



Annual Report of the Doctoral Student Union at Malmö University 2017



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Foreword

It has been a very interesting year for the Doctoral Student Union Malmö (DSU). The newly granted University status will render a higher number of doctoral students at Malmö University and the work of the DSU is therefore more relevant than ever. We believe that the DSU during 2017 has maintained its role as an important organization that partakes in discussions at the central bodies of the University but also as an organization that continuously challenges the University to improve postgraduate education.

This report describes the DSU's work during 2017 (17-01-27 to 18-01-26). The report is mainly concerned with the work in relation to the Activity Plan for the period (available at doktorandkaren.se). However, the DSU was also involved in several other activities in 2017 and these are also described briefly in this report. Local reports from the doctoral collegia are also included as well as the 2017 DSU board's suggestions for work ahead.

Malmö, January 2018

The DSU board:

Alexander Engström
Camilla Safrankova
Therese Lindgren
Adrian Lundberg
Alberto Chrysoulakis



DSU representation 2017

The DSU Board

President:	Alexander Engström (HS)
Vice President:	Camilla Safrankova (LS)
Treasurer and responsible for memberships:	Adrian Lundberg (LS)
Doctoral Collegia Coordinator:	Therese Lindgren (LS)
Communications Officer:	Alberto Chrysoulakis (HS)

DSU Representation in Central Committees and Other Important Forums

University Board: (Högskolestyrelsen)	Camilla Safrankova
Central Research Board: (Forskningsberedningen)	Alexander Engström
Doctoral Education Committee: (Forskarutbildningsutskottet)	Alexander Engström & Camilla Safrankova
Meetings with vice chancellor: (Rektorsmöten)	Alexander Engström & Camilla Safrankova

Doctoral Collegia and Representation at the Faculty Level

Faculty of Culture and Society (KS)

Collegium President:	Zahra Hamidi
Faculty Board:	Beint Magnus Aamodt Bentsen
Research and Research Education Committee:	Erik Snodgrass/Maria Persdotter
Supervisor Collegium K3 NMOG:	Linda Hilfling
Supervisor Collegium Urban Studies:	Malin McGlenn
Supervisor Collegium GPS:	Vacant

Faculty of Health and Society (HS)

Collegium President:	Vacant
Faculty Board:	Alberto Chrysoulakis
Board of Research:	Zoran Vasiljevic/Lotta Wendel

Faculty of Learning and Society (LS)

Collegium President:	Sepandarmaz Mashreghi Blank
Faculty Board:	Therese Lindgren
Research and Research Education Committee:	Marie Larneby/Magnus Bergman
Strategy Group:	Vacant
Supervisor Collegium (Ped.):	Therese Lindgren
Supervisor Collegium (SMDI):	Marie Thavenius
Supervisor Collegium (Historiska studier):	Magnus Bergman
Supervisor Collegium (IDV):	Anna Maria Hellborg
Supervisor Collegium (NMS):	Camilla Safrankova/Laurence Delacour

Faculty of Odontology (OD)

Collegium President:	Anna Klinge
Faculty Board:	Alexandar Milosavjevic
Research and Research Education Committee:	Victoria Dawson

Faculty of Technology and Society (TS)

Collegium President:	Niklas Ehrlin
Faculty Board:	Niklas Ehrlin
Research and Research Programs Board:	Lars Holmberg
Supervisor Collegium:	Vacant



Activities

Every year, the DSU board decides which activities that are prioritized. In this annual report, the DSU board describes how they have worked with these activities as well as other activities during 2017.

Activity Plan

All activities pursued by the DSU board in 2017 were based on the overall aims of the organization, as stated in the Activity Plan (p. 1) that the board published on the DSU website at the beginning of 2017:

The main goal of the DSU is to remain actively engaged in creating a dynamic, reliable and creative research and work environment for all doctoral students at Malmö University (MaU). By actively and continuously partaking in conversations on all administrative levels of MaU, the DSU's ambition is to create and maintain influence in the decision-making process of areas that touch upon the education, research environment and employment of doctoral students. To this end, the DSU strives to ensure that all levels of representation and influence can be easily identified and proactively engaged with. It should also be mentioned that several of the prioritized activities this year [2017] focus on information and communication. Through this approach, the intention is to get in touch with more PhD students, which will hopefully increase the amount of members. This is especially important during this year's transition to university status and the expected increased amount of PhD students.

Prioritized Activities and Actions Taken By the DSU Board

The specific activities in the Activity Plan are described in this section together with the actions taken by the DSU board.

Doctoral Student Ombudsman

The DSU will continue to investigate the possibilities for a doctoral student ombudsman (DOMB). In addition, the DSU will establish and maintain ways of communication with the new Doctoral support.

- Actions taken

The DSU board and MaU have continued to discuss the possibility of employing a DOMB. MaU says that the new Doctoral support is currently all the University can offer and the DSU has agreed to let this function be tested to see how it works. However, the DSU has also asked MaU to conduct a thorough evaluation of the Doctoral support after 1 year (in collaboration with DSU). The results of the evaluation will serve as the foundation for further discussions regarding the possibility of hiring a DOMB at MaU.

