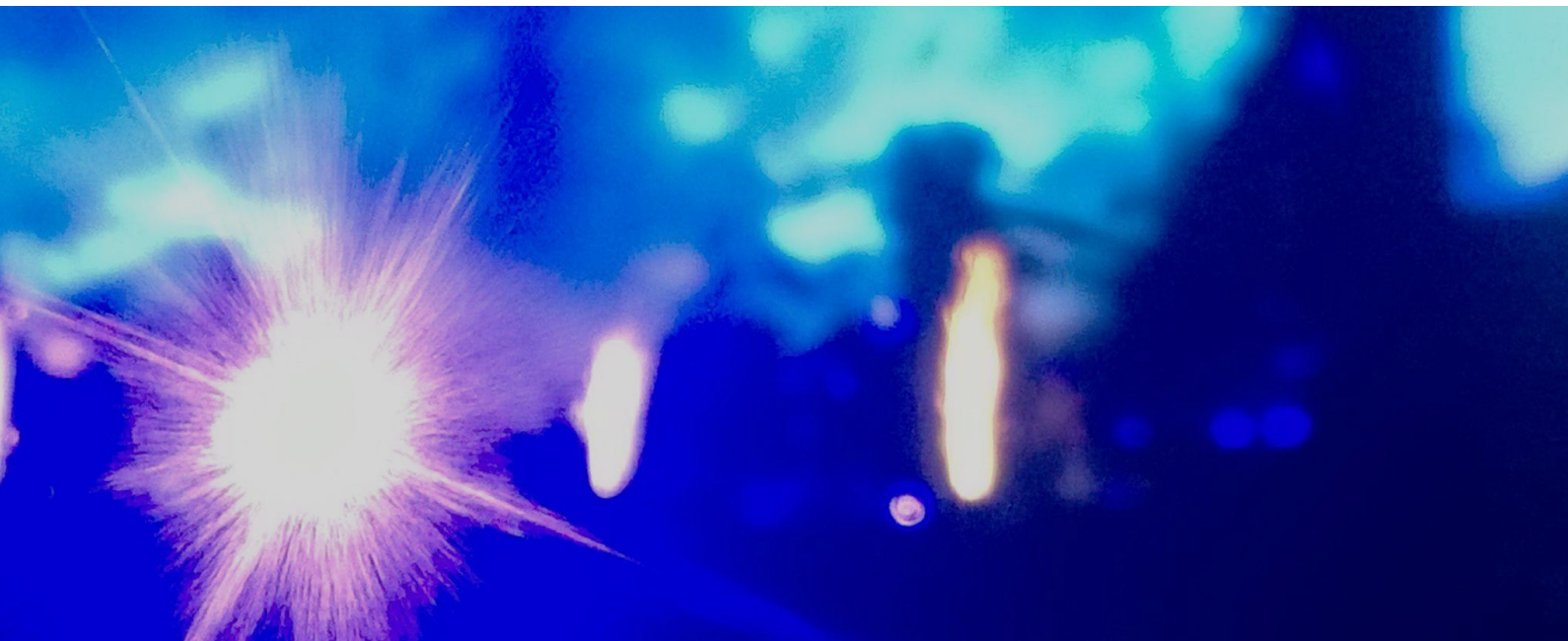


# Doktorandnämnden 2023 Spring Survey

## ***On:***

- *50%/80% progress raise of PhD student salaries*
- *Use and demand of writing support services*
- *General well being of the PhD student body at Uppsala University*



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**DOKTORANDNÄMNDEN**  
The doctoral board of Uppsala University

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# 1. Introduction

Between January 24th and February 21st 2023, the Doctoral Board of the Uppsala University (“Doktorandnämnden”, “DN”) has conducted a survey amongst all PhD students registered at Uppsala University. The survey contained questions about the salary increase intended for PhD students employed under the public employment agreement UFV-PA 2022/3294, the use and need of writing support services, and the general well-being of PhD students in their work.

This report is a summary of the results of that survey. It was written between the 1st of March and the 26th of May 2023. The final report was published for open download on the DN website (<https://uudoctoralboard.se/>) on 26.05.2023 and presented at the DN meeting on 23.05.2023. The survey was conceived by a subgroup of DN and in collaboration with the Doctoral Education Board (“Forksarutbildningsnämnden”, short “FUN”) of the Faculty of Science and Technology (short “TekNat”). Drafts of the survey were presented to the board on multiple occasions in October and December 2022 meetings. The report was made accessible to the board on the 25th of April 2023 with the invitation to give feedback.

The doctoral board consists of representatives from all faculties of Uppsala University. The analysis committee of this survey consists of members of the DN board, as well as the PhD representatives in the Doctoral Education Board (FUN) of the faculty of Science and Technology. Joining the survey group and analysis committee was open to all faculty representatives. DN and the analysis committee strive to represent all PhD students of Uppsala University.

## 1.1 Aims

The aim of this survey was threefold: Investigate the implementation of the 50%/80% progress raise guaranteed to PhD students employed under the collective agreement UFV-PA 2022/3294, investigate the use and demand of writing support services, such as “Grammarly” or “Ref-N-Write” and gauge the wellbeing of PhD students across all parts of the university to get an overview for future endeavours of DN.

Questions to be answered were:

1. Are PhD students informed about the 50%/80% progress raise and are they informed about the requirements needed to achieve them?
2. Do PhD students get these raises in a timely fashion, once the requirements are met?
3. Does getting the raise, on average, coincide with a 50%/80% completion of the studying time as intended by the agreement?

