

Board Report

Mandate: July 2024 - June 2025



The PhD Chapter at KTH
Doktorandsektionen vid Tekniska Högskolans Studentkår

A report summarizing chapter operations within the mandate period July 2024 - June 2025 on which basis, freedom of responsibility shall be assessed.

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Document versions

Version	By/comments	Date
Dr2025-PB-01	Ugne Miniotaite, Hemanth Venkatesan	2025-06-10

Background

A Chapter Board Report is a summary and analysis of the activities performed by the chapter during the past year. It is supposed to 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.

This chapter board report has been written by Ugne Miniotaite, who was the chairperson for the chapter for the mandate year 2024/2025.

Elected officials during 2024/2025

PhD Chapter Board of Directors

Chairperson	Ugne Minitoaite
Vice-Chairperson	Doga Gurgunoglu (2024) Hilma Karlsson (2025)
Treasurer	Hemanth Venkatesan
Education Manager	Ellymay Goossens
Communication Manager	Andressa Mazur (2024) Liv Breivik (2025)
Events Manager	Mattias Åstrand (2024) Abhilash Kulkarni (2025)
Business Liaison	Matt Davoudi
Council Coordinator	Zoé Barjot
Webmaster	Mehdi Nourazar
Workgroups Manager	Peiling Wu

The PhD Chapter Board held 14 documented board meetings during the mandate period July 2024 - June 2025.

PhD Chapter Functionaries

THS Student Council (KF) Representative	Hemanth Venkatesan Saumey Jain Ugne Miniotaite
Auditor	Susanna Pozzoli Katarina Lindmark
Nominating Committee (2024)	Vladilena Gaisina Andressa Mazur Mohammad Abuasbeh Daniel Medeiros Zoé Barjot
Nominating Committee (2025)	Andressa Mazur Ibrahim Batayneh

	Joel Kronborg Ugne Miniotaite Zoé Barjot
Master of Ceremonies	Mattias Åstrand (2024/2025) Susanna Pozzoli (2024) Hemanth Venkatesan (2025)
Standard Bearer	Monika Rolinska (2024) Hemanth Venkatesan (2025)
Vice Standard Bearer	Martin Lindström (2024) Matt Davoudi (2025)
Head of Female Doctoral Committee	Andressa Mazur (2024) Markella Zacharouli (2025)
KTH Central Representatives	Main Representative
University Board (Universitet styrelsen, US)	Ugne Miniotaite
Faculty Council (Fakultetsrådet, FR)	Doga Gurgunoglu (2024) Hilma Karlsson (2025)
Future Faculty Group	Mattias Åstrand and Doga Gurgunoglu (2024)
Employment Board (Anställningsnämnden)	Mattias Åstrand and Doga Gurgunoglu (2024) Hilma Karlsson (2025)
Language Committee	Charlie Börjeson
Third-Cycle Education Committee (Forkarsutbildningsutskottet)	Ellymay Goossens
Scholarship Committee	Mehdi Nourazar
Equality Committee	Andressa Mazur (2024) Markella Zacharouli (2025)
ISP Focus Group	Zoé Barjot Peiling Wu
Ethics Committee	Mehdi Nourazar
Library Committee	Matt Davoudi

Account on Financial Operations

The Chapter received its grant of 1,068,337 kronor from KTH (KTH Bidrag) plus 59675 kronor (e.g., value that ranges from time to time) from members' fees THS as basic income. In total, there were over 160 transactions from the period July 2024 - December 2024, and 134 transactions from the period January 2025 - June 2025, which include invoice payments, refunds when applicable and operational costs. As of June/2025, the Chapter currently has over 2.3M kronor in its bank account (Nordea), and a good chunk of it (over 80%) is currently left in the savings account for annual interest.

Some major events the chapter has endorsed and sponsored during the financial year (2024-2025) are the recurring sports events, hosted every Tuesday (12:00-13:00), with all the popular sports being played by chapter members (~12000 SEK/semester), the Chapter Gasque in November (~120000 SEK), the board Gasque in May (~70000 SEK), the Romme ski trip (~90000 SEK), the ongoing boat events (~90000 SEK), multiple study visits (~40000 SEK) and the chapter retreat for board members and council members to train them for leadership positions and positions of trust (~96000 SEK).

The PhD Chapter, led by our Business Liaison, held the first PhD-only career fair (PhireD; ~55000 SEK) in March 2025. As per the current board's wish, we hope the career fair to be a yearly event with more sub-events as part of the main event; an event to be on par with THS Armada or similar from other Chapters. That being the case, the expenses for said event would be significantly higher, the Chapter bearing most of these expenses, all in the hope that it benefits doctoral students and helps them establish careers in Sweden. As the event grows, the ability for sponsorships and streams of revenue from the companies increases, which would lower the cost.