Since the Doctoral support started 1 September 2017, the DSU has established good communication with the responsible person (Christian Stråhlman), for instance

through meetings and e-mail. The DSU has the impression that the communication with MaU improved significantly since the Doctoral support came in place. The Doctoral support is a part time position (20 % of full time) held by the new Coordinator for development and quality assurance in doctoral education (henceforth "Coordinator") at MaU.

Information and Communication

The DSU will strive to improve the information that is relevant for PhD students through our website and other forms of social media.

- Actions taken

This task was difficult given the lack of an updated system at MaU regarding the contact details to the PhD students. MaU has explained this difficulty as a matter of the lack of a digital individual study plan (ISP). The ISP will be digitalized in 2018, hopefully improving the possibility of having an up-to-date overview over all contact details to all PhD students at MaU (i.e. not only our members but all doctoral students). Since the Coordinator was established, he helped the DSU much through better and more recently updated contact lists.

The DSU board also started a twitter account to reach out to other audiences. Yammer groups were also created. A newsletter was sent to all PhD students with assistance from MaU. The reactions to it were positive and the future DSU boards are encouraged to continue to send newsletters in order to keep informing the PhD students of the activities of the DSU. In order to be more visible, the DSU also decided to create a new logotype (see "Other Activities").

Social Events

The DSU will continue to create meeting places for doctoral students from different faculties by arranging social events such as the DSU breakfast or guest lectures. Other forms of social events may also be arranged in order to bring PhD students together in an informal setting.

- Actions taken

The DSU arranged lunches to meet PhD students more informally. A guest lecture was also arranged in which Anna Peixoto presented her research on PhD education in Sweden. A DSU day was held in the fall. The Doctoral support, the vice chancellor and the trade union SULF participated.

Improvement of the Introduction of New PhD Students

The DSU will examine the possibility to extend the DSU's role in the PhD Introduction course and participate in the design of the course program. In addition, the DSU will elaborate on other ideas of providing a better introduction to new PhD-students.

- Actions taken

The DSU has had several discussions with MaU regarding the introduction course. A longer time slot was offered to the DSU. The participation of the DSU in the



introduction course was changed into a less formal approach, with a focus on discussions related to the new PhD students' expectations of their doctoral education, such as their view on supervision.

The introduction course was also changed to better fit the course's purposes and to make more PhD students attend the course. Discussions were also held directly with Christina Lindh, the course administrator at AKL, to examine improvements of the course. As the Doctoral survey by UKÄ showed that doctoral students at MaU feel that they do not get introduced properly, the DSU asked MaU to address this issue. MaU decided to map the introduction activities at the university in order to see how the introduction can be improved.

International PhD Students

The DSU will continue to work for improving the situation for international PhD students in terms of language issues.

- Actions taken

The DSU has continuously asked for the new language policy to be in place but MaU has not prioritized this issue during the year. However, towards the end of the year, a first draft was presented and there is great hope that the new policy will be implemented in 2018. The DSU must however keep on working on this issue in 2018 because international PhD students must have good opportunities to be integrated in the work environment at MaU.

Doctoral Collegia

The DSU will support and collaborate with the doctoral collegia at the faculties.

- Actions taken

The DSU has supported the collegia continuously, mainly through the DSU board's Doctoral Collegia Coordinator. A new collegium was established at the Faculty of Technology and Society. Although not in place yet, the collegium at HS is about to get started again. It is difficult, however, to find PhD students who want to get involved in the DSU locally (and in the DSU board).

Mapping of PhD students' situation at MaU

The DSU will initiate a mapping of PhD students work environment and resources to see if or how conditions differ between faculties.

- Actions taken

The DSU argued for a local PhD survey at MaU during the year. While MaU agreed that a survey is needed, it was difficult to find any answers regarding the execution of such a survey. However, the Coordinator asked UKÄ for local results for MaU from the national Doctoral student survey (Doktorandspegeln). The Coordinator obtained these results and they were useful for discussing with MaU what the university needs to work with in regards to postgraduate education. Two main problems were found in the survey. First, supervision was an issue, particularly for female PhD students.

Second, the introduction was also criticized by the doctoral students. These two problems were discussed with MaU at several occasions and MaU has initiated a survey to all supervisors in order to examine their view as well as a mapping procedure of all introduction activities.

Website for all PhD courses in Sweden

The DSU will look into the possibility of raising the issue of creating a centralized and searchable online site for all PhD courses in Sweden (similar to what exists in Denmark).

- Actions taken

This issue was much more complex than anticipated. It was not possible for the DSU to work with it on our own. The issue was further discussed with The Swedish National Union of Students (SFS) to see if there are other student unions that are interested in this. This is a long term project that the DSU needs to work with continuously.

