

# Operational Plan 2020/2021



Antagen av doktorandsektionens styrelse den 14 september 2020 och gäller till 30 juni 2021.

Enacted by PhD Chapter board on the 14th of September 2020 and shall henceforth be valid until 30th of June 2021 unless amended, replaced or repealed.

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**Doktorandsektionen vid Tekniska Högskolans Studentkår**

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## Document History

Version	Description, By	Date
Dr2020-CP-01	Drafted jointly as a shared document by the PhD Chapter Board of Academic Year 2020/2021 and adopted by the PhD Chapter Board Meeting of the 14th September 2020	14th September 2020
Dr2020-PB-01	Diary number changed from Dr2020-CP-01 to Dr2020-PB-01 by Gloria Samosir	1st October 2020



## Nomenclature

KTH: Kungliga tekniska högskolan (The Royal Institute of Technology)

FR: Fakultetsrådet (The faculty council)

US: Universitetsstyrelsen (The university board)

THS: Tekniska högskolans studentkår (KTH student union)

Dr/THS: Doktorandsektionen vid Tekniska Högskolans Studentkår (PhD chapter at KTH)

KS: Kårstyrelsen (The union's board)

KL: Kårledning (The union's management team)

KF: Kårfullmäktige (The union council or the general assembly)

CFU: Chef för utbildningsinflytande (Head of educational affairs)

PAD: Program ansvarig doktorand (PhD student representative for the program)

DrInK: Doktorand Integrerade Klubbmästeriet (Master of ceremonies group)

SFS: Sveriges förenade studentkårer (The Swedish National Union of Students)

SSCO: Stockholms studentkårer centralorganisation (Stockholm's student unions central organisation)

STAD: Stockholm förebygger alkohol- och drogproblem (Stockholm prevention of alcohol and drug problems)



## Background

The objectives of the PhD Chapter are to promote more effective and higher quality PhD education and research, promote a stimulating work environment, and improve the general conditions for its members. The PhD Chapter should also work toward fostering greater unity and fellowship among its members.

The purpose of the operational plan is to guide the executive work of the board of directors throughout the operational year 2020/2021. The creation of the operational plan was started on the introduction day for operational year 2020/2021, which was held on the 12th of August 2020. All elected board members **Gloria Samosir, Mohit Daga, Saiman Ding, Tharagan Kumar, Tanja Richter, Inês De Miranda De Matos Lourenço, Deniz Yildiz, and Sofia Broomé** participated in the development of the operational plan.

## Focus Areas for 2020/2021

### Social Events and Collaborations

This year, the PhD Chapter aims to put significant effort into organizing social events and activities for its members. A variety of ideas are in the works, including pub & quiz nights, a mentor (or “buddy”) program for new students, picnic lunches, and other kinds of social mingles. The PhD Chapter can expand its network and increase its outreach by collaborating with other established groups that share an interest in enhancing the well-being and social scene for KTH doctoral students, including THS, KTH Relocation, and labor unions. For example, the Chapter is currently working with KTH Relocation to organize social activities with a focus on well-being, such as hikes in the forest and guided tours. The Chapter has started collaborating with the THS International Reception management team to start a tradition of holding a Reception for new doctoral students. This would allow new students to be introduced to the PhD Chapter and its goals from the beginning. The Chapter also hopes to work with other activity groups at KTH (e.g. KTH outdoors, KTHSS), and increase doctoral students’ participation in these groups. Furthermore, the Chapter shall aim to create a platform to connect the doctoral students on a common platform where fellowship among the students is promoted.

In order to allow the PhD pubs to be organized sustainably, the Chapter should ensure that there is ample promotion through our communication channels (e.g. social media, newsletters, emails, etc.) to fill positions of Master of Ceremonies.



## Educational Advocacy

Section §4a of Chapter 1 of the Högskolelag<sup>1</sup> (1992:1434) states “The students shall have the right to exercise influence over the education at the higher education institutions.” The PhD Chapter is part of the student union at KTH (THS - Tekniska högskolans studentkår). THS is responsible for student influence at all levels of education, including third-cycle education. In the last academic year, THS has delegated the PhD Chapter to represent the doctoral students and appoint representatives for them. This was done via a decision of the THS Board dated 12th December 2019<sup>2</sup>.

