

PhD Vlog Week 1 Verena Stingl

TIME	SPEAKER	AUDIO
00:00:07	Verena Stingl	<p>Hi again, and welcome to the first week of my video blog about my PhD life in Denmark, although actually this week I'm not even in Denmark – I'm currently in Switzerland – and I'm going to tell you everything about that next week. But for this week, I thought I'm going to focus on the very beginning, so on how you actually score a PhD position in Denmark, because there are quite some relevant differences between other countries.</p> <p>In Denmark at least, the roles are somewhat inverse. It's not the PhD</p>
00:00:37	Verena Stingl	<p>student who searches and defines a topic, finds a supervisor and finds funding, but it's a supervisor who defines the topic, gets funding and then selects a suitable PhD candidate, which on the one hand is quite convenient, because then you don't have to do all this very painstaking funding exercise, but on the other hand of course, the topics are predefined so there's less general shaping.</p> <p>In my case, I was very lucky</p>
00:01:07	Verena Stingl	<p>that I found a topic that was ideally suited to my interests, but if you have a very specific research interest, it might of course be a little bit difficult.</p> <p>So if you want to find one of those positions, the first thing you have to do is to go to the DTU home page and actually look at the job listings, because there you will find the PhD positions, and from there it all starts. And as it's on the job listings, obviously the process then is somewhat similar to a job application. So the first</p>
00:01:37	Verena Stingl	<p>step is, like with a normal job, you send in your material, you send in your CV, you send in your motivational letter, and you send in your grade sheets. And you have to be aware that probably 50-100 other people are doing the same, so there are tons of applicants for each PhD position in Denmark, so you want to make sure that you stick out – not only with your grades – that's a given – they are very selective also on the grades – but also through how you present yourself in a motivational letter and in your CV.</p>
00:02:07	Verena	<p>If you take that step, you will be invited to interviews – again, this is very similar to a normal job application. In</p>

	Stingl	<p>my case, I only had Skype interviews, which is quite a usual thing for international applicants, so usually you don't have to go to Denmark for the interviews, if Skype interviews can be conducted as well.</p> <p>So far, it was not very academic – it only became very academic at the last step for me. So at</p>
00:02:37	Verena Stingl	<p>this step, I then was asked to write a short research proposal, to show that I'd actually mastered the language of the field, which is a somewhat good question to ask, because I came from chemistry before and then moved to something in the area of organisational theory, so it's quite different in the language and the terms and methodologies, so they wanted to make sure that I actually understood what I'd got into.</p> <p>In other cases, I know when people didn't really switch their fields, it was more about presenting prior</p>
00:03:07	Verena Stingl	<p>academic research or looking at prior published papers that made up the academic part of the whole application process.</p> <p>Yeah, so that takes a lot of time, you would think, and you might want to know why they make it so complicated. Well, I think there are a couple of reasons for that – first of all, they get so many applicants, that they want to be sure to pick the best one – but why do they want to make sure? This is somewhat linked to how a PhD position is defined here in Denmark, which is also quite different</p>
00:03:37	Verena Stingl	<p>from other places, because as a PhD here, you're basically employed as a researcher, and that's your main task. Within the three years that you're employed at DTU, you should focus as strongly as possible on your own research, and drive the research forward to produce good results, to produce good research output. So that means that there is very little administrative overhead, so all this nitty gritty additional stuff that PhD students often have to do for their professor, and also there is very, very little teaching,</p>
00:04:07	Verena Stingl	<p>which for me is a little bit sad, because I like teaching, but on the other hand I have a lot of time to do actual research and not prepare lectures or grade exams or whatever.</p> <p>So yeah, you can really focus on your research here, and that's what makes it super-attractive, but therefore they also want to make sure that they get people who can really use this opportunity and use the three years to</p>

		<p>research as good as they can.</p> <p>And I think the last reason is – they spend quite a lot of money on the PhDs,</p>
00:04:37	Verena Stingl	<p>so you are paid quite well as a PhD, with a salary that even takes experience into account, so you can have quite a comfortable life out of your PhD salary – that will cost a lot – and you get a budget that you can spend on books, on conferences, on travel for research – so again, this costs a lot to the university, so obviously they want to make sure they get people who really stick to it and go through it and provide good research outputs at the very end.</p> <p>Okay, so</p>
00:05:07	Verena Stingl	<p>much about the application process – I hope that was somewhat interesting for you. And news [about] what happened in research the last week – unfortunately, nothing at all. I was sitting in a statistics course the whole week, but well, obviously that’s also a student’s life, a PhD student’s life – you have to do that. So I think next week will be more interesting again, then I will tell you why I’m in Switzerland, why I was in Berlin before, so this will all be much more research-related, and I hope you</p>
00:05:37	Verena Stingl	<p>tune in and are still interested, and so see you next week.</p> <p>Bye bye.</p>

END OF TRANSCRIPT