

Doctoral Student Survey - Results and Recommendations



Provided by the PhD Chapter Board

The PhD Chapter at KTH/ Doktorandsektionen vid Tekniska Högskolans Studentkår

Doktorandsektionen vid Tekniska Högskolans Studentkår

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1 Introduction

During the spring semester of 2019, the PhD Chapter Board decided to conduct a survey to better understand the overall doctoral study experience at KTH. The 2018/2019 PhD Chapter Board began to develop questions to include in the survey. The questions were developed to query about different aspects of the doctoral student experience, such as supervision, individual study plans (ISPs), balance between work and private life as well as questions regarding PhD Chapter activities. This was done to identify common issues and get a general opinion from the doctoral students at KTH. By sending out a survey, the PhD Chapter also sought to increase its visibility among students and to receive feedback on its activities from its members. The development of the questions continued throughout the Fall semester of 2019. The survey was distributed in November - December 2019 to all doctoral students who had study activity and a valid email address registered in LADOK at that time.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the survey is to give the PhD Chapter (Doktorandsektionen vid THS) a better understanding of the current status of doctoral student at KTH. It also aims to identify the focus areas which the PhD Chapter should work on in the future. The results will make it possible for doctoral representatives at both the local (school) level and central level to raise the issues that are most important to the doctoral students. The survey, thus, is an opportunity for all doctoral students to influence the PhD Chapter's work and the outcome of the survey is intended to form the basis for the future work of the chapter.

1.2 Development of Questions

This was the first time the PhD Chapter distributed a survey to all doctoral students at KTH, hence there was no prior survey constructed by us to take into consideration when developing the survey questions. The questions in the survey have been developed by the PhD Chapter Board of 2018/2019 and the PhD Chapter Board of 2019/2020. The questions were inspired by the UKÄ's survey "Doktorandspegeln 2016" and KTH's survey "Medarbetarundersökning 2018". They also draw inspiration from the feedback and issues brought up by the members of the chapter to the PhD Chapter Board and the current questions in focus for the chapter. The questions were developed to be general, in the sense that they should be relevant for most doctoral students, regardless of which school and programme the doctoral candidates are a part of. Most of the questions were also constructed in such a way that they were deemed to be relevant over time, allowing a future PhD Chapter Board to distribute follow-up surveys and make comparisons. A smaller fraction of questions were, however, targeted to the current issues that the PhD Chapter is working on. This has enabled the doctoral students to express their views on them. Such questions might not be of use for follow-up surveys.

During the development process of the survey, the PhD Chapter Board also invited people outside the board to review and comment on the questions. These persons included the doctoral advisors, school level doctoral student representatives, members from the THS management team, and staff from GVS (Gemensamt verksamhetsstöd).

The questions were constructed to contain 9 sections, each with a particular focus area¹:

1. Background
2. Individual Study Plan
3. Departmental Duties
4. Supervision
5. Courses
6. Health, stress-levels, and balance between work and private life
7. HR and administration support
8. Overall evaluation
9. Work of the PhD Chapter

As for the type of questions, the majority of the questions are given in the form of statements, where the respondents were asked to rate on a 7-point Likert scale to which degree they agreed/disagreed with each of the statements. Respondents were also given the opportunity to comment on their answers in free text form. The rest of the survey consisted of multiple-choice and open-text questions.

1.3 Distribution of the Survey

The survey answers were collected during the period 12th of November to 15th of December 2019. The first email invitations were sent on 12th of November, followed by, up to three automatic reminders to those, who had not answered the survey (respondents could also opt to not participate and thereby also not receiving any reminders). The last and final reminder also stated that the survey would close on the 15th of December. The survey was distributed to everyone who was registered as a doctoral student at KTH in LADOK, with a positive study activity during the fall semester 2019 and who had a valid email address registered in LADOK. The survey was distributed digitally through a survey system, using an anonymous mode. That is, the respondents' answers cannot be linked to their names or any other identifiers and remain anonymous even in the raw data-set. The distributors of the survey could only see whether a respondent had answered the survey or not, and never what they answered. It was, of course, completely voluntary to answer the survey. As a small token of appreciation, everyone who completed the survey was entered into a drawing for 5 gift cards (300 SEK each) at Adlibris. The survey was available in both English and Swedish and each respondent could choose which language to answer the questions in.

¹All questions are presented in this report

1.4 Analysis of the Results

Some background information (like school, department) was collected in the questions to enable comparisons but was not mandatory to answer. The results are presented/aggregated only in such a way that it cannot be linked back to individual respondents. All participants were also asked if they allowed their anonymous answers to be part of this study as the last question of the survey. The responses which declined to be part of the study were removed from the dataset and are not part of the presented results. The analysis and report were done by the PhD Chapter Board of 2019/2020 during the spring semester of 2020.

1.5 Results

The survey was sent out to 1431 doctoral students, out of which 604 answered the survey, corresponding to 42%. Out of those, 8 students stated that they do not want their anonymous answers to be part of the presented results. Further, one student did not answer which school he/she belongs to. This answer is also excluded from the results to avoid singling out this particular student. Hence, the total number of responses presented here is 595.

In this report, we mainly present bar charts, Likert charts, and summaries of the data. For each survey section, there is a highlighted subsection where the PhD Chapter's analysis and recommendations are presented. If a response does not contain an answer to the corresponding question, then the response is omitted during the analysis of that question. The bar charts in this report use the absolute numbers and the Likert charts use percentage. The actual number of responses for the Likert charts are shown in brackets for each group. For every text-field (open response) question, a summary of the different responses is presented.

2 Background Information

The first section of the survey focused on the background of the respondents.

2.1 Questions and Results

There were seven questions asked in this section. They were:

1. Which school do you work at? (see Fig. 1)
2. Which division (avdelning) do you work at? (Stated in your KTH profile page "Works for". Please use the abbreviation.)
3. When did you start your PhD studies? (see Fig. 2)
4. What is your gender? (see Fig. 3)
5. How old are you? (see Fig. 4)
6. Which type of contract do you have? (see Fig. 5)
7. Where did you complete your Master's studies? (see Fig. 6)

The responses to the first question, regarding which school the doctoral student work at, are used as a divider when presenting all the other survey answers. To avoid singling out a student, the respondent who answered “Don’t know/Prefer not to answer” is omitted from the presented data. Throughout this report, the schools are referred to using the corresponding abbreviations for their full names, as follow: ABE for School of Architecture and the Built Environment; EECS for School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science; CBH for School of Engineering Sciences in Chemistry, Biotechnology and Health; SCI for School of Engineering Sciences and ITM for School of Industrial Engineering and Management.

The second question of the survey was “2. Which division (avdelning) do you work at? (Stated in your KTH profile page under ‘Works for’. Please use the abbreviation.)”, but the number of responses per division was not enough to break down the data as per division level without singling out respondents. Therefore, the data for all respondents were presented divided per school.

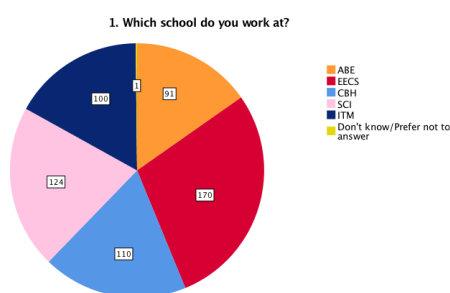


Figure 1

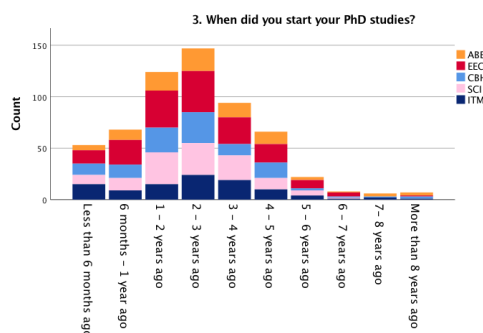


Figure 2

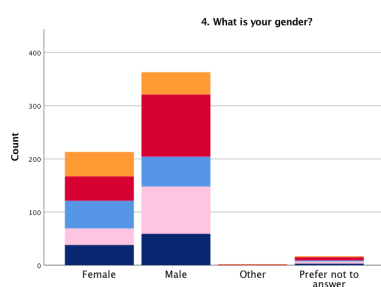


Figure 3

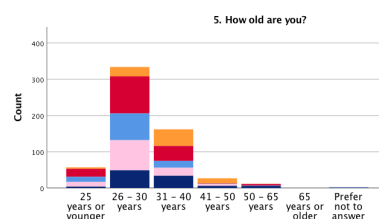


Figure 4

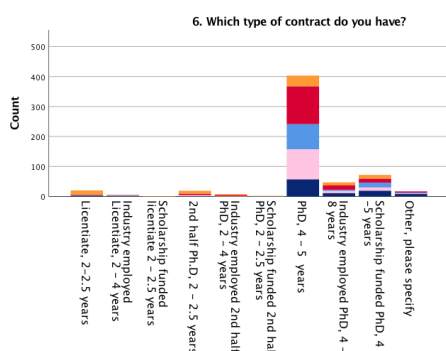


Figure 5

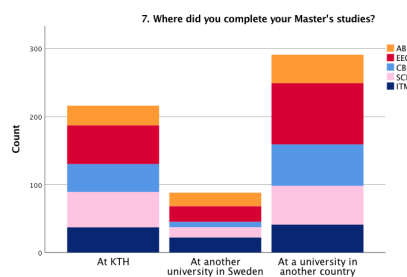


Figure 6

3 Individual Study Plan (ISP)

The second part of the survey consisted of 6 questions regarding the individual study plan (ISP).

3.1 Questions and Results

The 6 questions asked regarding the individual study plan (ISP) were:

8. When was your ISP last updated? (If you have not established an ISP, skip the question) Year and month? (see Fig. 7)
9. Your ISP should be updated at least once per year. Has your ISP been updated that often? (see Fig. 8)
10. How many percents is your current research activity stated as in your ISP? (If you do not have an established ISP, you can answer with what is stated in your contract.) (see Fig. 9) Please note that from the comments on this question it became apparent that some respondents rather answered how many percents of their doctoral studies they had finished.
11. When did you start working on your first ISP? (see Fig. 10)
12. How well would you agree with the statements?
 - a. My current ISP well reflect my current work situation and work tasks. (see Fig. 11)
 - b. The online system (eISP) that is used to updated my ISP works well. (see Fig. 12)
13. Do you know where to find your subject specific study plan of your PhD programme (the one you are admitted to, where for instance required courses are stated)? (see Fig. 13)

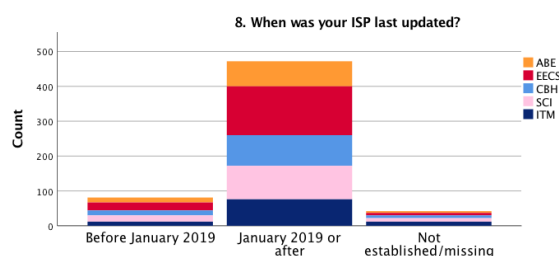


Figure 7

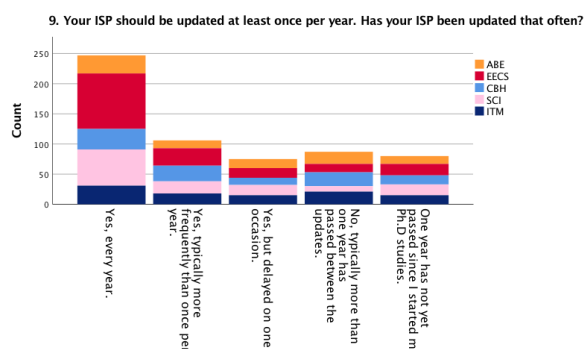


Figure 8

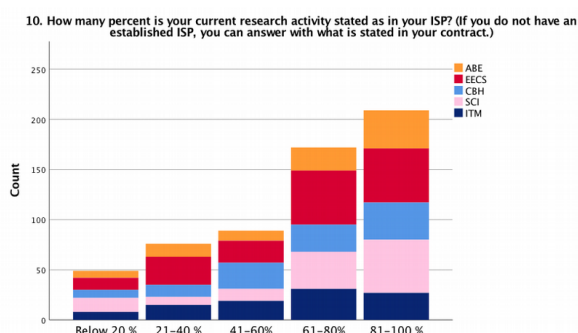


Figure 9

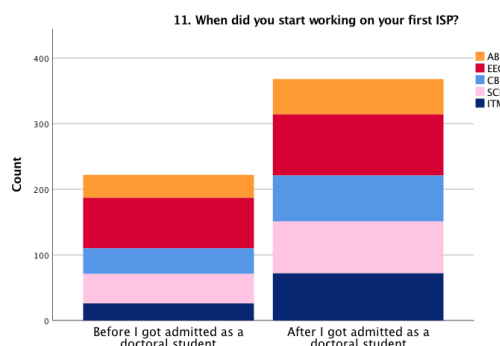


Figure 10

My current ISP well reflect my current work situation and work tasks.