Some other highlights, finance-wise:

- There has been a general uptick in the number of events organised by Chapter members, both at the council level (events at departments/divisions or at the school level) and at the central level for all doctoral students.
- The Chapter has organised several pubs with various themes (karaoke, quizzes, cocktails), which have been generally popular with the students.
- The Board of 2024-2025 did away with the previous board's decision to hand out gift cards for pub workers as it was made aware to the treasurer that these cards might be construed as a salary, which would be taxable, and the PhD Chapter, as an ideal organisation, is not liable to pay tax.
 - Instead, the Chapter shall provide a 'thank you' event such as an activity or dinner based on certain criteria for the pub workers. This criteria, decided by the board and enforced by the Master of Ceremonies, is that pub workers who have worked at least three pubs during a semester are eligible to be invited to the thank you event.
- The Chapter also endorsed an accounting course for training purposes for the treasurer of the Chapter, which shall be a staple going forward for all persons elected as the treasurer to ensure that the finances are properly handled in line with Swedish law and regulations.
 - The cost of the course arises from the fact that the course is given in English, specifically for the treasurer of the Chapter and other interested parties from the Chapter. If future treasurers are Swedish speakers, they can attend the free course offered by THS.

Account on Educational Advocacy and Representation

During the 2024/2025 mandate, the Chapter Board continued to represent doctoral students across all relevant committees, councils, and working groups at the central KTH level, with the exception of the Management Group (attended by the THS President). This year has seen significant progress in key areas of advocacy, policy development, and student support.

A major focus of the year was the doctoral salary ladder. The Chapter analyzed the results of a survey conducted during the previous mandate, which revealed that many doctoral students struggle to progress along the salary steps. The survey also showed a clear preference among students for a time-based salary progression system. These results were presented in multiple KTH committees, and in February 2025, the Chapter organized a Rektor Q&A with President Anders Söderholm, specifically raising the issue of the salary ladder. Following this, a KTH working group has been formed to explore a shift to a time-based salary model. We expect this issue to continue to be a point of focus in the coming year.

During the autumn term, the Chapter collaborated with KTH to initiate the new KTH PhD Survey, highly based on the 2023 PhD Chapter Survey. The initiative was led by the Education Manager, in consultation with the PhD School Councils. The Chapter supported the distribution of the survey to all doctoral students and initiated the preliminary analysis of responses. This is great progress in terms of having influence, but the university owns the responsibility of tracking the third-cycle education quality.

We also concluded our participation in the Time Compensation Working Group, resulting in the establishment of a KTH-wide procedure for how time compensation is granted to central, national, and international student representatives. The Chapter has successfully retained the 200% time compensation policy for its own board members, ensuring the sustainability of student representation.

Another important outcome of our work is the change to KTH's research education guidelines, allowing up to 10 ECTS credits of Swedish language courses to be counted toward a doctoral degree. This change reflects the Chapter's long-standing effort to increase opportunities for doctoral students to learn Swedish and better integrate into Swedish academic and societal life.

We continued to coordinate the Future Faculty and we were attending tasks for recruitment, docentship or promotion of professors ~90% of the time both during HT24 and VT25 (approx 92 tasks, we filled 82 of them). This is, of course, done with the enormous help of the councils who motivate the doctoral students to fill the positions.

Other relevant aspects, but no less important, to note is that we also managed to have representatives at the THS Kårfullmäktige. Finally, we strengthened our bonds with the Labour Unions by having an active doctoral student at the local SACO-S at KTH and began the work of looking into a more formal collaboration with the labour unions.

Account on Internal Affairs

As a continuation of the high activity of the PhD Chapter, every single position in the Board and the Chapter Functionaries was filled during the period July 2024 - June 2025, which means a total of 10 board members, 5 members of the nominating committee, 1 Auditor, 6 people officially appointed to the DrInK Group, 1 Head of the WoP Committee, 2 standard bearers, and 3 members to the KF. There was a high engagement of all these people, and this allowed the Chapter to flourish and bring more visibility to it. In particular, we had 1087 members of the PhD Chapter out of a total ~1600 students with 1% or more active on Ladok, and we are currently the biggest Chapter at THS (albeit this number fluctuates over the year).

