

Board Report

Mandate: July 2019 - June 2020



The Phd chapter at KTH/ Doktorandsektionen vid Tekniska Högskolans Studentkår

A report summarising chapter operations within the mandate period July 2019 - June 2020 on which basis, freedom of responsibility shall be assessed.

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Document versions

Version	By/comments	Date
Initial draft	Emma Riese, initial version	2020-09-17
Dr2020-PB-04	Emma Riese, after feedback from Tage Mohammadat and Mohit Daga	2020-09-22

Purpose

A chapter board report is a summary and analysis of the activities performed by the chapter during the past year. It shall account for the number of meetings and actions that have been performed during the past mandate year. The purpose of this document is also to be a background for the auditors' report. Further, the THS By-Laws¹ (via §9.1.1.) mandates each chapter to write an annual report, as does the PhD Chapters' statutes. This report has been written by Emma Riese who was the chairperson for the PhD Chapter for the mandate year 2019/2020 and the vice chairs Tage Mohammadat (2019) and Mohit Daga (2020), have also given feedback and contributed to the final version of the report.

Background

The mandate period 201907-202006, was the first year in which we used the new board member definitions (that was decided by the previous board 2019), where every board member had a certain focus area. It was also the first year we used the split mandate periods, meaning that half of the board members' positions had a mandate period January- December and the other half July - June. One reason for implementing this change was to have better continuity in the board. In the beginning of this mandated period, the board was, however, quite small, and half the positions were vacant. This led to a huge workload on some of the board members, especially when it came to representation in central committees and some of these positions were also left vacant during 2019. In 2020, new board members were elected and while other board members finished their mandate period or chose to resign from their position. In the next section, all elected officials during the year are presented.

Overall, I feel very proud and appreciative of all the work the PhD Chapter has done during my mandate period as the chairperson. The majority of the board work has been around two broad focus areas: "Visibility and social events" and "Educational Advocacy". In the following sections you will find an account on the Chapter board activities, and in the attachment you will find a more detailed description based on our operational plan called the "[Activity report](#)".

Elected officials during 2019/2020

PhD Chapter Board of Directors

Chairperson	Emma Riese
Vice-Chairperson	Tage Mohammadat (2019) Mohit Daga (2020)
Treasurer	Tharagan Kumar (2020)
Webmaster	Karl Johan Westrin

¹ https://cdn.thskth.se/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/THS_Reglemente_180515_ENG.pdf

Educational Manager	Kasra Khatami Mashhadi (from July 2019 - February 2020) Gloria Samosir (from March 2020)
Communication Manager	Lorenzo Marchetti (January 2020- May 2020)
Event Manager	Rinat Yapprov (2019) Deniz Yildiz (from March 2020)
Council Coordinator	Alessandro Enrico
Workgroup Manager	Mohit Daga (from October 2019- December 2020) Sofia Broomé (from March 2020)
Business Liason	Ines De Miranda De Matos Lourenço (from March 2020)

The PhD Chapter Board held 20 board meetings during the mandate, all meeting was documented and minutes are available at our website <https://www.dr.kth.se/minutes/>

PhD Chapter Functionaries

THS Student Council (KF) Representative	Ksenia Loskutova
Auditor	Erik Merkus
Deputy Auditor	Felix Wilk
Nominating Committee	Tage Mohammadat Robin Palmberg Kateryna Morozovska Rinat Yapprov
Master of Ceremonies	Federico Rorro
Standard Bearer	Robin Palmberg (2019) Emma Riese (2020)
Vice Standard Bearer	Kateryna Morozovska (2019) Tage Mohammadat (2020)
Head of Female Doctoral Committee (WoP)	Inês De Miranda De Matos Lourenço (2020)

KTH Central Representatives	Representative
University Board (US)	Emma Riese

Strategic Council (SR)	Emma Riese
Faculty Council (FR)	Tage Mohammadat (2019) Mohit Daga (2020)
Future Faculty Group	Tage Mohammadat (2019) Mohit Daga (2020)
Language Committee	Sofia Broomé (from March 2020)
Education Committee (UN)	Kasra Khatami Mashhadi (from July 2019 - February 2020) Gloria Samosir (from March 2020)
Third-cycle Education Committee (FU)	Emma Riese
Central Grants Committee	Rinat Yapprov (2019) Mohit Daga (2020)
KTH Sustainability Council	Kasra Khatami Mashhadi (from July 2019 - February 2020) Deniz Yildiz (from March 2020)
Scholarship Committee	Rinat Yapporov (2019) Mohit Daga (2020)