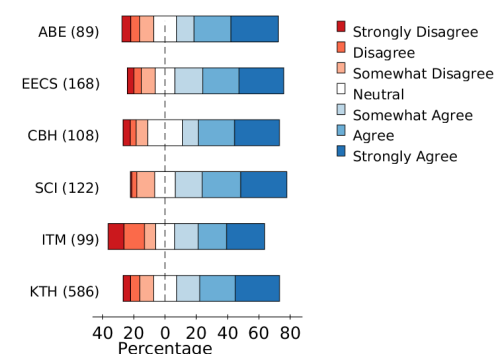


Figure 11

The online system (eISP) that is used to updated my ISP works well.

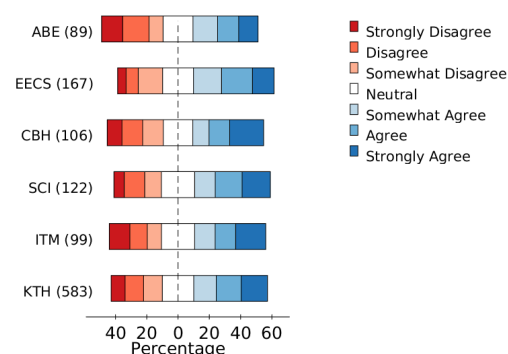


Figure 12

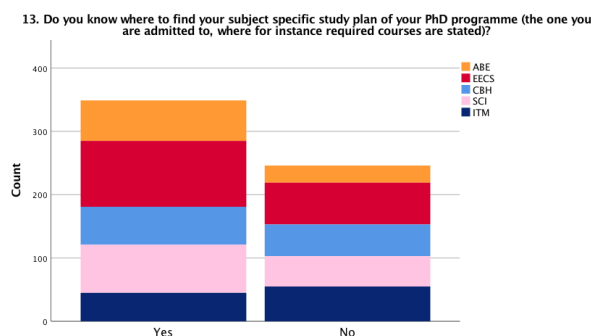


Figure 13

3.2 Analysis of Results and Recommendations

Synchronizing the ISP and the work tasks: The survey has raised issues regarding how well the doctoral student's work tasks correspond to their current ISPs (see Fig. 11). The ITM School's respondents to a larger extent disagreed with the statement that their ISPs well reflect their work tasks. It is recommended that the school should focus on improving the routines concerning ISP creation and follow-up.

Preparing ISP after admission: All the schools should focus on increasing the percentage of students working on the ISP after being admitted. The new decisions regarding the admission process were established in March 2019 (V-2019-0237) and the PhD Chapter would like to see that this decision is always followed.

Improving the eISP System: A large number of doctoral students have indicated issues concerning the online system used to update the ISP, the eISP-system. 50+ students commented that the process of establishing a new or updated ISP tends to be very long, due to either the lack of interest from the main supervisor, problems with LADOK, or the delays with the other approval steps. The students experience negative consequences since they do not have a precise working contract, and they might lose the status of students on LADOK with possible repercussions in the housing queue, as well as student discounts and benefits. It is recommended that efforts should be made to improve the online system used for eISP. Recently, a new version of the system, eISP2, was launched. However, in the PhD Chapter's view, no major improvements to the system have been made, except for the possibility for eISP to read from LADOK (fixed in March). One suggestion to speed up the process is to also allow the doctoral student to initiate an ISP update (currently only the main supervisor can do that). The problem is that not even KTH admin seems to be able to influence the evolution of the system...

Subject Specific Study Plans: Alarmingly, more than 200 doctoral students at KTH do not know where to find the subject-specific study plan (sv: allmänna studieplaner (ASP), see Fig. 13). This is despite the fact that all doctoral students should insert a link to their subject-specific study plan in their ISP, and also have to state that they have read it (by checking a box). The doctoral administration support groups in each school should make the subject-specific study plan (sv: allmänna studieplaner (ASP)) available and easily

retrievable for all doctoral students. It is also crucial that all subject-specific study plans are translated and available in English.

4 Departmental Duties

The third section of the survey consisted of questions regarding departmental duties.

4.1 Questions and Results

This section contained the following 4 questions:

14. What work tasks are included in your departmental duties? (see Fig. 14)
15. Do you report the hours you spend? [The actual hours, not the prognosis/planned hours] (see Fig. 15)
16. How many course credits (ECTS) have you taken in pedagogy? (Pedagogy courses at KTH are usually given by the Department of Learning in Engineering Sciences eg. FLH3000 Basic Communication and Teaching.) (see Fig. 16)
17. How well do you agree with the following statements?
 - a. The actual working hours I spend on departmental duties, well corresponds to the percentage in my ISP. (see Fig. 17)
 - b. If I spend more time than I'm scheduled to do on departmental duties, I get compensated for that. (see Fig. 18)
 - c. I have sufficient content knowledge to teach in my courses. (see Fig. 19)
 - d. I think I have sufficient pedagogical knowledge to teach at KTH. (see Fig. 20)
 - e. The pedagogic training I have enrolled in has helped me to become a better teacher. (see Fig. 21)

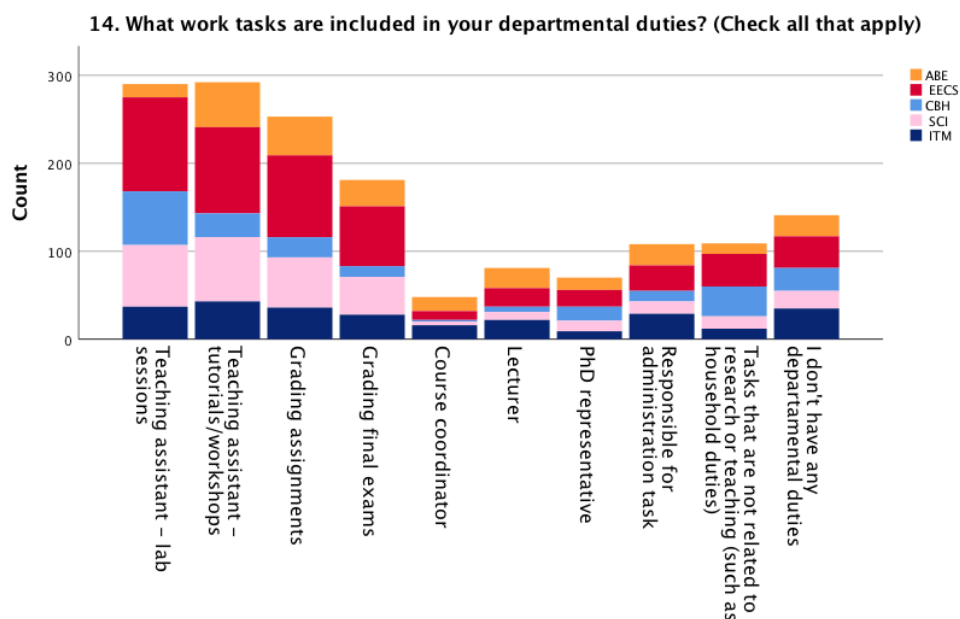


Figure 14

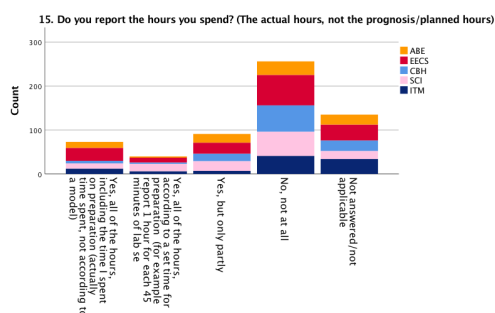


Figure 15

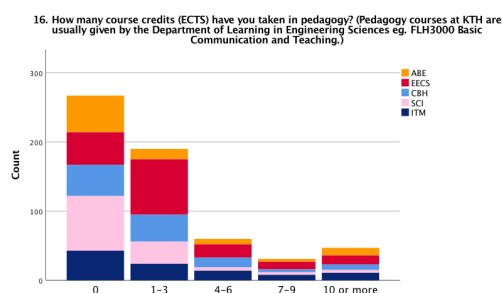


Figure 16

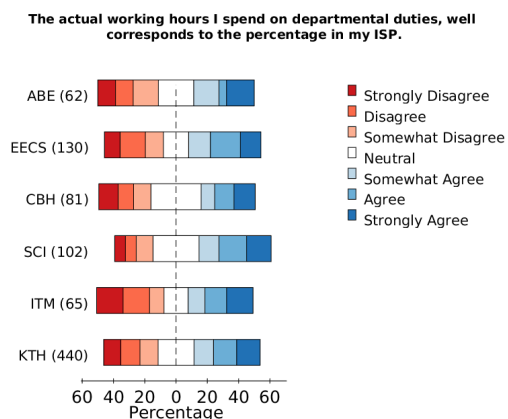


Figure 17

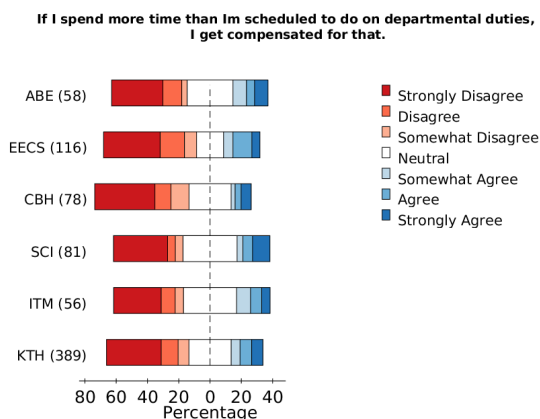


Figure 18

I have sufficient content knowledge to teach in my courses.

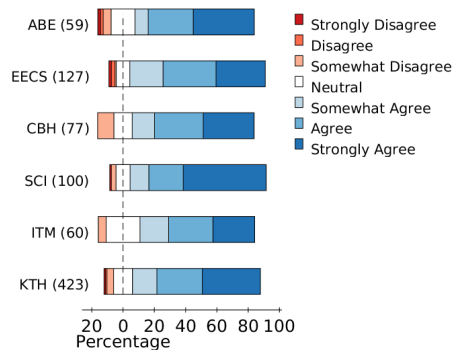


Figure 19

I think I have sufficient pedagogical knowledge to teach at KTH.

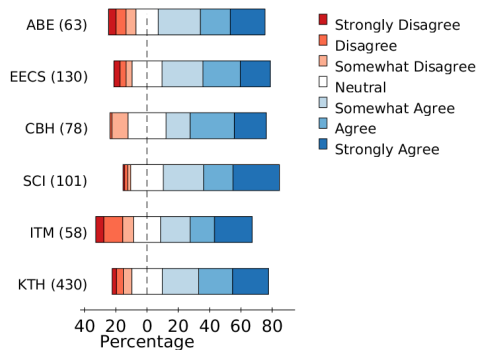


Figure 20

The pedagogic training I have enrolled in has helped me to become a better teacher.

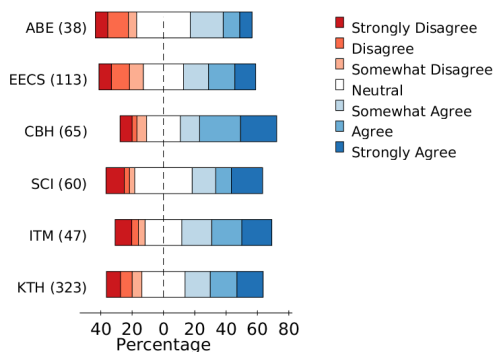


Figure 21

4.2 Analysis of Results and Recommendations

What do departmental duties entail?: As shown in Fig. 14, the most common departmental duties are related to teaching, being a teaching assistant during lab sessions and tutorials, grading assignments, and exams. Some respondents have, however, also stated to be a PhD representative as part of their departmental duties. Currently, there exists no decision regarding counting doctoral student representation (student influence) as a departmental duty and the funding for such a position is unclear (Dnr. V-2016-0451, only applies to central and national representation, not on the school or department level and here it is stated that a commission of trust position could be ground for a prolongation). This is an issue the PhD Chapter has been raising repeatedly throughout the academic year, and expects KTH to follow up on this as soon as possible. What is also alarming is that as many as 109, corresponding to 18% percent of the respondents, stated to have work tasks that are not related to teaching nor research (such as household duties). The PhD Chapter recommends that the departmental duties should be of such nature that it prepares the student for a continued career in academia (or other relevant careers in the industrial/private or public sector). Department duties may include duties like introducing new doctoral students, organizing group seminars, etc. However, the PhD Chapter strongly objects to the cases where doctoral students are subjected to household tasks in the name of departmental duties.