### Central Level Representation

The PhD Chapter representatives in central level bodies of KTH shall engage in dialogues in connection to subjects that include but are not limited to Doctoral Courses, Supervision, Individual Study Plan, Stress and Well Being and Subject Study Plan. The Doctoral Student Survey Report - Recommendations<sup>3</sup>, which is based on a student survey conducted in Nov-Dec 2019 and published in June 2020, can serve as a basis for selecting doctoral issues to highlight at relevant forums. The PhD Chapter's representatives shall actively engage the different bodies of KTH and present issues concerning the doctoral students. The Chapter shall place consultation with school councils as a matter of paramount importance, particularly for representations about doctoral student issues in all major work-groups, which emanates from the central organizational bodies of KTH including the third-cycle education committee.

The Chapter shall actively work to anticipate future issues about doctoral education, and raise it appropriately at different forums of KTH. The current reality of the global Coronavirus pandemic will continue to impact the doctoral students' work situation, e.g. transforming or restricting how teaching or research is conducted. It is critical that doctoral students' voices and perspectives are an active part of shaping how these challenges are dealt with.

### School Level Representation

The PhD Chapter shall work with the various School Councils and coordinate appropriately. The Chapter shall encourage the School Councils to use the aforementioned Doctoral Student Survey Report - Recommendations to highlight doctoral student issues. Furthermore, the Chapter shall constantly seek feedback from the school councils to understand issues faced by them and raise them appropriately at central bodies of KTH. The Chapter shall work with School Councils in ensuring proper representation. For details see section on Council Coordination.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.uhr.se/en/start/laws-and-regulations/Laws-and-regulations/The-Swedish-Higher-Education-Act/#chapter1>

<sup>2</sup> <https://cdn.thskth.se/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/ks06-1920-handlingar.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.dr.kth.se/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2020/06/Report\\_on\\_Survey\\_Results.pdf](https://www.dr.kth.se/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2020/06/Report_on_Survey_Results.pdf)



## Supervisor of the Year Award

To promote good supervision at the third cycle level at KTH, the PhD Chapter Board of Academic Year 2019/20 had proposed to give out the Supervisor of the Year Award. The rules for this award were decided by the PhD Chapter Board Meeting held on 23rd April 2019<sup>4</sup>.

In this academic year, the PhD Chapter shall invite the nominations for the inaugural Supervisor of the Year Award. The Chapter shall engage the School Councils and seek possible coordination regarding this award. The Chapter shall work in cohesion with THS and respective bodies at KTH to ensure that the Supervisor of the Year Award is given at an official KTH Ceremony.

## Professional Development

The PhD Chapter shall work to facilitate the professional development of doctoral students. One of the prime focus areas would be to work with THS Armada to find career opportunities for the doctoral students. The THS Armada career fair is the largest career fair in Scandinavia. In 2020, this career fair will take place virtually. The PhD Chapter Board shall strive to work with THS Armada to ensure that doctoral students could find career opportunities via THS Armada's virtual fair. The Chapter will aim for continued collaboration with THS Armada for 2021, the planning of which will begin in March 2021.

Still with a focus on improving doctoral students' contact and collaboration with external research bodies and industry, the PhD Chapter will explore possibilities of organizing workshops or discussions with invited speakers. The Chapter will also look into creating discussion spaces that explore the idea of "communicating research for a popular audience," an important question for many academic researchers.

## Council Coordination

During the previous mandate period, there has been improved coordination between the PhD Chapter and the school councils. This year, the Chapter hopes to continue to strengthen this relationship. The council coordinator will continue to serve as a point of contact for all doctoral school councils and ensure that there is synchrony between central and local representation. The Chapter aims to hold a "PAD Workshop Day" (an idea which has been floated around in previous terms) this year, an event in which doctoral student representatives from all parts of KTH can learn more about the purpose and possibilities of their role. The precise format of the "PAD Workshop Day" is subject to the constraints of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. If circumstances allow it, the event could be conducted as a full-day lunch to lunch event with an overnight stay at a venue in Stockholm, and

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.dr.kth.se/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2020/04/Meeting-20200423-Minutes.pdf>



could double as the 40th Birthday Celebration of the Chapter (a plan that was postponed from academic year 19-20).