Account on Financial Operations

During the mandate year of 2018/2019 the PhD Chapter board did not manage to get access to the chapter's bank accounts. This resulted in a long back-log of unpaid reimbursement, especially troublesome was an unpaid invoice for the WOP@KTH- retreat that was budget and granted during spring 2019, but not paid until July 2019. It was all sorted by the chairperson, once we got access to the bank account. Since the treasurer position was also vacant during 2019, the chairperson and vice chairperson were then the signatories for the chapter (which is according to our statutes). To deal with all transactions, from the previous and present mandate period, we developed a system for how to number and account for transactions and developed and decided on an outlay-form that had to be filled in for reimbursements.

In total 13 390 SEK has been spent on Chapter activity, mainly on food during events for members and PhD Chapter board/School council presidium. For a full report see, attachment [Expenses and Income of 2019/2020](#).

Account on Educational Advocacy and Representation

During this mandate period, the chapter board continued the work of the previous board in attending and representing at committees, councils and workgroups we are invited to attend/appoint a doctoral student representative to. During the fall

2019, UKÄ visited KTH to evaluate the quality insurance system, where we as part of THS, also ensured doctoral students were interviewed and heard. In the spring of 2020, before the corona outbreak, a new network for program responsibilities at the third-cycle level was formed, and we, naturally, attended the first meeting. Due to corona, this network was later (temporarily) merged together to form a network for all levels of education, to discuss and deal with transformations and that had to be made due to the pandemic. On the school-level, we have also worked to allow PhD student school council members to (finally) be invited to the Qualitative dialogues and also to the newly started School Collegiums. During the fall 2020, we also started to put together time-compensation reports and prognosis for school level representatives, in close collaboration with PhD students' school councils. We have also pushed for a new decision regarding time-compensation for doctoral students in the commission of trust positions (currently the decision KTH has is only for central and national representation), and a working group was going to be appointed and start working during the spring. It was, however, postponed until the fall semester 2020. In addition to the above mentioned representational duties, we have also been part of workgroups regarding KTH's survey to doctoral student alumni, syllabus for third-cycle subject (allmänna studieplaner, ASP), the formation of the ethics committee at KTH, and gave feedback on a number of documents including a draft for the new language policy and guidelines for scientific publications.

The year's largest project has been the "Doctoral student survey" that was sent out to all active doctoral students at KTH in late 2019, and then results were then analyzed and summarized by the board members in a [report²](#) that was published in June. The survey was a very successful way of reaching out to the doctoral students and also in identifying issues and areas in which KTH and the chapter are already doing well. It has been a great tool for student influence and helped us representatives to be better representatives. When the corona pandemic broke out, we also took part in extra meetings regarding thesis defenses online, and put together a survey where doctoral students could tell us more about how their doctoral education (mainly regarding research, departmental duties and courses) were affected. This survey was mainly distributed by the help of the school council. In addition to sharing the collected data with doctoral representatives, THS and third-cycle education responsibilities at the schools, the results were [summarised and published³](#) in June 2020.

Account on Internal Affairs

During the year we have had good engagement from the members of the board, even if we have been a bit overworked at times when we had lots of vacant positions and lots of errands to handle. To allow new board members to get up to speed about the structure of the chapter and our roles, we started each semester with an introductory event, as board member training. We invited members from the THS Management team, our PhD student advisor and a past member of the PhD Chapter board to talk about their work and experience. In addition, we also conducted workshops where we developed and agreed on the operational plan for the year. We also had a fixed time for the board meetings and they occurred once every other week. Before each board meeting everyone was asked to report on their past activities (since the last meeting) before the meetings. These reports have also been added in the meeting minutes and was available to all board members to read upon before the meeting. All meeting minutes from these meetings, along with relevant documents such as decided PMs, have been published on our website. Some of the highlights would include updated working directives, a system for archiving PMs, Guide on Time compensation for PhD representatives at KTH, and our email-policy.

² https://www.dr.kth.se/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2020/06/Report_on_Survey_Results.pdf

³ https://www.dr.kth.se/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2020/06/Dr2020-PB-14_0001-Report-of-Survey-Results-Consequences-of-COVID-19.pdf

We have also worked more closely with the doctoral councils at the five schools, much through the council coordinator. In February-March, we also invited the presidiums of all the school councils to join us for a lunch meeting to talk about our work as board, and their work within the council.