We strengthened a lot of processes and our relationships with different stakeholders - namely the PhD Councils, the Labour Unions, THS and KTH Central. For the first stakeholders, our Council Coordinator attended the Council meetings to discuss possible questions. We also organized a PhD Chapter retreat, a two day retreat to Näsby Slott. The purpose was to team build the councils and let them get to know each other and learn from each other, but also to together workshop how the Chapter can be improved as well as for self development.

Internally, we have improved the efficiency of Board meetings and worked on distributing responsibilities more evenly among Board members. This approach helps prevent overburdening individuals and promotes sustainable student involvement. As a result, if someone is sick or away, the Board's operations can continue without major disruptions.

Additionally, the Board participated in the interview process for hiring the new THS Ombudsman and is strengthening its collaboration with the Ombudsman to better utilize existing resources available to doctoral students. With THS, we held four meetings THS x Dr where we brought important issues related to both operational and educational aspects.

Operationally, we have used Slack for Business (with a non-profit discount of 85%) and we believe that this brought a lot of value to us. In particular, all other councils are all located in the same workspace as us. In the past year, the population has further increased from 70 to 95 active users, since previous Chapter Board or Council members stay on Slack for consultations. The Board has considered changing from the current model (pay per member) to the Enterprise model and has initiated discussions with Slack regarding this. It could then facilitate an increase of members through the advertisement of the Slack Workspace.

In recent years, the PhD Chapter has implemented digital elections to enhance student engagement and promote a more democratic process. This initiative has proven successful; during the digital elections held last year, the number of participants increased significantly from ~80 to ~130 participants.

Furthermore, we have developed our own time compensation guidelines to gain transparency and accountability.. Additionally, we have established a formal handover documentation system that is to be updated by the outgoing individual prior to the conclusion of their mandate. This system aims to prevent the redundancy of efforts, simply put to avoid 'reinventing the wheel' and ensures that, in the event of decreased engagement and then following a vacancy, the Board will not need to start from the beginning.

Account on External Affairs

There are several highlights on external affairs that it is important to mention:

- We collaborate with KTH (HR, Research Education administration, KTH career, and KTH Relocation) to conduct four onboarding sessions annually, guaranteeing that all incoming doctoral students receive comprehensive orientation and are well-informed upon joining.
- We launched the first PhireD doctoral career fair, attracting 300 participants, primarily doctoral students, and 18 companies. This event received very positive feedback from the doctoral students. Additionally, we participated in the REVERSED fair in collaboration with THS and KTH, which helped us increase our network of business contacts that can benefit the PhireD fair.
- The Doctoral Female Committee (WoP) saw a boost in activities during the Spring semester. We conducted several self-defense classes that were well-received and initiated a book club focusing on feminist literature. We also organized WoP hangouts at the library to foster community.
- Throughout the year, we continued to provide a newsletter that featured important updates, including news from councils and changes at KTH. Our focus was on raising awareness of the PhD Ombudsman, Ingrid Illiou, and the issues we are addressing within the PhD Chapter.
- Supervisor of the Year Award: We kept the yearly tradition and, after around 49 nominations, we awarded the prize to Linda Lundström (SCI). We also received good feedback on how to improve the SoYA process.
- Lastly, we organized weekly sports events every Tuesday at lunch in KTH-hallen. These events saw strong participation, particularly from students who may not have engaged in other activities.

These activities were in addition to the several events hosted by the board and the DrInK group during the whole year, especially the pubs (karaoke nights, quiz night, comedy night, watch parties, etc), and also in addition to the educational influence activities described above.

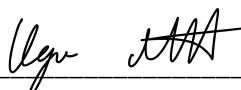
Potential Future Activities and Recommendations

Over the past year, the PhD Chapter has built on the momentum gained in previous years. However, there is still room for improvement. In light of our recent changes, it's clear that our statutes and bylaws need updating - a task that began this year but requires continuation in the upcoming year.

We are confident that the Chapter is being handed to capable individuals, and we hope it will continue to flourish. Several important projects, such as the salary ladder, the PhD survey, and Swedish courses for doctoral students, are already underway. We believe that it is essential to maintain momentum on these initiatives rather than launching numerous new ones, even if the number of issues to be tackled seems endless.

Finally, the current system for handling individual funding requests is inefficient, treating small and large expenses equally. Based on advice from the previous auditor, the PhD Chapter Board is working on developing a budget. Our Treasurer has started this process and received approval at the Chapter Meeting on June 5th to proceed with creating a detailed budget. Something that will hopefully be implemented in the coming year.

On behalf of the resigning board,



Ugnė Miniotaite

Chairperson 2024/2025

Stockholm, 17 June 2025