The Chapter also hopes to present a modest grant opportunity for school councils, in which the PhD Chapter would support some school-level initiatives. The awarding of this grant would be contingent on the submission of a feasible proposal by the PhD school councils intended to benefit the doctoral student community at their particular school.

Furthermore, the Chapter will continue to advocate for comprehensive student representation at all levels of KTH. To that end, the Chapter shall encourage the school councils that a doctoral student representative (PAD) is appointed for every program. The PhD Chapter Board shall ensure that free and fair elections are held for all these positions.

In order to facilitate school-level event management efforts, the Chapter shall encourage the school councils to nominate student representatives to undertake STAD training with support from the PhD Chapter. STAD is a qualification that allows a person to operate a pub in student areas at KTH. STAD-holding student representatives would thus be able to make use of the Chapter Hall, T-Centralen (for example) to host school-level events, hopefully improving doctoral student life at KTH and bolstering the relationship between the PhD Chapter and school councils.

## Communication

The PhD Chapter aims to strategically improve communication strategies to reach a wider audience and raise awareness of the Chapter and its work. The PhD Chapter's communication strategy for these efforts will greatly focus on its established social media presence (e.g. Facebook) and website (dr.kth.se). Occasional emails will be primarily used to introduce new doctoral students to the PhD Chapter and refer to social media and the PhD Chapter website for further information. The Chapter plans to gradually improve our website to provide a more up-to-date appearance and user-friendly interface. In addition, the Chapter aims to create an introduction video of the PhD Chapter, which can be added to our Facebook page and website, and shared with our collaborators, such as KTH Relocation.

### Information Dissemination

Another focus area for communication between the PhD Chapter and doctoral students will entail the transmission of important information. The Chapter will prioritize creating guides and flyers that can be distributed among the doctoral students. This material could include:

- A guide on "How to do a PhD", with experiences and stories from alumni.





- A flyer with information about the social groups and services that exist at KTH (e.g. counselling, the doctoral Student Advisor), as well as entities that new students might find beneficial to join, e.g. the Student Union, SSSB, a labor union, A-kassa, etc.
- A flyer about the PhD Chapter itself; the activities that the chapter is planning, its new ideas (e.g. the FAQ, the survey), its goals, contact details of its board members, etc.

These could be distributed to the students during our events and printed and placed in different parts of KTH, as well as posted on our website.

## Treasury and Finance

At present, the PhD Chapter only receives their share of member fees from THS. However, it is matter of fact, that every other Chapter, in addition to THS member fees, receives an annual grant from KTH to support their activities. The Chapter aims to rectify this discrepancy during the coming year. Having additional financial resources would allow the PhD Chapter to pursue more initiatives (academic, social, and professional) for the benefit of doctoral students at KTH.

Currently, the PhD Chapter's payment system could at times be inconvenient to use, as it requires an individual to cover Chapter expenses upfront and claim reimbursement later. This year, the Chapter will look into obtaining SWISH or other bank account or debit card options that would allow for more hassle-free transactions, though the Chapter has to weigh additional fees involved (if any) against the value of increased convenience.

## Sustainable Engagement

Section §4a of Chapter 1 of the Högskolelag<sup>5</sup> (1992:1434) states "The higher education institutions shall work to ensure that the students take an active part in the work of further developing the education. Lag (2000: 260)." Further, Section §7 of Chapter 5 of the Högskoleförordning<sup>6</sup> (1993:100), includes elected positions in Student Union as a possible ground on which the employment of doctoral students may exceed more than the ordinary stipulated time.

Adequate time compensation for doctoral students working in commission of trust positions shall be a critical issue for the PhD Chapter. A workgroup addressing this very matter has been initiated by Forskarutbildningsutskottet (Third Cycle Education Committee), in which the Chapter Board has a representative. The Chapter hopes that a fair, transparent, well-defined, and standard process for securing time compensation for doctoral student representatives across all parts of KTH will be achieved during this year.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.uhr.se/en/start/laws-and-regulations/Laws-and-regulations/The-Swedish-Higher-Education-Act/#chapter1>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.uhr.se/en/start/laws-and-regulations/Laws-and-regulations/The-Higher-Education-Ordinance/#chapter5>