Throughout the mandate period, we had an ongoing work of updating the communication channels for the chapter's representatives. We now have a more active Slack-channel where also school council representatives are active members, and the functional-emails are also used in communication both with KTH, PhD Chapter members and internally in the PhD Chapter board.

Account on External Affairs

During this mandate period, the chapter has worked extensively on gaining the trust from external partners, both at KTH and in the unions (including the student union), and also with other entities at other universities such as KI, SU, Handels and Södertörn with the "Sthlm PhDs" collaboration we have been part of. This work has been both meaningful and productive, as the awareness of our existence has increased tremendously. We had planned to host an event for doctoral students in Stockholm, together, during the spring 2020, but due to the pandemic, these plans were unfortunately canceled. Previously, the perception from both members, KTH and students at other University, might have been that we worked mainly with social events, such as pubs and parties, but now our other type of work, defending the rights of the doctoral students, has been more visible at KTH and within the Student Union THS. We wanted to improve student influence for PhD students and also raise doctoral student specific issues and problems, and in that regard, I think we have made some valuable progress during the year.

Account on Chapter Events for Members

During the academic year 2019/2020, we have held four chapter meetings, the last one was conducted through Zoom due to the corona pandemic. We also held a successful Ice skating event in December 2020. Before the outbreak of the Corona pandemic the Master of Ceremonies organized Chapter pubs (monthly or bi-monthly) in the Chapter hall. After the corona outbreak we moved to a digital version and hosted a virtual fika and AW.

Initially, we had a plan to organize some sort of Birthday celebration to acknowledge the PhD Chapter's 40th Birthday. Due to the lack of an event Manager, we instead moved our effort to initialize an award to acknowledge and praise good supervision in the third cycle level, the "Supervisor of the Year Award". During the spring semester 2020, we started to inform about the award and also decided on rules for how the award is going to be handed out, together with criteria for nominations. Unfortunately, time run out before we could see this whole process through, and this project has been handed over to the 20/21 PhD Chapter board.

Potential Future Activities and Recommendations

The chapter is a living entity, and it feels like the chapter got some new energy and direction during 2019/2020. Hopefully, the survey results can be useful also for the new board and used for comparison in the future if a new survey is sent out. I would also like to see the “Supervisor of the Year” Award be established and handed out, since I believe it would further strengthen the view of third-cycle education as education and allow for the spread of good practice. As the resigning board, we wish all the future boards the best of luck and look forward to watching the chapter grow stronger and evolve in the hands of newly elected board members!

On behalf of the resigning board,

Emma Riese
Chairperson 2019/2020
Stockholm, 31 October 2020

Attachments

Expenses and Income of 2019/2020

Background

During this year, we have had a result of 34 955 SEK. The money that has been spent during the year has mainly been spent on food during different events.

	Outgoing	Ingoing	Difference
Chapter Meeting costs (mainly food) for 3 meetings	3636		
Representation (fee for standard bearer and STAD training)	3462		
Board (food and fika during introduction days)	1345		
Lunches with the school council presidiums	1424		
Food during the Ice skating event	2023		
Gift cards to survey participants	1500		
Membership Fees		48 345	
			34 955*

*The WOP@KTH- retreat was budget and account for during 2018/2019, even if the transaction itself was made during this mandate period, hence it is not accounted for in this results but in the 2018/2019 results.

On behalf of the resigning board,

Emma Riese
Chairperson 2019/2020
Stockholm 31 October 2020

Activity Report 2019/2020



Baserat på verksamhetsplanen antagen av Doktorandsektionens styrelse den 12 september 2019, updaterades 27 februari 2020 och gäller till 30 juni 2020.
Based on the operational plan enacted by PhD chapter board on the 12 of September 2019, updated on 27th of February 2020, and shall henceforth be valid till
30 June 2020 unless amended, replaced or repealed.