Hours spent on departmental duties should be reported: Many doctoral students disagree with the statement that the percentage in their ISP corresponds well to the actual hours spent on departmental duties (see Fig. 17). A clear majority of the doctoral students do not report the hours they spend (see Fig. 15), which also makes it hard to show the difference between planned and spent hours. The PhD Chapter believes that there should be a clear routine for all doctoral students to report hours so that any differences from the planned hours can be accounted for. If a doctoral student spent more time than planned, the student should also get compensated for that either through a prolongation or by reduced departmental duties in the following semester(s). This is not said to be the current case (see Fig. 18). This is perhaps going to be even more vital during/after the COVID-19 pandemic, where doctoral students might have had to increase their hours spent at teaching when the format had to change to a digital/virtual format so quickly.

Pedagogical training: For doctoral students with teaching duties, pedagogical training is a key element in developing their role as teachers. According to V-2019-0628 "Riktlinje om utbildning på forskarnivå", doctoral students with teaching duties should enroll in pedagogical training. As seen in Fig. 16, not everyone who has teaching duties has attended a course in pedagogy. Most respondents stated to have both sufficient content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge to teach (see Fig. 19 and Fig. 20). In general, the respondents stated that the pedagogical training they had enrolled in has helped them to become better teachers (see Fig. 21). But around 23 % of the doctoral students who answered the question (272 declined to answer) disagreed with the statement (1-3). This implies that there are improvements to be made in the courses in pedagogy that the doctoral students had enrolled in. KTH should, therefore, continue to offer courses in pedagogy specifically for doctoral students and course evaluation feedback should be

taken into consideration as the courses develop. Continuous and regular improvements might be necessary to guarantee that such courses are relevant and high-quality.

5 Supervision

The fourth section of the survey consisted of questions regarding supervision.

5.1 Questions and Results

This section contained the following 4 questions:

18. How many supervisors do you have (in the ISP)? (see Fig. 22)
19. Do you meet/are in contact with all of them? (see Fig. 23)
20. How many hours of combined supervision (from all of your supervisors) would you say you get an average month? (see Fig. 24)
21. How well do you agree with the following statements?
 - a. I get sufficient supervision. (see Fig. 25)
 - b. The distribution of the supervision as stated in my ISP well correspond to the actual distribution between my supervisors. (see Fig. 26)
 - c. My supervisors are a helpful resource in my PhD education. (see Fig. 27)
 - d. My supervisors clearly communicate their expectations of my work. (see Fig. 28)
 - e. My supervisors care about my research. (see Fig. 29)
 - f. My supervisors value my time and efforts. (see Fig. 30)
 - g. My supervisors care about my well being. (see Fig. 31)

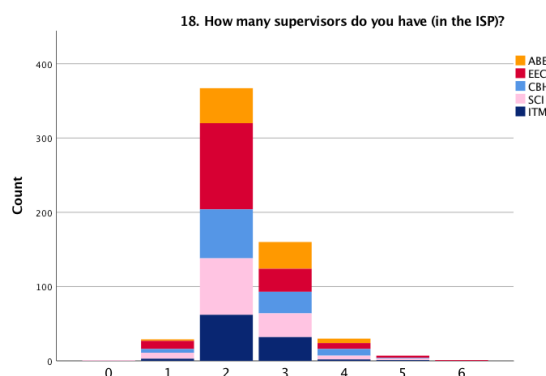


Figure 22

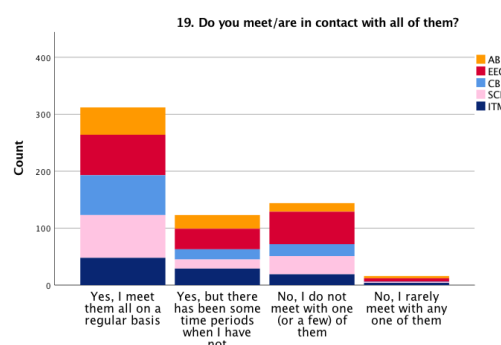


Figure 23

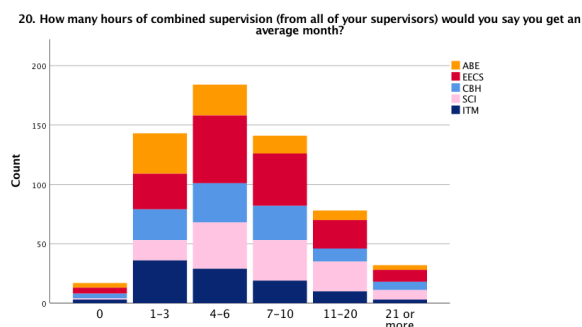


Figure 24

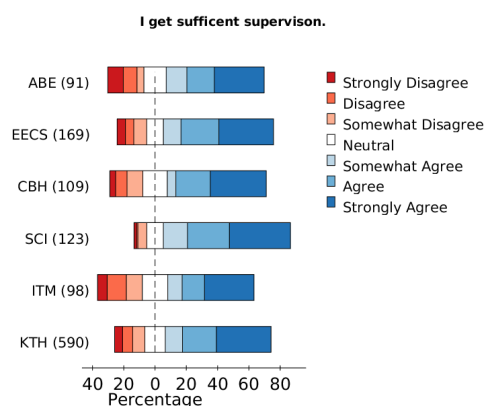


Figure 25

The distribution of the supervision as stated in my ISP well correspond to the actual distribution between my supervisors.

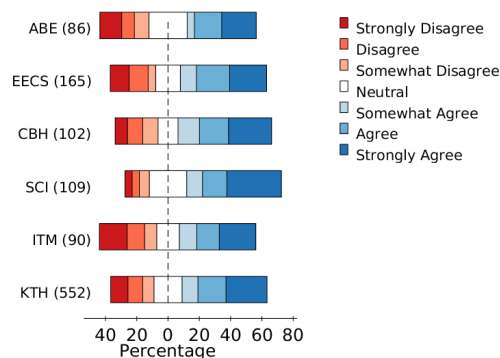


Figure 26

My supervisors are a helpful resource in my PhD education.

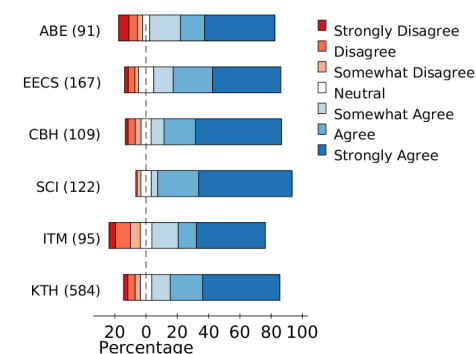


Figure 27

My supervisors clearly communicate their expectations of my work.

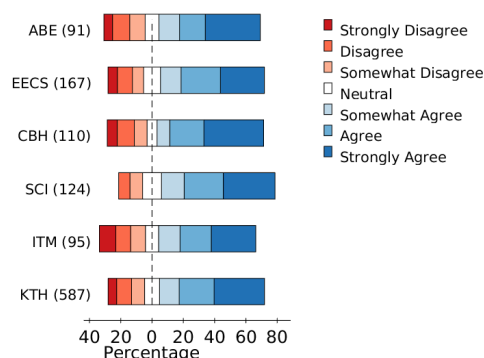


Figure 28

My supervisors care about my research.

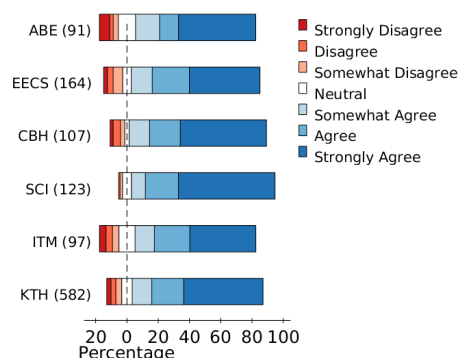


Figure 29

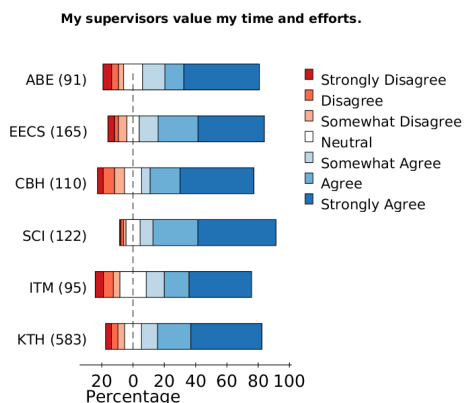


Figure 30

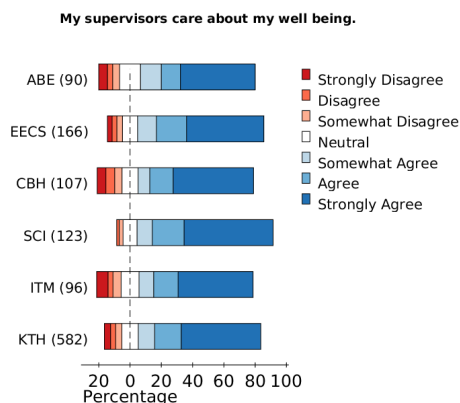


Figure 31

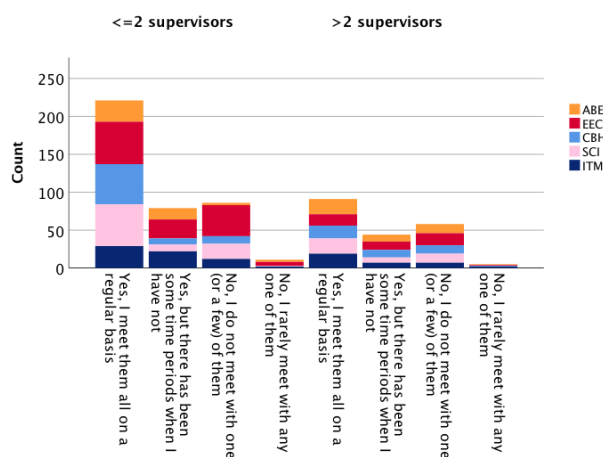


Figure 32

5.2 Analysis of Results and Recommendations

Communication of Expectations: It has been highlighted by the survey respondents that there is a gap in communication between supervisors and doctoral students in terms of the expectation (see Fig. 28). Clear communication of expectations is important and it becomes crucial when issues between student and supervisor(S) arise. The ISP could be used to state clear expectations of work and progress parameters that are acceptable to the supervisor(s) and the doctoral students. The PhD Chapter recommends that appropriate mechanisms are developed to streamline this process.

Sufficient Supervision: Out of the 590 responses, roughly 25% of them indicate that doctoral students do not get sufficient supervision. Although the adequacy of supervision is to a certain extent subjective, the student perspective reflects the lack of clear communication with their supervisors. It is of utmost importance, that all doctoral student gets sufficient supervision. Supervision issues might also be discussed and resolved by involving a third

party, for instance in the yearly progress meetings. However, it has been found that such yearly progress meetings are not a regular practice for many doctoral students (see Fig. 56 and Section 8 for details regarding yearly supervision meetings).

Doctoral projects involving multiple supervisors: In this aspect, multiple issues have been highlighted throughout the survey. Firstly, nearly 40% of doctoral students indicate that the allocation of supervisory contribution in the ISP does not correspond to the actual distribution of supervision (see Fig. 26). Furthermore, if the doctoral students have more than two supervisors, regular meeting are less frequent compared to when the number of supervisors is two. See Fig. 32. In this aspect, the PhD Chapter recommends that all schools should be sensitized about the supervisory coordination among multiple supervisors.

6 Courses

The fifth section of the survey focused on courses and course work for doctoral students.

6.1 Questions and Results

The following questions were asked for this section.