Other Activities

The DSU was involved in a wide range of activities not specified in the Activity Plan. These activities refer to new issues that arose during the year as well as more spontaneous initiatives to improve PhD education at MaU. In 2017, the DSU:

- Discussed the need for the organization to be more visible. It was decided that a new logotype (in color) would make DSU more visible and representative for its members. The logotype, with the overall graphic profile, makes the organization more customized to fit the way the DSU board perceives the organization.
- Influenced the hiring process of the new Coordinator by providing questions for the final interview.
- Influenced how the Doctoral support should work.
- Updated the DSU website according to the new graphic profile.
- Successfully asked for more funding for the DSU, from 300 000 SEK to 365 000 SEK.
- Participated in the supervisor course in which we presented and discussed PhD education from a doctoral student perspective.
- Chose PhD students for evaluations of the quality of the doctoral education.
- Negotiated a formal agreement between MaU and DSU (still ongoing). No agreement has existed previously and the new agreement will likely be in place in mid-2018. The new agreement will also improve the possibility of the DSU to be more independent from MaU in terms of how prolongations of board members are implemented.
- Was involved in the development of a new quality framework for PhD education.
- Was involved in the development of new guidelines regarding the initiation of new research subjects at MaU. As the new university status makes MaU more independent, the university now has the possibility to decide on which new research subjects to be started at MaU. The DSU has stressed the need for

MaU to continuously consider the effects on doctoral students when establishing new subjects.

- Argued that MaU shall not have scholarship financed PhD students if this makes these students have a worse situation (financially, socially etc.) than PhD students with employment. MaU decided not to accept scholarships, a decision partially based on the argumentation by the DSU.
- Held presentations about DSU at faculty introductions for new PhD students.
- Was involved in discussions regarding the new digital ISP. The Implementation of the digital ISP is planned for April 2018.
- Described the PhD student influence at MaU as requested by UKÄ
- Provided input on the new strategy of MaU.
- Discussed research schools with MaU from a PhD student perspective.
- Examined the possibility of a better digital membership system.
- Had meetings with representatives from the trade union (SULF), for instance regarding the question of previous teaching experiences and how they are valued economically by MaU.
- Discussed the planning of work time at MaU with the HR department with a specific focus on PhD students' situation
- Visited Lund University to see how their Doctoral student union works
- Had regular meetings with the Student unions at MaU

Reports from the Doctoral Collegia

To the knowledge of the DSU board, four collegia were active during 2017: (KS, LS, OD & TS). However, the Faculty of Health and Society is in the progress of restarting the collegium which will hopefully be in place during the spring 2018. Some of the active collegia in 2017 have reported their activities briefly in this report. For further information, contact your local collegium president.

Faculty of Culture and Society

Zahra Hamidi, President:

The KS doctoral collegium is the doctoral council from the Faculty of Culture and Society (KS) with around 35 doctoral students. During 2017, the collegium had 5 meetings and the most important issues brought up at the collegium meetings or worked on include: suggestions for a more effective introduction days for new doctoral students, trying to improve the conditions of international non-Swedish speaking doctoral students, trying to improve the working environment of doctoral students housed in Niagara, an on-going discussion for creation of a guideline and fair policy for prolongations of doctoral students employment and transition from staff status to student status for all including the International doctoral students. A group on Yammer platform has been created to improve the communication within the collegium. Moreover there is also an ongoing discussion for setting monthly social events to strengthen the doctoral students network at KS and ensuring integration of the new doctoral students in the faculty.

Faculty of Learning and Society

Sepandarmaz Mashreghi Blank, President:

LS doctoral collegium met twice this last term. A couple of important issues that we discussed were issues of having representatives in various committees and boards in the university as well as proposals for new PhD courses and workshops. The issue of representatives remains an important issue that we will discuss more in the subsequent meetings.

Faculty of Technology and Society

Niklas Ehrlin, President:

As of autumn 2017 the TS collegium is autonomous after having a history of joint collegium meetings together with KS. Only one TS collegium meeting was held during the autumn, but complementary meetings were held together with Christina Bjerken (director of doctoral studies at TS). During one of the meetings we got to meet Christian Stråhlman, our doctoral support person. Issues that have been raised during the year are often about information availability – it is still hard to get an overview of the important information needed for new (and current) PhD students. Discussions have also been ongoing whether we should move all of the PhD students of TS to a common “room”, or not. No decision is yet made, but the idea is incorporated in the coming “omtag Niagara” and will be addressed again in future collegium meetings.

Suggestions for Work Ahead

The DSU board encourages the DSU board of 2018 to keep being involved in most of the abovementioned activities. Most of the activities presented are not finished. Suggestions for additional work include:

- Follow up on the new language policy and how it is implemented.
- Find and implement a suitable system for administering membership (information available from the 2017 board).
- Be much involved in the evaluation of the Doctoral support. Keep in mind to raise the discussion regarding the DOMB as a person not employed by MaU.
- Explore how the DSU can better communicate within the organization. How can we reach all PhD students with relevant information?
- Partake in the development of the new digital ISP.
- Examine and discuss how MaU values PhD students' previous experiences (e.g. teaching) in terms of salaries. This work has already started and involves the trade union (SULF).
- Examine if the DSU should join The Swedish National Union of Students (SFS).