Background

The objectives of the PhD Chapter are to promote more effective and higher quality PhD education and research, promote a stimulating working environment and improve the general conditions for its members. The PhD Chapter should also work towards a 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 2019/2020. The operational plan has been prepared using the input of previous board and refined during the introduction day for operational year 2019/2020 held on the 14th of August 2019. All elected board members *Emma Riese*, *Tage Mohammadat*, *Rinat Yapparov*, *Alessandro Enrico* and *Kasra Khatami Mashbadi* participated in the development of the operational plan. In addition, *Ksenia Loskutova*, PhD Chapter representative in the union council/Kårfullmäktige (KF) also participated. A second workshop was held 12/2 2020 with the board members of spring 2020: *Emma Riese*, *Mohit Daga*, *Alessandro Enrico*, *Lorenzo Marchetti*, *Karl Johan Westrin* and *Tharagan Kumar*. During the workshop changes and updates were proposed and discussed, which led to this new version of the operational plan.

Focus Areas during 2019/2020

Visibility and social events

Last year 2018/2019, the PhD Chapter focused on visibility and organized lots of events, such as board game nights, writing workshops and quiz nights. The PhD Chapter also sent out newsletters through emails and used Facebook and Instagram to advertise events. However, the PhD Chapter work that was not social was not as clearly communicated and visible aside from the website. This year's focus is to improve the visibility of chapter work.

Done:

- Organizations: External Representation & contact in/with THS councils, KTH labour unions, Stockholm's doctoral associations.
- Members: Newsletter - Fall/2019, Winter 2019, Spring 2020, Summer 2020
- Pubs & chapter events October 2019 and December 2019.
- School councils: Meeting Councils
- Public: Improvement of website and communication on Facebook
- Sport event (Ice skating December 2019)
- Virtual AW and Fika
- Members: Pubs & chapter events (canceled or moved to virtual alternatives since mid March due to COVID-19); Regular posts on social media

- Public: Improvements of information on website and communication on Facebook

Additional comments:

- School Council: Educational bootcamp (postponed due to COVID-19, if the new board wishes it can hopefully be done during fall)

Creating a stronger community

Not all PhD students have lots of colleagues in their research field, and being a PhD student could be experienced as lonely for some. The PhD Chapter should aim to tie together all PhD students and create a friendly environment for all PhD students. The PhD Chapter would like to continue to work with offering social events for all PhD Chapter's members. We are also collaborating with PhD students from Stockholm University, Karolinska Institutet, Handelshögskolan i Stockholm och Södertörns högskola, to be able to share experiences and maybe even offer events together.

Done:

- Collaborative event with PhDs in Stockholm - September 2019
- Chapter event with board games and Pub - October 2019
- Chapter event with Christmas theme and Pub - December 2019
- Chapter meeting and pub March 2020
- Chapter in May 2020 - Due to COVID-19 - the chapter meeting was virtual and no board game pub organized.
- 40th anniversary pub - could not be done due to COVID-19, hopefully a celebration can take place in the fall 2020.

Additional comments:

- Stockholm's doctoral event - May 2020 - Postponed, could be picked up again during the fall.

Welcoming new PhD students

As part of the chapters responsibility towards new members, the PhD Chapter should work to welcome new doctoral students through participating in reception ceremonies and sending a welcoming letter to all newly admitted PhD students. We could also work towards being represented in introduction meetings, if they are given especially for PhD Students.

Done:

- Welcome letter drafted.
- Circulating the letter to respective officials.
- Initiated a collaboration with THS International Reception, to also include PhD students.

Additional comments:

- Plan and conduct THS international reception event during the reception in August. This will be errand that is passed on to the new board.

Supervisor of the year award

The PhD Chapter is turning 40 years the 24th of March and this will have to be acknowledged. Our initial idea was to arrange some sort of Birthday celebration and invite members of the PhD Chapter as well as members from other chapters and PhD students from other Universities. But due to the lack of an event manager, we decided to instead of a party established an award to promote good supervision at the third cycle level at KTH.

Done:

- Pre-discussions on possible venues and arrangements for a Birthday party.
- Rules are drafted for the Supervisor of the year award.
- We posted about the Birthday on Facebook and our website.
- Instead of a Birthday party during spring 2020, the board has decided to establish the “Supervisor of the Year” award, to promote good supervision in third cycle education.
- PhD Chapter board has finalized the rules for the award and are now waiting for a response from KTH Ceremonies regarding the application to initialize it.

Additional comments:

- Establish the Supervisor of the Year award. Even if progresses have been made regarding this award, it will be up to the board of 20/21 to follow up this errand.

Collaborations

The PhD Chapter shares the Chapter hall together with the **Aerospace Chapter**, and therefore should have good collaboration with the Aerospace Chapter on all matters concerning the Chapter hall (such as pubs and events).