22. How many course credits do you have to take as part of your PhD programme? (see Fig. 33)
23. How well do you agree with the following statements?
 - a. It is easy to find information on upcoming courses. (see Fig. 34)
 - b. After each course I enrolled in I have been offered to take part in a course evaluation. (see Fig. 35)
 - c. I have seen/know where to find the results of the course analysis for the courses I would like to enroll in. (see Fig. 36)
 - d. I have seen/know where to find the results of the course analysis for the courses I enroll in. (see Fig. 37)
 - e. I get notified well in advance before a new course starts at my department/in my research field. (see Fig. 38)
 - f. My supervisors are helpful in finding and selecting appropriate courses. (see Fig. 39)
 - g. I think the distribution between course credits and thesis work in my PhD education is well balanced. (see Fig. 40)
 - h. The courses I have enrolled in have been relevant. (see Fig. 41)
 - i. I am allowed to/encouraged to enroll in courses relevant to me even though they are not yet in my ISP. (see Fig. 42)
 - j. The process to transfer course credits (for previously taken courses or courses given by another university) works well. (see Fig. 43)

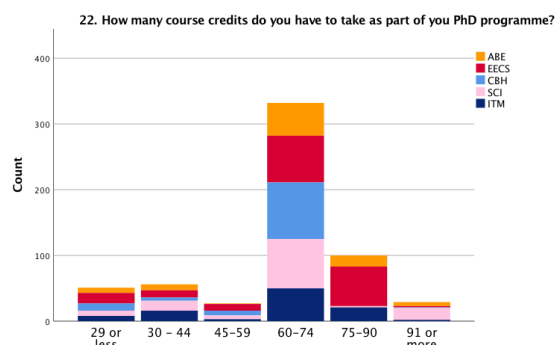


Figure 33

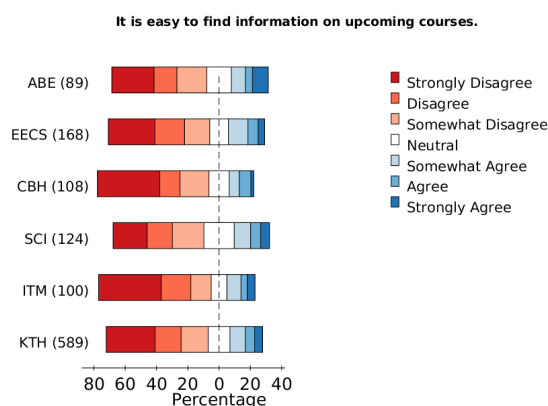


Figure 34

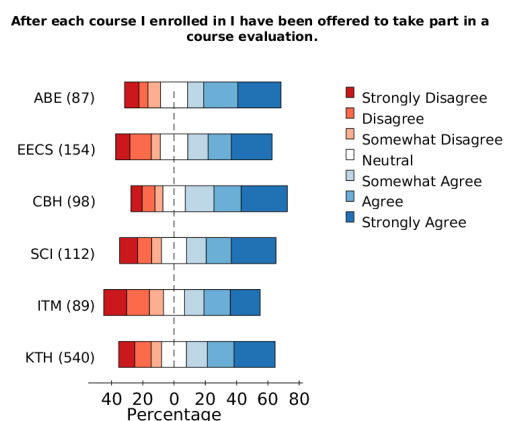


Figure 35

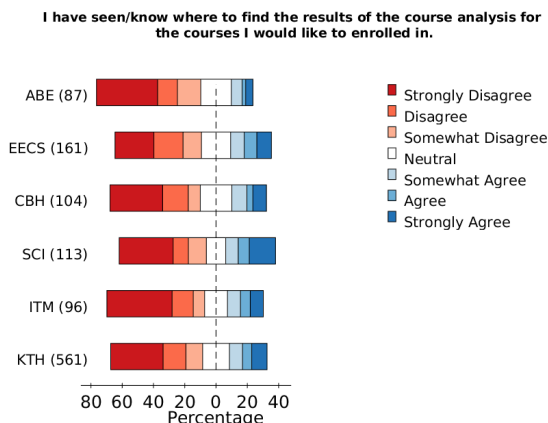


Figure 36

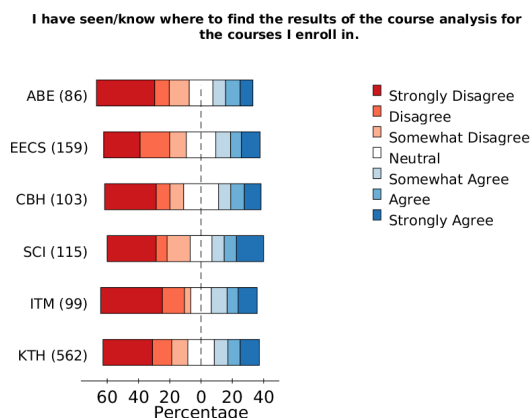


Figure 37

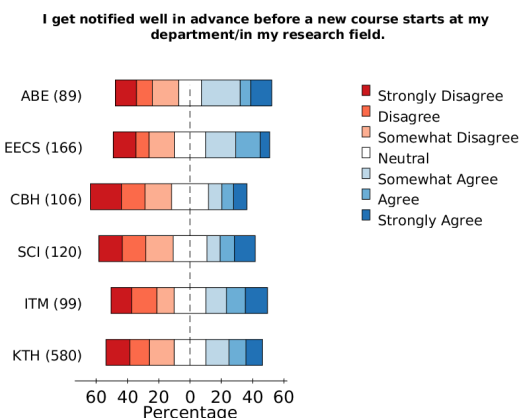


Figure 38

My supervisors are helpful in finding and selecting appropriate courses.

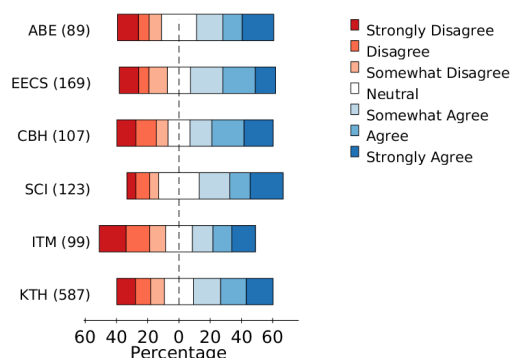


Figure 39

I think the distribution between course credits and thesis work in my PhD education is well balanced.

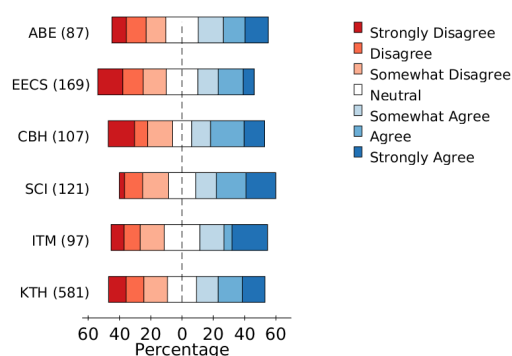


Figure 40

The courses I have enrolled in have been relevant.

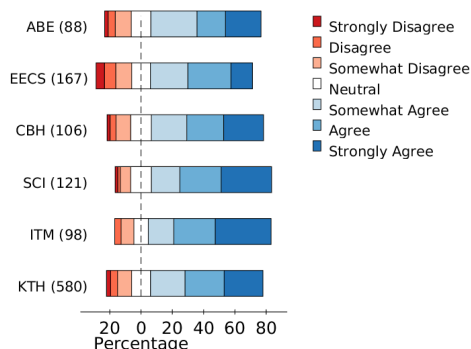


Figure 41

I am allowed to/encourage to enroll in courses relevant to me even though they are not yet in my ISP.

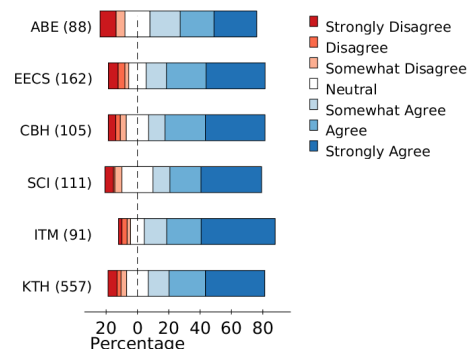


Figure 42

The process to transfer course credits (for previously taken courses or courses given by another university) works

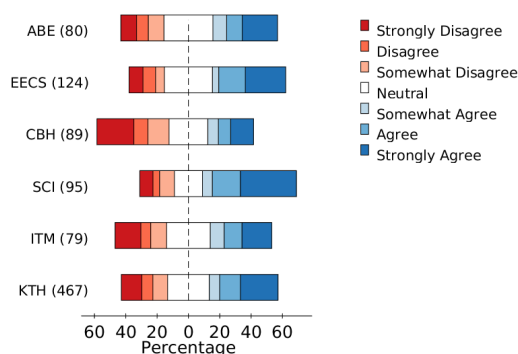


Figure 43

6.2 Analysis of Results and Recommendations

Information Regarding the Courses: According to Fig. 40, finding information regarding third cycle courses is a major concern among doctoral students. The information dis-

semination regarding the third cycle courses needs to improve. Also, it must be noted that providing advance information regarding upcoming courses is especially important for Industrial Doctoral candidates, for whom the logistics of fitting the courses into their schedule can be even more complex than for other doctoral students. It should also be noted that for interdisciplinary research candidates, courses that are offered at other schools than the host school might be useful. Hence, that information is provided sufficiently in advance is crucial. Among the many different ways in which course information is distributed, KTH has two ([C.1], [C.2])²³ dedicated web pages where it is possible to search for third cycle courses. However, these pages are not updated or have become obsolete. This can be improved based on simple measures as stated below:

- In [C.1], give information regarding the “Last offered Semester” and “Next Offering” for each course.
- In [C.2], make it mandatory for the Schools and Departments to list a course at least two periods before it begins.
- Doctoral students should be informed about the course information during the Departmental/School level Introduction/Orientation meetings at the time of joining the PhD program.

Transfer of Course Credits: KTH currently has various forms that contain information about transfer of credits. Doctoral students have expressed concerns about the process of transferring the course credits (see Fig. 42). Firstly, in some schools the information regarding this is inadequate. Also, there have been complaints regarding the fairness of the process in terms of applicability of transfer and the number of credits eventually transferred. The PhD Chapter recommends that the process should be streamlined.

Updating Course Credits on LADOK/eISP: There have been complaints about the delay in the process of reporting course credits to LADOK and from LADOK to the eISP-system. The PhD Chapter would recommend having the same rule as applies to the written examination, namely that they should be corrected and reported back within 15 workdays from the day of the examination. It is not apparent to us if the delay is due to late grading or reporting by the examiner or by late reporting by the administrative staff, but the PhD Chapter would argue that doctoral student should be able to find course result in LADOK within 15 days from the day of the examination or course end. The system administrators reported that this issue was resolved in March 2020 and the new eISP2-system should sync with the information in LADOK.

Relevance and Quality of PhD Courses: According to current regulations the thesis work should correspond to at least 120 ECTS, allowing a maximum of 120 ECTS for course work. At KTH, the requirements for courses are typically in the range 60-90 ECTS. This roughly translates to 1 to 1.5 years of study time. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that third cycle courses of relevance to the field of research must be offered. Doctoral students have expressed concerns regarding the relevance of the PhD Courses

²C.1 = <https://www.kth.se/utbildning/forskarutbildning/kurser?l=en>

³C.2 = <https://www.kth.se/student/kurser/sokkurs?l=en-UK>

(see Figs. 41, and 42). There have been complaints and suggestions regarding the funding for offering third cycle courses at various departments at KTH. It has been noted by some respondents of the survey that the third cycle courses are not given prime importance and are offered as makeshift solutions. One of the problems here could be the current finance system for third-cycle courses. The PhD Chapter recommends that KTH works to ensure that the quality of third-cycle courses is improved and that courses are offered at fixed regular intervals.

Course feedback and ensuring their availability: Feedback regarding the PhD courses is also one of the issues highlighted through this survey (see Figs. 35, 36, and 37). The PhD Chapter recommends that course evaluations are undertaken after every third cycle course. Also, course analysis should be carried out and made available for past and future students.

7 Stress and Well-Being

The sixth section consisted of questions regarding stress and well-being of doctoral students, an area that has been found as problematic in previous surveys, such as KTH's medarbetsundersökning 2018.

7.1 Questions and Results

The following questions were asked for this section.

