

Base group work in the Doctoral programme at the Faculty of Medicine

1. Introduction

The base groups consist of groups of about 8 doctoral students within the same class, who follow each other over the course of the programme. Base group meetings take the form of seminars with a predetermined content, with the point of departure in the scientific work produced by the doctoral students and with discussions from each meeting documented in a so-called base group matrix. The doctoral programme contains 21 base group meetings which are distributed over the course of the programme.

The purpose of the base group meetings is to support the individual progression through application and in-depth discussion of the knowledge and skills introduced in the courses of the programme. They also serve as a space for dialogue about the doctoral students' scientific products in interaction with other doctoral students. The base group meetings ensures that all doctoral students are offered the opportunity for long-term collaboration and thereby promotes education on equal terms among doctoral students.

2. Elements of base group work

Base groups. The base groups comprise groups of doctoral students within the same class (e.g. those starting the programme in Spring 2022) and programme (4- or 6-year), with about 8 (6-10) members of each base group who will follow each other over the course of the programme. The division of doctoral students into base groups are made by the programme directors at the start of each new class in spring and fall, aiming for a composition with scientific diversity and an even gender distribution as long as it is feasible.

Base group mentors. Teachers/researchers who will support and follow the base group. This role is described in greater detail under point 3, below.

Base group coordinators. Each base group will elect one coordinator from the members, who will be responsible to create and invite the other members to digital meetings and act as the contact person of the base group. The role of coordinator will be rotated within the base group.

Base group meetings. Arranged according to a flexible schedule with 2-4 meetings per semester during semester 1-7 (4-year programme), and 1-3 meetings/semester during semester 1-10 (6-year programme), with the point of departure being digital meeting. Each meeting is 3 hours and its exact timing is decided jointly by the base group within a three-week window given by the schedule. Base group mentors and programme directors are invited to all meetings, in addition to the base group members.

Base group activities and examination. Base group activities comprise assigned tasks for each meeting. Tasks will require both individual preparation before the meetings as well as the discussions at the meeting, and where the outcomes of the discussions are documented in *base group matrixes*. The base groups work independently with the matrices, which will be integrated in the learning platform (below) and serve as

list of attendance, description of task, the continuous documentation of progress for the base group itself, and as examination of the base group meetings. The matrices can also be expanded to contain process evaluation after each base group meeting and semester, which increases the possibilities for follow-up and evaluation.

Learning platform. Each base group will have access to their own Canvas site. It will contain all necessary material and documentation of the base group work, and where base group mentors and programme directors can complete examination of the base group tasks.

3. Base group mentors

3.1. Role and responsibility

The base group work is designed for the base groups to work with it independently, including deciding and arranging meetings, the content and form of tasks before and during meetings, and documentation of completed tasks. Programme directors are responsible for examination of the base group tasks.

The two base group meetings during the first semester will be arranged as part of the first programme course, *Joint point of departures for science and research*, and at these meetings the course coordinators of this course act as base group mentors. The purpose of this centralized mentoring during the first semester is to support the base groups to get used to the structure of base group work for the upcoming semester, and also to identify and solve any challenges in this phase of formation.

From semester 2 and onwards, every base group will be linked to 1-2 external base group mentors. Attendance at the meetings by mentors is expected to be more important in the first parts of the program and less crucial in the later parts. The mentors can tailor their own attendance contingent on the maturity and independence of the base groups.

The role of the base group mentor is to:

- Be available as contact person for the base group, e.g. in case of questions or problems requiring external support.
- Monitor the base group members' attendance and, when possible, their active participation in the base group work, and ensure that the base group complete and document their assigned tasks in the base group matrix.
- Report member attendance each semester to the course coordinator.
- During semester 2-4 (2-6 for 6-year programme) the mentor should attend at least in the beginning of each base group meeting, and at all mid-term seminar presentations taking place around semester 4 (6). During semester 5-7 (7-19 for 6-year programme) attendance about once per semester is expected to be sufficient.