Done:

- Pre-agreements on 4 pubs and chapter events
- Pre-agreements on monthly pubs for Oct, Nov, Dec.
- Monthly pub on Oct, Nov

Additional comments:

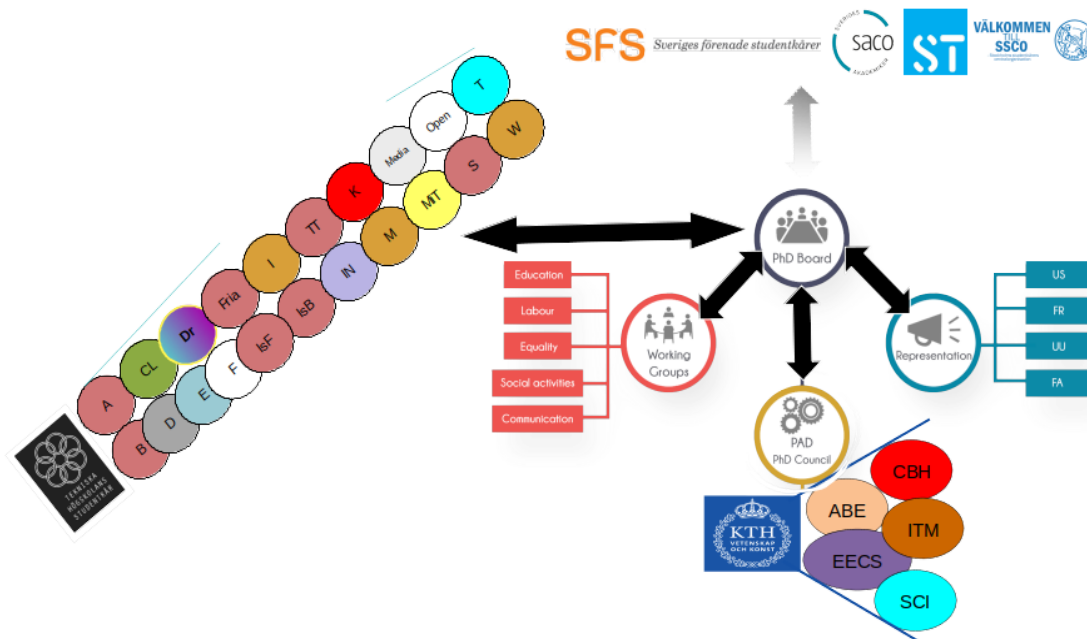
- Monthly pubs on March- were canceled pubs during the spring semester due to COVID-19.

Educational Advocacy

Doctoral students influence on every level

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. Since the PhD Chapter is the only chapter at the student union that exclusively organizes and represents PhD students, the chapter should work with THS such that doctoral influence is working in a bottom-up approach at all levels and forums affecting research and research education. The PhD Chapter should also work together with THS central, KTH Doctoral councils and **PhD Advisor**, to lift up issues in a more effective way.

Done:



- Referral on THS delegation order
- Request for new policy draft for time compensation, currently a discussion point in FU (Forskarutbildningsutskottet) . The working group was appointed in December, but the work has not started yet.
- Updated of PM on guide on representation
- Feedback given on an initial draft of the Language policy.
- School Council: Educational bootcamp was postponed due to COVID-19, if the new board wishes it can hopefully be done during fall.

Additional comments:

- The formation and work of the working group regarding time-compensation, was supposed to happen in January but sadly it has not been formed. It will be the board 20/21 which will contribute to that work.

Sustainable engagement

One of the challenges for the PhD Chapter is to ensure a **sustainable engagement**. We need to make sure that it is possible to be engaged in the PhD Chapter in a sustainable way by ensuring that all representatives at all levels are getting **sufficient time compensation**. This is a crucial part in making sure that our representatives are not forced to work overtime due to their representation role. Being a representative should not add any additional psychological or study burdens and be grounds for a prolongation.

Done:

- PM on working directives detailing communication
- PM on representatives with time compensation for HT19 as work baseline.

- Request for new policy draft for time compensation, currently a discussion point in FU (Forskarutbildningsutskottet) . Working group was appointed in December, but the work has not started yet.

Additional comments:

- School Council: Educational bootcamp (postponed due to COVID-19, if the new board wishes it can hopefully be done during fall)
- Contribute to the working group regarding time-compensation.