24. How many hours do you work a normal week? (Fig. 44)
25. How well do you agree with the following statements?
 - a. I often work during weekends/evenings to keep up. (Fig. 45)
 - b. I feel pressured to work even though I feel sick. (Fig. 46)
 - c. I feel pressured to be available even when I am not at work. (Fig. 47)
 - d. I often experience stress during or in relation to my work. (Fig. 48)
 - e. I have a hard time letting go of my work when I come home. (Fig. 49)
 - f. Since I started my PhD studies I have experienced health issues due to my work. (Fig. 50)
 - g. If I encounter any health issues, that could be thought to be caused by my work, I know where to seek help. (Fig. 51)
 - h. I have a healthy and good balance between work and private life. (Fig. 52)

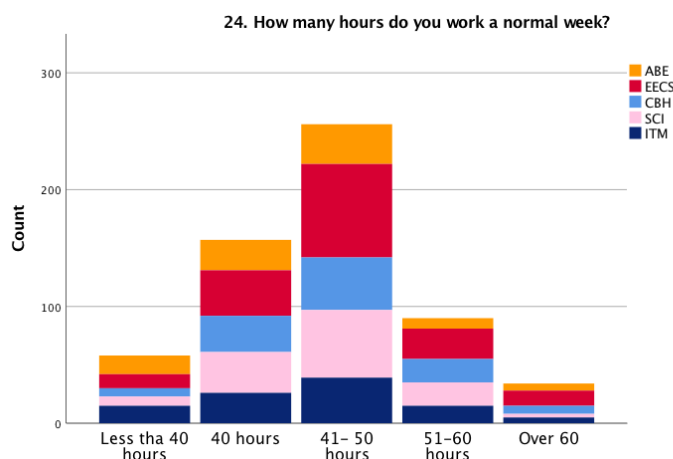


Figure 44

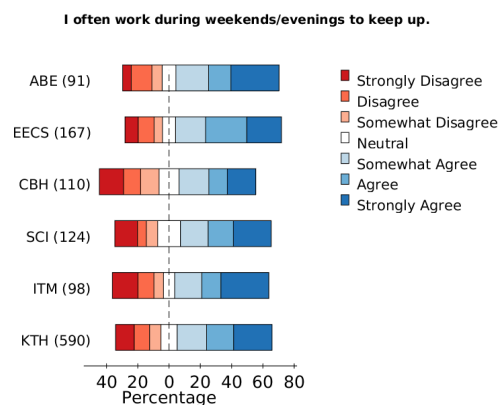


Figure 45

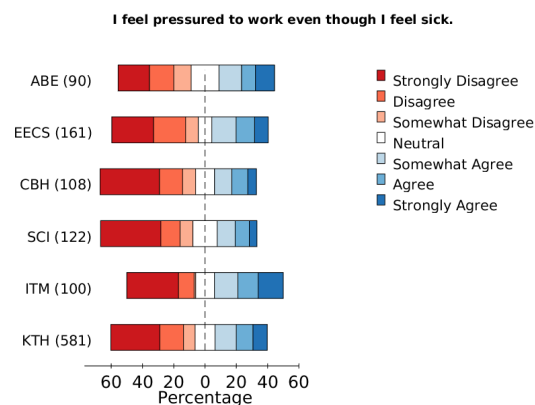


Figure 46

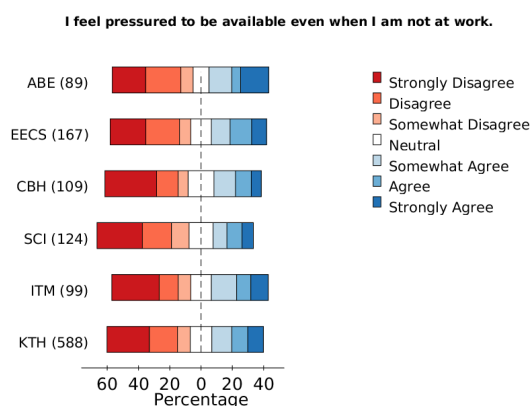


Figure 47



Figure 48

I have a hard time letting go of my work when I come home.

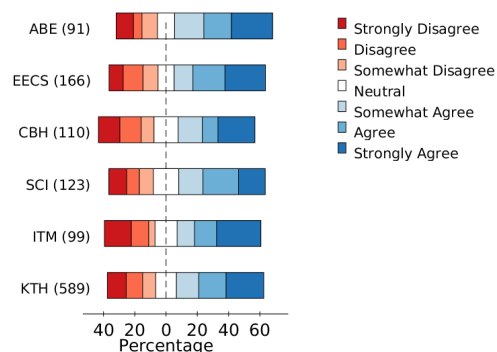


Figure 49

Since I started my PhD studies I have experienced health issues due to my work.

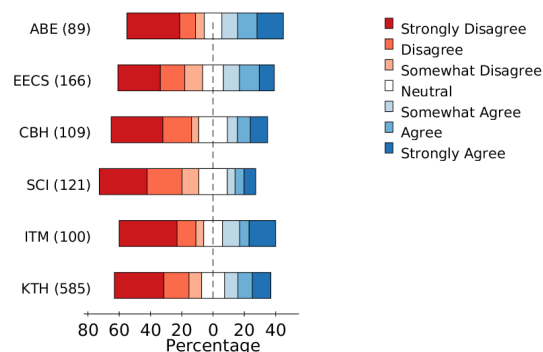


Figure 50

If I encounter any health issues, that could be thought to be caused by my work, I know where to seek help.

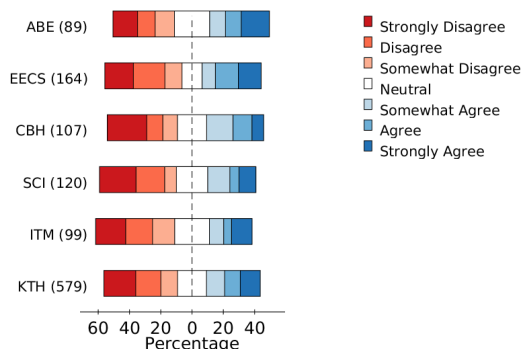


Figure 51

I have a healthy and good balance between work and private life.

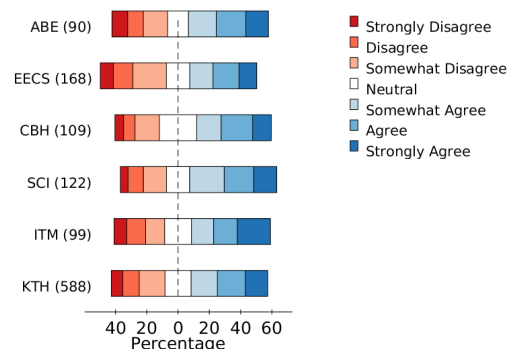


Figure 52

7.2 Analysis of Results and Recommendations

In this section, the analysis of the results is presented together with some additional comments from the respondents to further highlight and explain the results.

Number of work hours in a week: Many students report that their working hours can vary quite a bit. The mean of the variation, however, seems to lie above 40 hours for most (see Fig. 44), which implies that it varies between a normal and a high workload, rather than between low and high. There is also a small portion of respondents that stated to work less than 40 hours a week. For this group of students, partial sick leave, parental leave, or other employment (for industrial doctoral students) are given as explanations. Many respondents do report to be working on the weekends/evenings to keep up (see Fig. 45). One respondent says, about the number of hours of work per week, *“Very hard to say as the line between working/not working is blurry at the best.”*, which is also reflected in Fig. 49 (the answers for “I have a hard time letting go of my work when I come home”). Another quote from the survey that reflects this is *“Hard to quantify as work includes my worry about and preparation for work outside of the office, but overall it is not much*

more than 40 a normal week.” Fig. 44 shows that the bulk of doctoral students at KTH report a weekly workload of between 41 and 50 hours. However, more than 20% of the respondents report that they work more than 50 hours per week.

To mitigate this, the PhD Chapter suggests that all supervisors clearly communicate their expectations on the doctoral students regarding their work hours, preferably already at the beginning of the employment. It should be encouraged to work regular working hours and it should also be clear that this is viewed as most sustainable from the employer (KTH's) and supervisors' perspectives. Continuous work needs to be put in to reduce stress at the workplace, supervisors and faculty should state good examples. Supervisors could, for instance, remind their doctoral students about upcoming holidays and avoid sending emails off work-hours.

Well-being and stress related to doctoral studies: Figures 45 to 52 show the replies to questions regarding stress and well-being in general related to work. The figures show that many students work during weekends, experience stress, and have a hard time separating work from other parts of their life. However, students overall do not feel pressured to work when they are sick or to be available when not at work. The recent COVID-19 pandemic could also have affected the doctoral students in this sense, but there is no information about it in this survey since it was distributed before the pandemic. Even though the trend is on the disagreeing side in Figures 46 and 47 (a majority of the students do not feel pressured to work when sick or to be available when not at work), it is still a problem that some respondents do. No doctoral students should feel pressured to work when they are sick and everyone should be able to leave their work at work.

“I like thinking of work during non-work time and the opportunity to go really deeply within a topic was one of my motivations for starting the PhD” is a quote from the comments on the above questions and there are more comments in line with the quoted one. This is a common romantic image of being a doctoral student. However, working overtime can cause stress and an unbalance between working and personal life with the risk of health - mental or physical - consequences in the long term. Being passionate about the research topic and committed to the doctoral project should not come at the expense of physical and mental well-being. The distribution of responses in Figure 47 and comments such as:

- *“PhD is constant stress for me about not performing well enough, and about realizing what level is 'good enough'. Happy to have a partner who has done a PhD and help me leveling in what to be worried about and not, to give me some perspective”*
- *“Regarding feeling stressed during my work, the feedback from my supervisor is of high importance. If my supervisor is not satisfied, I feel pressured and am very unsatisfied with myself, which also affects my self-esteem. Until [20xx], I was very happy with everything, but it changed during [season, year], when my supervisor's feedback had a huge negative impact on me and my mental health was not good. I talked to the PhD Student Advisor to seek help regarding this, and she helped me a lot in managing the issues in an orderly manner.”*

indicate that there is work to be done here in recognizing the mental challenges of the

doctoral students at KTH. The PhD Chapter believes that this can be achieved while at the same time maintaining the passion for research. Some periods leading up to deadlines will inevitably be more stressful, but the basic information about ways to stay mentally healthy should be conveyed to students by their supervisors' and heads of division (i.e. regular work hours, routines, maintain good eating and sleeping habits, exercise), and communicated in such a way that expectations are clear. Working towards achieving a healthy and sustainable work culture should be a common goal.

At the same time, the following type of comments

- *"I do not have a healthy balance, but my advisers encourage one."*
- *"The pressure to work comes almost entirely from myself, not KTH"*

seem to suggest that it is hard to entirely avoid negative mental pressure even when the doctoral students experience that KTH and their supervisors do encourage a healthy work-life balance. The PhD Chapter would recommend that KTH work actively with providing support and stress management tools and techniques for doctoral students.

8 HR and Administrative Support

The seventh section focused on HR questions and administrative support.

8.1 Questions and Results

The following questions were asked for this section. Out of these, Question 27 is a text-field (open response) question, for which a qualitative analysis of the received responses is presented.

26. How well do you agree with the following statements?

- I have been properly informed of workplace safety. (see Fig. 53)
- I have been offered to have yearly follow-up/progress meetings (uppföljningssamtal or utvecklingssamtal) with anyone OTHER than my supervisors. (see Fig. 54)
- I have all the equipment I need to carry out my work. (see Fig. 55)
- I know whom to turn to if I need help regarding educational issues. (see Fig. 56)
- I have been informed about the code of conduct at KTH. (see Fig. 57)
- I do not have to worry about the funding for my position. (see Fig. 58)
- I am happy with the introduction I received when I started my PhD studies. (see Fig. 59)
- My work place is free from discrimination. (see Fig. 60)
- My work place is free from sexual harassment. (see Fig. 61)
- If I were to experience harassment, discrimination or other ill treatment at my workplace I know how to report it. (see Fig. 62)

k. If I were to experience harassment, discrimination or other ill treatment at my workplace I know where to seek help/advice. (see Fig. 63)

27. Have you ever encountered any problems regarding your admission or renewal of your contract? If so, please specify what happened.

