraser. As my contact person at NDRI Suzanne was extremely helpful, providing considerable advice on how to improve my article drafts and other academic submissions. I also presented sections of my work at an informal gathering and received constructive feedback from fellow researchers at NDRI.

Professionally I have benefitted in many ways from this stay. It has been inspiring to be a part of such an enthusiastic department that approaches alcohol and other drugs research from a similar theoretical position. People have taken the time to engage me in discussions of ideas for papers, theoretical problems and the like.

What I would like to emphasise as perhaps equally important is the wonderful social environment. Everyone has welcomed me very warmly, taken time to chat, and generally from the start just made me feel very included.

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