Communication and transparency

All representatives have a responsibility towards the doctoral students at KTH they represent at large to be transparent about their work. In order for the student influence to be truly working, **communication** between the local levels, from each PAD (program responsible representative, programansvarig doktorand), to the school councils (doktorandråd) to the central level the PhD Chapter is necessary. All representatives should also be confident about what their role entails and who to contact if they need advice or assistance. The PhD Chapter should be informed and approve all appointments for all local and central representation and also offer support for representatives. For central representation, the PhD Chapter should have a possibility to appoint representatives and keep THS informed about appointed representatives.

Done:

- New clause on PM on working directives detailing framework for communication
- Slack-channels between the PhD Chapter board and all school councils have been established.

Synchronisation with school councils and PADs

In 2018/19, the chapter enacted a new board member definition in which one of the board members has the role **Council coordinator**. This is one step towards getting the communication between the local and central level to work more smoothly. During 2019/2020 the PhD Chapter board shall plan to specifically invite school councils chairs to take part in board meetings and chapter meetings. We also plan to work together with THS central to unify how PADs are appointed and develop a work description for a PAD.

Done:

- Meeting with EECS council
- Meeting with ABE council
- Meeting with ITM representatives
- Meeting with SCI representatives
- Meeting with CBH council
- Central elections for councils
- Meeting with the presidiums of each school council 2020 (all except ITM)
- Had an ongoing dialogue with school council representatives and was present at council meetings when possible (depending on the availability of the council coordinator).

External Collaboration

During 2018/2019 the PhD Chapter started a collaboration with PhD organizations from Karolinska Institutet (KI) and Stockholm University (SU). A network that meets and discusses questions and exchange experiences regarding doctoral issues. The PhD chapter should continue to collaborate with doctoral organisations in Stockholm and Sweden to exchange best practices and strengthen the collective voice of doctoral students in Sweden.

Done:

- Established a new collaboration with Stockholm's school of economics for a Pub in September 2019.
- Formulating strategies for future collaborations. For example, setting up some formal grounds.
- Hosted meeting at KTH in February 2020.

Additional comments:

- We had plans to possibly host an event together in May, but due to the corona pandemic we decided to postpone it until earliest in the fall.

Survey to identify issues

During 2018/2019, the previous board started to develop a survey to be sent out to all PhD students at KTH, with questions regarding PhD life, such as supervision, Individual study plans (ISPs), balance between work and private life and distribution between thesis work and course work. This was done with the objective of identifying common issues and getting the general opinion from the PhD students. Distributing a survey with the PhD Chapter as the sender would also be one way to improve visibility for the chapter, as well as getting input from the Chapter members on the work of the Chapter. This survey was however not distributed during 2018/2019 and the current board had it distributed in December 2019. During spring semester 2020 the PhD Chapter board will work with analysing and reporting of the results.

Done:

- Draft for the survey was made and reviewed.
- Circulated to doctoral students with a registered study activity in Ladok during fall semester 2019 (around 1400 PhD students).
- Analyze/summarize and present the data, and a report was published in June 2020.

PhD students' environment

The PhD student ladder is currently based solely on research progression, not on time spent. The requirements for moving up the salary ladder could also differ between different research fields and education programs. For instance, to move to the 50% step, some require PhD students to have a seminar with an internal or external opponent, and some require the PhD student to write and defend a Licentiate thesis. The PhD Chapter should advocate to have a consistent progression criteria preferably based on time that also incentivise accomplishments.

Done:

- A survey was made with Stockholm's doctoral associations on the matter and identified the practices at Stockholm's university and Karolinska Institute to be similar to the spirit of this formulation.
- Pre-discussions were raised at labour union ST at SACO on the matter in September. An inquiry to the respective salary negotiation groups. Both SACO and ST share concerns on the system and to various degrees agree with PhD chapter stance.
ST assessed that the question is mainly a quality question and not strictly a salary increase issue usually discussed during 'lönerrevision' meetings. As such it can't be brought up during this year salary review meeting for the collective agreement meeting concerning PhD students' salary ladder. According to ST representatives, the earliest this issue can be brought up during spring-fall 2020.
SACO explained that the issue had been discussed for a while, but what is in this year's proposal is 500SEK increment on 24th Oct meeting, and all other questions are postponed to next year's meeting.
- This was also discussed during a third cycle education committee meeting (Forskarutbildningsutskottet) 17/4, raised by one of the FAs.