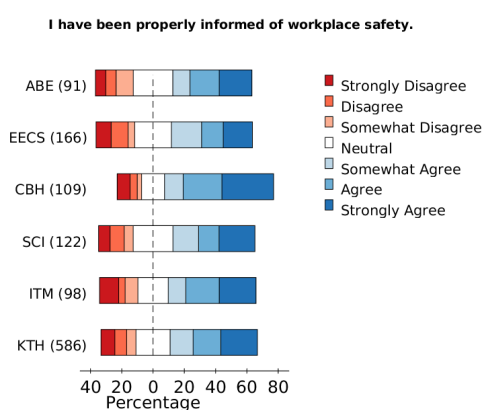


Figure 53

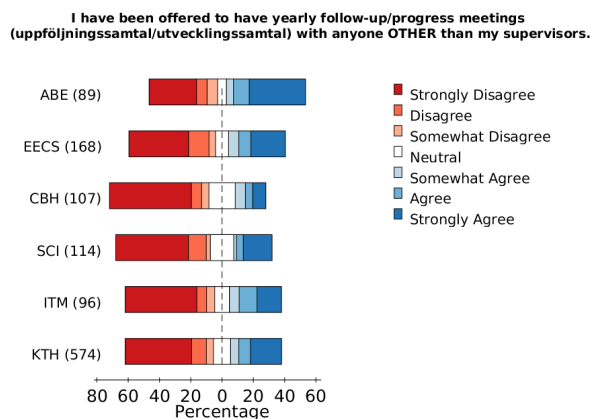


Figure 54

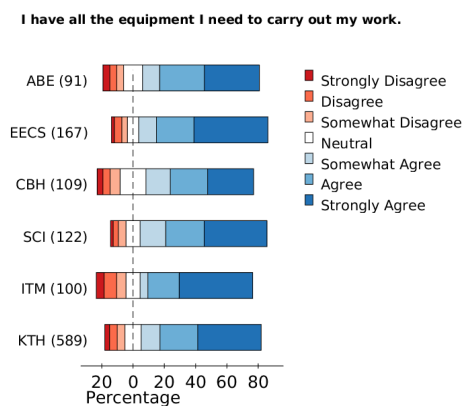


Figure 55

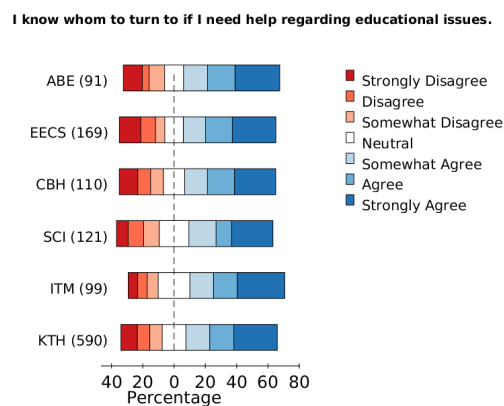


Figure 56

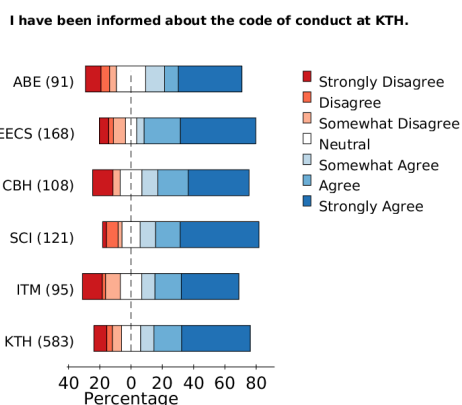


Figure 57

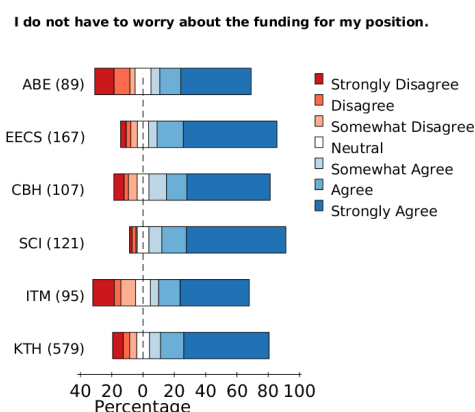


Figure 58

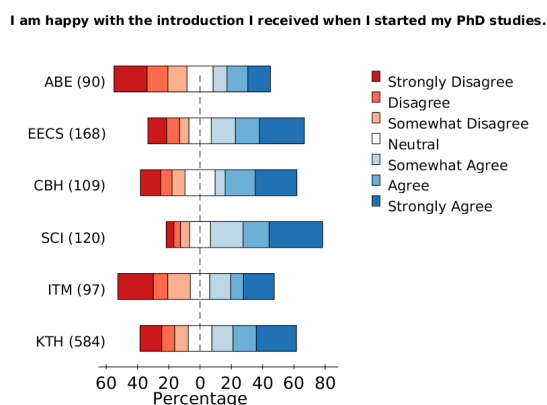


Figure 59

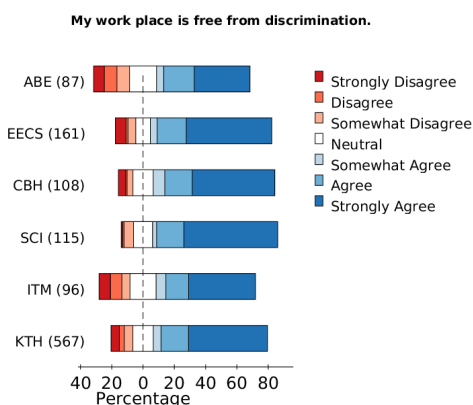


Figure 60



Figure 61

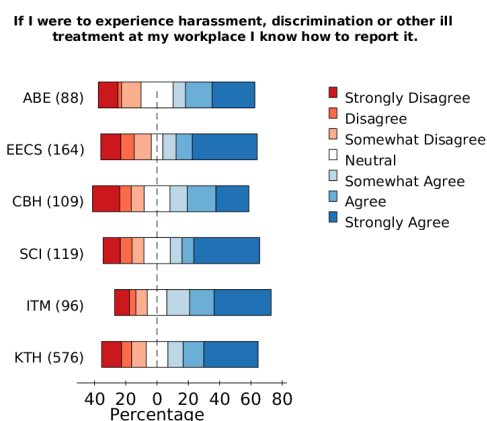


Figure 62

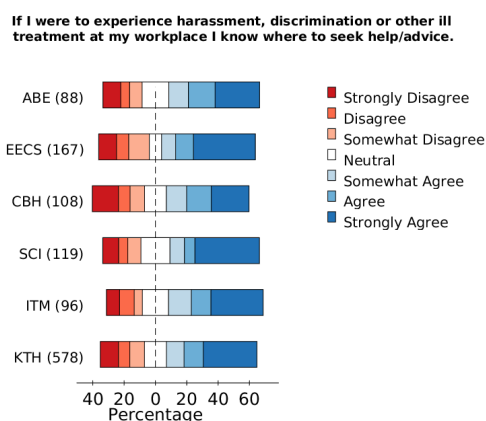


Figure 63

Summary of Responses Q27

This Question yielded 161 responses. Nearly half of the respondents (77/161) affirmatively indicated having experienced some kind of obstacle during the administrative process of starting or renewing their contract.

A significant category of administrative problems pertains to international students. Several have experienced visa-related delays. The significant time and lack of certainty involved in obtaining an appropriate visa or residence permit (particularly for non-EU/EEA students) have been reported as a significant administrative hindrance. Students have also observed a general lack of coordination between KTH and the Swedish Migration Agency (Migrationsverket). Apart from delaying the work contract, such complications can have a cascading negative impact on student life. Not having one's work contract properly in place is an impediment to obtaining a Swedish personal number, which prevents one from being able to open a bank account, which creates difficulties with regard to receiving one's salary, and so on.

Industrial doctoral students constitute another significant category of students that seem to face a particular set of administrative challenges. Their contract, which is negotiated between their employer and KTH, often takes a long time to finalize, causing delays in their start dates and their studies.

Due to delays in the finalization of the initial contract, some doctoral students start working at KTH prior to being officially admitted. This means that they do not receive a salary during their first couple of months of work, though they receive it retroactively. Contract renewal also does not take place in an automatic or standardized way for many students. Negligence in contract renewal has led several people to experience a sudden loss of access to their workplace and the KTH system; for example, their key card stops working, they could no longer access library materials, and they could not book travel tickets. Several people reported failing to advance on the salary ladder upon contract renewal despite making appropriate progress in their doctoral program.

A lack of knowledge or initiative on the part of the supervisor—or in some cases, an outright hostile supervisor—can exacerbate any of the issues outlined above. Some students a difficulty in initiating the discussion with their supervisor regarding salary progression. In combination

with oversights on the part of HR, this amounts to an administrative system that for many students is cumbersome and fraught with irregularities.

8.2 Analysis of Results and Recommendations

Yearly progress meetings: A majority of doctoral students across KTH state that they are not offered the opportunity to have yearly progress meetings with a person who is not their supervisor (see Fig. 54), though the ABE School performs better than the other schools in this regard. In some parts of KTH, the head of the department extends an invitation to each of their employees (including doctoral students) to hold a one-on-one “development talk.” Such a practice should be made the norm across KTH.

Discrimination at the workplace: Alarmingly, around one in five doctoral students at KTH do not regard their workplace as being free from discrimination (see Figs. 60 and 62), with higher numbers among ABE and ITM students. It is also alarming that close to 40% reported not knowing where to report incidents of ill-treatment in the workplace. It seems advisable to conduct further studies to identify the specific forms of discrimination that different students face, so that they can be appropriately dealt with. Alongside the KTH code of conduct, workplace safety, and educational issues, information about where to report incidents of ill-treatment should be part of doctoral student orientation when you begin working at KTH, and periodically communicated. Information about the doctoral student advisor (doktorandombudsmanen) and occupational health care should also be presented during the orientation and their contact information should be easy to find for those who search for it. It is vital that the information is also available in English.

Renewing Work Contract: Student responses show that the process of starting and renewing a work contract at KTH could be much more streamlined. Particular attention should be paid to categories of students—such as international students or industrial students—who face a specific set of administrative hurdles. There are varied and frequent aberrations (including delays in formal admission, negligence of contract renewal, delayed salary payment, and erroneous salary allocation) that lead to unnecessary stress, which could be reduced if the process were more systematized across KTH.

Introduction meeting/orientation for doctoral students: The orientation and introduction to KTH for newly admitted doctoral students could be improved (see Fig. 59). Students from the SCI school seem to be happier about the received introduction, while students from the ABE and ITM school the least happy. The PhD Chapter would argue that all doctoral students should be given equivalent introductions and that spreading of best practices should be facilitated.

9 Overall Evaluation

The eighth section consisted of questions regarding the doctoral students overall experience of their doctoral studies at KTH.

9.1 Questions and Results

The following questions were asked for this section.

28. How well do you agree with the following statements?

- If I had to choose today, I would still choose to pursue PhD studies. (see Fig. 64)
- If I were to start PhD studies in the same subject now, I would still choose KTH. (see Fig. 65)
- I would recommend pursuing PhD studies at KTH to a friend with the same background as myself. (see Fig. 66)
- My PhD studies live up to my expectations. (see Fig. 67)

29. How would you rate your PhD experience, this far? (See Fig 68)

If I had to choose today, I would still choose to pursue PhD studies.

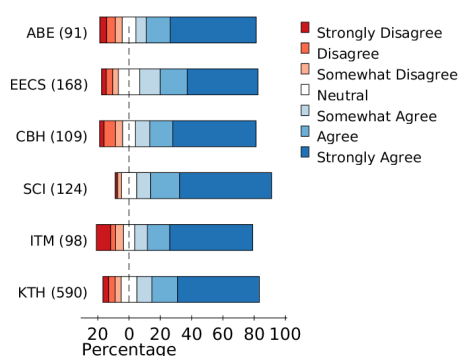


Figure 64

If I were to start PhD studies in the same subject now, I would still choose KTH.

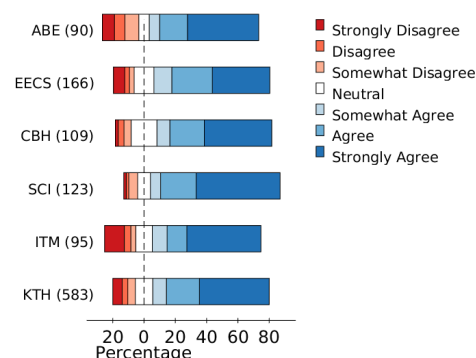


Figure 65

I would recommend pursuing PhD studies at KTH to a friend with the same background as myself.

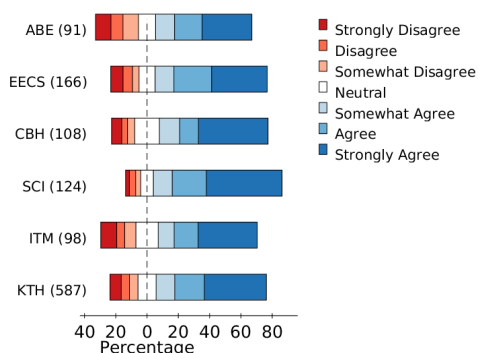


Figure 66

My PhD studies lives up to my expectations.

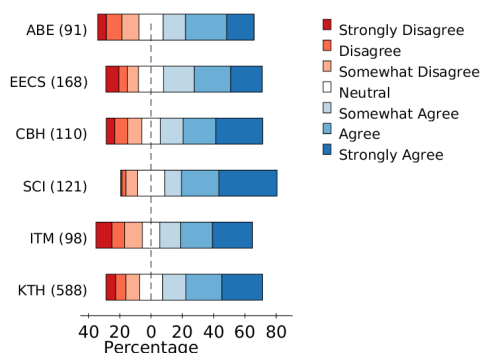


Figure 67

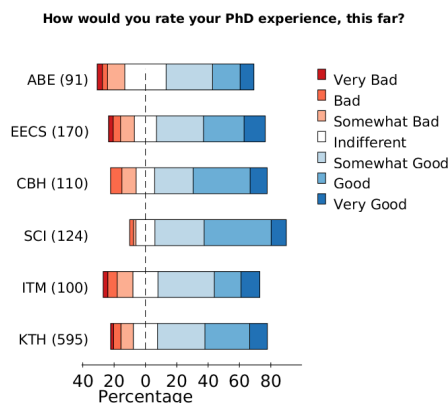


Figure 68

9.2 Analysis of Results and Recommendations

More than 20% of doctoral students indicated that they would not recommend their friends, who possess a similar background as themselves, to pursue doctoral studies at KTH (see Fig. 66). Similarly, nearly 20 % of doctoral students stated that they would not like to start doctoral studies at KTH, if they were to start it all over again today (see Fig. 65). A general trend in this section indicates an adverse situation at the ABE and ITM school. Overall, the data in this section indicates that around 20% of the doctoral students are facing some sort of issues relating to their doctoral studies or that their studies are not living up to their expectations. The PhD Chapter was quite alarmed by this large percentage, which can not be discounted as a small overall number. The PhD Chapter believes that the other sections in this survey shed more light on the issues and factors that have contributed to these lower ratings. The PhD Chapter hopes that if a similar survey is conducted again, say 2 years from now in 2022, work towards improving these identified issues have resulted in a much higher overall satisfaction with the doctoral student experience at KTH.

10 Work of the PhD Chapter

The ninth and the final section queried the respondents about the PhD Chapter's work.

10.1 Questions and Results

The following questions were asked for this section:

30. Do you know that KTH has a PhD Chapter (a part of the Student Union at KTH, THS)? (see Fig. 69)
31. Do you know that the PhD Chapter is responsible for student influence at the doctoral level? (see Fig. 70)
32. Do you know that the PhD Chapter has a local council for each school and local representatives for each programme/department? (see Fig. 71)

33. Below, are listed some of the issues that the PhD Chapter focuses on. How important do you think each one is?

- Monitoring PhD students workload/departmental duties to ensure a good balance. (see Fig. 72)
- Including courses in general skills (such as management, communication, and entrepreneurship) within PhD programmes. (see Fig. 73)
- Offering of relevant pedagogical training for PhD students that have teaching obligations/interests. (see Fig. 74)
- Creating opportunities for PhD students to network across departments and research fields. (see Fig. 75)
- Possibility to learn Swedish as part of PhD programmes and/or departmental duties. (see Fig. 76)
- English language as the discussion language in official meetings to make it easier for PhD students to be representatives. (see Fig. 77)
- Ensure PhD student representation on every level (from division to central and national level) and make sure representatives on all levels are time-compensated for commission of trust positions. (see Fig. 78)

34. Are there other issues that the PhD Chapter should focus on?

35. What type of events would you like the PhD Chapter to offer?

In addition to presenting charts for each of the asked statements in question 32, Fig. 79 presents the minimum, first quartile, median, third quartile, and a maximum of the values attributed to each of the seven stated focus issues. It shows the importance that the respondents give to each one of the stated focus issues, easily comparable to each other. The ones that were considered to be most important, in terms of median and quartile values were “PhD Chapter monitors the workload/departmental duties to ensure a good balance” and “Ensuring PhD student representation on every level”, but all of the stated issues were considered very important, with the lowest median being five out of seven.

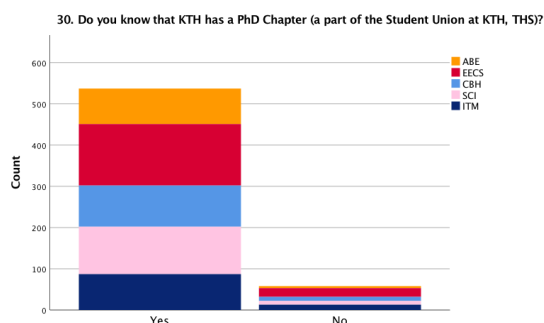


Figure 69

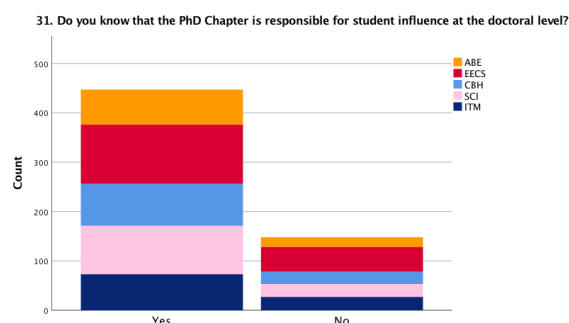


Figure 70

32. Do you know that the PhD Chapter has a local council for each school and local representatives for each programme/department?

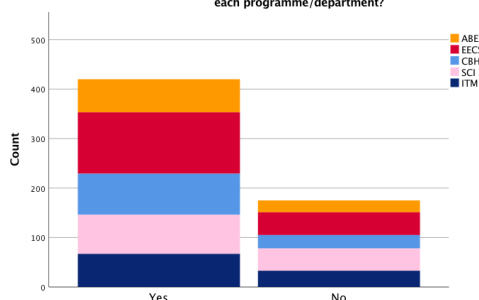


Figure 71

Monitoring PhD students workload/departmental duties to ensure a good balance.

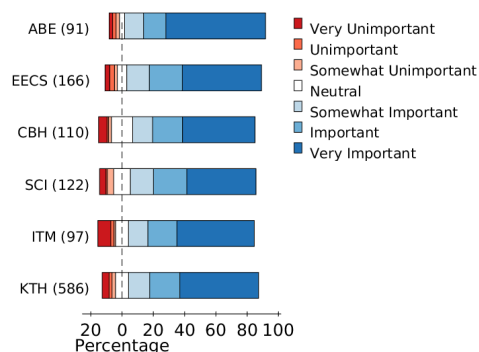


Figure 72

Including courses in general skills (such as management, communication and entrepreneurship) within PhD programmes.

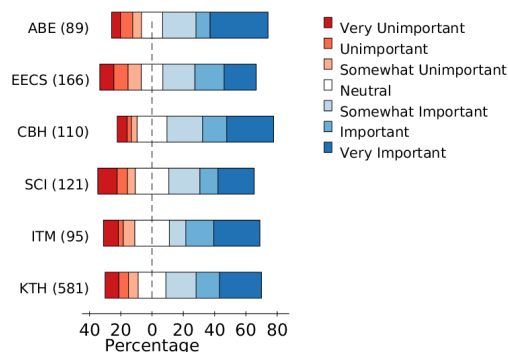


Figure 73

Offering of relevant pedagogical training for PhD students that have teaching obligations/interests.

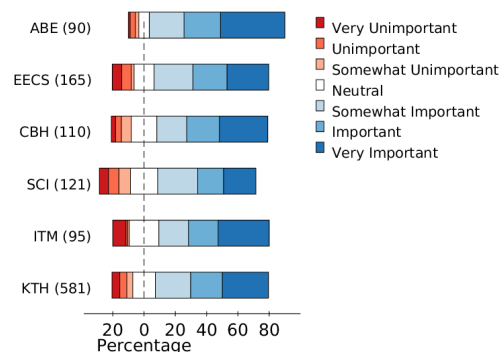


Figure 74

Creating opportunities for PhD students to network across departments and research fields.

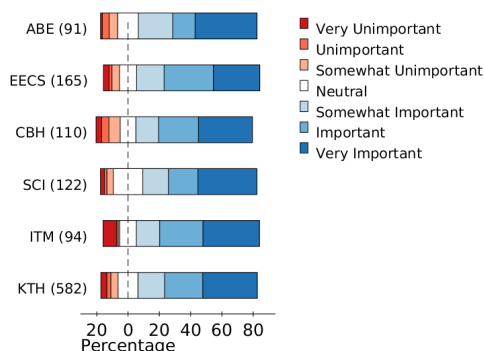


Figure 75

Possibility to learn Swedish as part of PhD programmes and/or departmental duties.

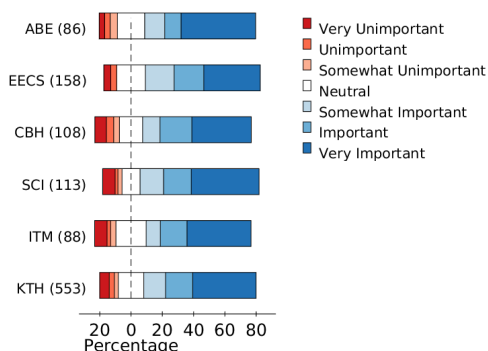


Figure 76

English language as the discussion language in official meetings to make it easier for PhD students to be representatives.

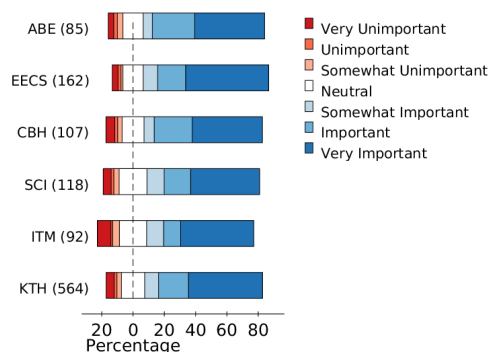


Figure 77

Ensure PhD student representation on every level and make sure that they are time-compensated for their commission of trust position

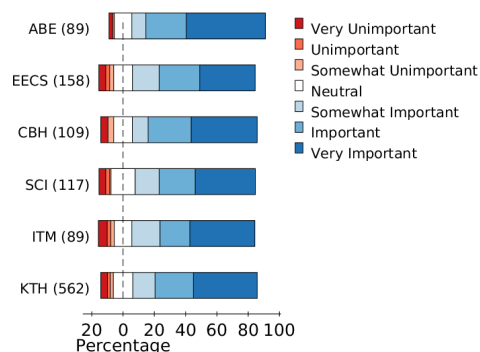


Figure 78

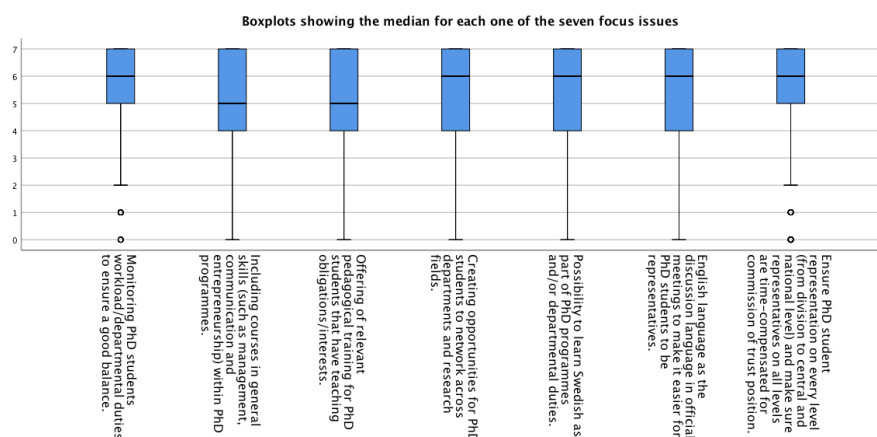


Figure 79

Summary of Responses - Comments Regarding Q33

Learning Swedish as part of PhD programmes and/or departamental duties: The respondents considered that having the possibility to learn Swedish as part of their third cycle education program was very important and that basic language courses should be an option for students from all schools. A point to notice was that the respondents mentioned that the courses should be offered for free. For example, since the Swedish course for employees is charged on the group and is given during work hours, some students feel that they should not attend it because their supervisors do not encourage it, giving them a disadvantage compared to other students. Further, it was mentioned that the Swedish language courses should, at least in some cases, could be part of departamental duties.

English language as the discussion language in official meetings: As a government body, KTH can be considered to be run in Swedish. So while it makes sense to have Swedish as the official language, the respondents consider that there should be a Swedish “ground truth version” of documents, but have these documents translated to English as well. However, it was also mentioned that not all documents are translated into English. In

this case, many people don't have access to the documents so many times ideas are passed by hear-say and not by the real written truth. The solution to this problem will be to ensure that the official documents are also translated into English and made available.

Role of PhD student representatives: Some respondents considered that the role of PhD student representatives was not clear, and others believe that focusing on outcomes could perhaps be more important than on decision-making. The PhD Chapter could improve its influence and visibility by contributing to the awareness regarding common traits and issues in the doctoral study experience. That would influence external stakeholders, such as policymakers, funding agencies, alumni, those who intend to have careers in academia, and the general audience.

Ensure base level rights and obligations for doctoral students: It was stated by the respondents that the PhD Chapter should ensure that the rights of the doctoral students that arrive at KTH are clear and fulfilled by the hosting program/division/department/school, and that the students are aware of their obligations. A proposed solution to this problem, as proposed by the respondents, was to further define what the base level rights are and, if something is currently missing from them, what they should be. This was suggested to in particular include industrial and scholarship funded doctoral students. Further, it was suggested that KTH should have an introduction to doctoral studies for new students that is given by employees who are not supervisors or direct managers, but for example HR personnel, in order to establish a general understanding of the PhD process. Something else that was highlighted as important was to explain the rights that someone working and living in Sweden has, and, for example, give materials, like a brochure, to show how things work for different types of doctoral student positions. It was also mentioned that conducting surveys like this one is fundamental.

Salary and measurements of progression: In KTH there are different criteria for the progression of PhD student salaries - be based on the time from admission, on publications, or based on the supervisor's opinion on the student improvement -. This creates inequality. A solution to avoid discrimination and inequality may pass by making sure that the salary increase is time-based for everyone. Another point mentioned by the respondents was that the salary negotiations could be improved, based on the fact that the last PhD stage got a 0% raise in the 2018 negotiations. It was also mentioned that the salaries could be more at-par with equivalent positions in the private sector. Lastly, it was mentioned that the salaries for those who hold a scholarship as PhD funding should be improved since the amount is insufficient to support their study.

Mental health: This was a point mentioned by many respondents, also in this section as an issue the PhD Chapter should focus on. A proposed solution, by the respondent, could be for the PhD Chapter to facilitate discussion and awareness by organizing workshops and counseling sessions and/or sharing sessions between students.

Help and guidance: Respondents mentioned the lack of help and support groups that exist during the PhD. A suggestion from the respondents was to create simple ways to find groups of students that are having the same problems, and make a group to overcome

them together. The PhD chapter could also help in monitoring not just workload, but also monitoring and making surveys about any problems that could happen during the doctoral studies. This would mean having an active voice on students' work overload. Another suggestion is to create a "Guide on how to do a PhD", that would include for example good practices, and experiences from former students.

Supervision: Many respondents mentioned the dissatisfaction with the role of their supervisors during their doctoral studies. A proposed solution by the respondents was to find a way to increase the competence and helpfulness of supervisors. Also, it could be good to ensure support for 'doctoral student - supervisor' conflicts, since very often people are left one-on-one. Some proposed solutions would be to create independent committees monitoring these relations. It would help doctoral students to feel less alone when they have issues with their supervision and ensure better control of the relationship between supervisors and doctoral students. It would also be good to offer possibilities to contact other people when supervisors cannot help. A first step would be to promote discussions in the faculty about what good supervision looks like, and promote such practices among all supervisors. For example, a code of conduct for supervisors, including what are the key principles of supervision, a definition of a supervisor's duties and role, etc. Finally, it was requested to enforce more strict and clear rules about supervision, and requirements for graduating.

Career counseling: During the course of doctoral studies, the students are not guided through career opportunities, and this is extremely important. To improve this the PhD Chapter could arrange talks by alumni coming to KTH both from industry and academia to talk about their experiences and answer the questions that the students might have.

Scholarship and non-EU/EEA doctoral students: Non-EU/EEA doctoral students face many problems regarding VISA and travel restrictions that often people do not know how to solve, so they would like to have standardized instructions for handling common cases of academic travel laid out at the KTH level. It should also be given support for doctoral students who are on scholarships since they feel that they have little support through the administration. They would like discussions regarding their salary and benefits such as wellness activities, and they don't have the KTH system for travel money return, which uses a lot of their time in filling forms. They also have to pay for the language courses themselves.

Summary of Responses Q35

This Question yielded 137 valid responses. Out of these 74 responses suggested that PhD Chapter must offer more social activities. The PhD Chapter pubs and mingle stand out to be the most popular demand with 20 specific mentions. Though, a few responses also suggested organizing more non-alcoholic mingle events. Some other suggestions were to organize board games or movie nights (13 responses) and sports events (10 responses). Apart from social

events, there were also suggestions to organize events related to networking with industry for future careers, there were 34 such specific suggestions.

Seminars, training, and skills-based events were also suggested. There were 30 suggestions in this regard. Some broad categories of suggestions included: lunch/breakfast seminars, events concerning stress management, software training events or transferable skills like programming. Some suggestions specific to doctoral studies included seminars or training on academic writing, presentation of doctoral research, for instance, a “pitching PhD Research” event and lectures or experience sharing for grant applications.

Lastly, there were also suggestions concerning events focused on the assimilation of foreign doctoral students (7 responses) and conducting an introduction event for new doctoral students (6 responses).

10.2 Analysis of Results and Recommendations

Learning Swedish as part of PhD programmes and/or departmental duties:

The PhD Chapter suggests either to allow the inclusion of Swedish courses in the ISP for students who do not speak Swedish and are interested or to consider such courses as part of departmental duties in connection to the teaching activities in the first and second cycle. The PhD Chapter emphasizes that all doctoral students (regardless of their research topic and funding situation) should be given the possibility to enroll in Swedish courses if they wish. To give doctoral students with teaching duties (where Swedish is required) the possibility to learn Swedish as part of the departmental duties is a proposed step forward.

English language as the discussion language in the official meetings:

The language barrier can make it hard for non-Swedish speakers to get access to the right information (such as subject-specific study plans) and to also be represented in official meetings. To promote a better diversity in who can become a doctoral representative, the PhD Chapter would also argue for a more inclusive approach when it comes to the discussion language.

Role of PhD student representatives:

The PhD Chapter would like to acknowledge that representation is a key element in student influence. It is crucial that doctoral students (through the PhD Chapter and THS) are both invited to and given the possibility to take an active role in the meetings where decisions that influence doctoral students are prepared or decided. This standpoint is also mentioned in the new guideline on student influence V-2019-0605. To be invited is the first thing, but in order to be a good representative, it is also important that all representatives are given the time to prepare and be part of the meetings. Currently, KTH only has a decision regarding prolongation (including a yearly budget) for doctoral students engaged at the central and national level (V-2016-0451) and no decision regarding representation at the school level. The PhD Chapter would urge KTH to rewrite this decision so that it includes representatives at all levels. It should also be made clear how the process around the prolongation work and where the funding for the prolongation comes from. Without this decision, the doctoral student representatives are at risk of having their commission of trust positions as an add-on to their third cycle education without the time being accounted for. Student influence at the doctoral level can not be viewed as sustainable nor well functioning if the representatives are not given the time required to fulfill their work task.

Ensure base level rights and obligations for doctoral students: The PhD Chapter would like to further point towards the importance of a good introduction for newly admitted doctoral students. We have some information regarding this on our webpage, and KTH also offers information related to this at the intranet. The PhD Chapter would, nevertheless, like to see this information made more accessible and visible to the doctoral students and would very much like to collaborate on this. We also do believe that conducting surveys and being a more integrated part of the quality insurance system, will also help facilitate better follow-up processes within third cycle education.

Salary and measurements of progression: The PhD Chapter would like to recognize that the question on salary is a matter typically discussed within the labour unions, and not within the student union. We would, however, be very positive towards clearer guidelines regarding the progression of doctoral studies. As far as the current regulation is concerned, it is said to be based either on goals mentioned in the ISP of the student and in case that is missing, to be solely time-based. The responses to this survey do, however, imply that the individual set goals can differ and be experienced as unequally high, and in that sense, a purely time-based model would be fairer. In any case, the PhD chapter recommends that if a doctoral programme has specific requirements, this should be stated in the subject-specific study plan (ASP).

Mental health: Since approximately 1/3 of the respondents stated to have experienced health issues due to their work (Fig. 50), it is vitally important to spread awareness about how to recognize symptoms related to mental health, how to seek help, preventative measures that can be taken and tools for ensuring a balance between work and private life. It is therefore important to spread awareness and improve counseling. From the survey results, there are clear issues with stress and mental health for many doctoral students at KTH. The PhD Chapter would like to contribute to the work for improvement, however, we would also encourage the HR units at KTH to try to tackle this problem and work collaboratively with us on this matter.

Help and guidance: The PhD Chapter appreciates the suggestions that were brought forward by the respondents. The doctoral student advisor is a great resource for doctoral students who need personal help and guidance. The PhD Chapter board acknowledges that the networking aspect has not been as apparent in PhD Chapter as required. In this aspect, improvements and efforts should be made during the upcoming academic year. The SULF's handbook on how to do a PhD is, however, already uploaded on our website.

Supervision: The PhD Chapter would like to acknowledge that there is a requirement for the main supervisor to have taken a course in supervision. It is also important to give doctoral students the possibility to raise issues with the supervision to someone else than their supervisor. The PhD Chapter suggests that the programme responsible for each third cycle education programme should take an active role in this regard and facilitates such discussions. Sharing of experience between supervisors and spreading best practices should also be encouraged. At the KTH central level, the PhD Chapter is very positive about the new initiative for a network between the PAs, especially when it comes to third-cycle education.

Career counseling: The PhD Chapter appreciates the suggestion and would like to include this type of activity in both central and school-specific settings, such as doctoral student days and events. The PhD Chapter would be very happy to have a PhD student counselor. For first and second cycle students, each programme has its own student counselor, and even if the demand is different for third-cycle students, this could be something for KTH to also look into.

Scholarship and non-EU/EEA doctoral students: The results of this survey indicate that this group of doctoral students have to face more problems than KTH-employed doctoral students. Special attention should be directed to these issues and doctoral students belonging to this group should also be given the opportunity to be represented when policy documents, process descriptions, and similar matters regarding these type of issues are discussed and decided on. Specifically, when it comes to the admin aspects, doctoral student representatives should be invited. Since the change in the law in year 2018, newly admitted doctoral students' salary has to be at the same level as hired doctoral students, and they also have to be insured so that their studies can be prolonged if they have been on sick leave or parental leave. However, for doctoral students admitted before the change in the law, the salary is still considerably lower compared to fully employed doctoral students.

Events: The PhD Chapter would like to thank all the respondents who provided suggestions for future events. The proposals should be taken into considerations for future initiatives by the PhD Chapter board of 2020-21 academic year. Some suggested events are/have already been offered but continuity and regularity of those are recommended.

11 Conclusions and Final Remarks

This report provides a fairly detailed picture of the conditions of the doctoral students at KTH during the period of November-December 2019 (when the survey was conducted). In general, a majority of KTH's doctoral students seems to be doing rather good, but there is also scope for improvements in some critical areas. From 595 respondents, the PhD Chapter would like to conclude by a short summary of the main issues that have been identified:

1. The importance and use of the ISP should be further communicated and highlighted to both doctoral students and supervisors.
2. The eISP-system could and should be improved, and a doctoral student representative should be invited to participate when updates are discussed and/or decided on.
3. Subject specific study plans (ASPs) needs to be established for every subject and should be easy to find.
4. Departmental duties should be reported and accounted for all doctoral students. If doctoral students are forced to spend more time than prognoses on departmental duties, they should be compensated.

5. The supervisors are very important for the doctoral students and also, sadly the stated cause of many concerns. Spreading of best practices among supervisors and training/discussion forums for supervisors are strongly encouraged. The survey results also revealed that many doctoral students do not meet with all of their supervisors and that the distribution between the supervisor's time differs from what is stated from the ISP.
6. Information about courses, course evaluations, and course analysis have been identified as particular problematic across KTH. This is an area which the PhD Chapter would like KTH to prioritize on. A new financial model for offering third cycle education could be one way to facilitate a change.
7. Many of KTH's doctoral students report being stressed due to work and report working overtime in any typical week. This is alarming and KTH (as well as the PhD Chapter) should actively work to address this by promoting and facilitating healthy and sustainable work cultures and environments.
8. All doctoral students should be given the opportunity to participate in yearly follow-up meetings with someone other than their supervisors, which is currently not the case for a very large fraction of doctoral students.
9. Administration and education support to doctoral students, especially to non-EU/EEA students, could and should be improved.
10. It is alarming that around one in five doctoral students does not regard their work-place as being free from discrimination. KTH needs to work actively with these questions and information on how and to who one should report an incident need to be easier to find and also talked about during the introduction.
11. The introduction for doctoral students should be made equivalent across schools and not depend on which school a doctoral student belongs to.

In addition to these, the PhD Chapter has also gained validation on the importance of the issues we have and are still focusing on. The survey results suggests that the stated areas are considered to be of importance to the doctoral students at KTH. Those are:

1. Monitoring PhD students workload/departmental duties to ensure a good balance.
2. Including courses in general skills (such as management, communication, and entrepreneurship) within PhD programmes.
3. Offering of relevant pedagogical training for PhD students that have teaching obligations/interests.
4. Creating opportunities for PhD students to network across departments, research fields, and industry.
5. Possibility to learn Swedish as part of PhD programmes and/or departmental duties.

6. English language as the discussion language in official meetings to make it easier for PhD students to be representatives.
7. Ensure PhD student representation on every level (from division to central and national level) and make sure representatives on all levels are time-compensated for their commission of trust positions.

To facilitate student influence at the doctoral level, the PhD Chapter would further like to highlight the last point, the importance of time compensation for doctoral student representatives, at national, KTH central, and KTH school level. It is of concern that KTH currently only has a decision regarding prolongation for national and central level. This is a huge obstacle for many doctoral students who are or would like to be engaged in the PhD Chapter at the school level.

We would also like to conclude by thanking all doctoral students who filled out the survey and especially thank them for all the suggestions for future events. We hope to see a healthy participation of the doctoral students at the PhD Chapter's future events.