Regarding the writing support services, the main questions were:

4. Which kind of writing support services, if any, are PhDs of Uppsala University using?
5. How are they using them and how important are they for their work?
6. Is there a university-wide or even faculty or department-specific demand for certain such services?

In the last part, the main points of interest were:

7. What moves the PhD student body? What are potential focus points for DN and the university to move on?

## 1.2 Format and Advertising

The survey was created using Kurt, the university's own tool to survey students and employees, developed by MedfarmDoIT. It was spread via the email newsletter of DN, which reaches all PhD students registered at Uppsala University who did not actively unsubscribe from it. At the time of writing, DN's emails reached a total of 2938 students, which means it can be safely assumed that most PhD students active at Uppsala University have received the email. The first email containing information on the survey's purpose and content was sent on the opening day of the survey, January 24th 2023 and the last email the day before its end, February 20th 2023.

Furthermore, the survey was advertised through word of mouth in various PhD faculty councils.

## 1.3 Question Design

A total of 14 questions were asked to the students. The questions were as follows:

1. Which department are you working in?
2. How much time do you expect your PhD to take in total from start to end? This time should include both leaves of absence, like sick leave or parental leave, and prolongations based on teaching or other departmental duties.
3. How much of that time has passed at this point? Round to the nearest half year.
4. According to the collective agreement UFV-PA 2022/3294, PhD students are eligible for salary raises after completing their studies to 50% and 80%, respectively. Were you informed about the 50%/80% raise and what permits you to get them, by your supervisor or otherwise?
5. After reaching the 50% raise, how long did it take for the 50% raise to take effect? If there was any delay: Please comment why, if you can. Comment also, if there were any other issues.
6. How much study time has passed once the 50% raise did take effect? If it took effect retroactively, mark the first time the raise did cover. Study time refers to

time directly spent on the PhD, without including e.g. teaching, clinical duties or leaves of absence.

7. After reaching the 80% raise, how long did it take for the 80% raise to take effect? If there was any delay: Please comment why, if you can. Comment also, if there were any other issues.
8. How much study time has passed once the 80% raise did take effect? If it took effect retroactively, mark the first time the raise did cover. Study time refers to time directly spent on the PhD, without including e.g. teaching, clinical duties or leaves of absence.

**Writing Support Services** - We are currently investigating the use of writing support services in the life of PhD students

9. Are you currently using any of the following writing support services? By "paid", we mean any part of the service that becomes accessible only once a fee is paid. This fee can be singular or recurring.
10. How important are writing support services in your writing process?
11. Are there any support services you have currently not used because they are behind a pay-wall, but would use if they were subsidised fully or in part by UU?
12. Are there any other software or technical support tools you would like us to consider? This could be of a general type, like, for example, reference managers or a specific software example that you think is useful for a large part of the students.

**General Comments** - DN is always interested in hearing about any issues of PhD students at Uppsala University

13. Are there any other matters or issues related to your PhD studies that you want to mention to us? This can regard anything from, for example, issues with your supervision or work environment, to ideas in developing doctoral education or networking at UU, for example, ideas for events aimed towards PhD students.
14. As an overall judgement: How satisfied are you in your PhD as of now? This just serves to give us a general idea.

The answers to each question will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

To be able to gauge the respondent's demography, the respondents were asked about the department they work in. Some PhD studies, for example in medical sciences, are expected to take longer than the regular 4 years of pure study time due to other responsibilities than just research studies. It was, therefore, important to learn about the total time the respondent's PhD is expected to take. Leaves of absence, like parental leave or prolonged sick leave might play into this as well. Similarly, it was insightful to learn at which stage of their PhD the respondents were at the time of the survey to gauge how many of the respondents would be eligible for a 50%/80% progress raise at the time of the survey. Questions 5 to 8 then ask specifically about the study time, i.e. time spent directly on research or anything directly relevant to the completion of the PhD. This is the

time the 50%/80% progress raises should be compared to as written in the collective agreement UFV-PA 2022/3294. The study time excludes any time spent on leaves of absence or clinical and administrative duties and is thus equal to a total of 48 months for all PhD students at Uppsala University, as specified by Guidelines for Doctoral Studies at Uppsala University UFV 2022/728.

No question was mandatory to answer in order to submit the survey and in every question the respondents were given the possibility to comment in the form of a short free text. The reason behind this was that every PhD student should have the possibility to freely talk about their experience and only share what they feel comfortable with. There were no further questions about the identity of the respondent, in order to protect the anonymity of students of smaller departments at the university that may only have a small handful or few individual PhD students. The survey did require the respondent to log in via their university employee log-in in order to ensure that only PhD students active at Uppsala University could respond and every student responded only once. This was enabled through the Kurt survey system and no information about the personal identity of the student was relayed in the survey response. Every respondent remained anonymous.

The survey was introduced to the PhD students with the following text at the beginning of the survey form:

“Welcome to a survey by Uppsala University’s Doctoral Board (DN)! With the following questions, DN is assessing the situation in certain areas regarding PhD studies at Uppsala University.

There are three short sections: 1) Salary 2) Writing Support Services 3) Other Possible issues you want to report.

1) According to the collective agreement UFV-PA 2022/3294, each PhD student is guaranteed a raise in salary after completing 50% and 80% of their studies, respectively. How this achievement is measured, however, is not always objective and the raise is not always granted reliably.

2) DN is currently investigating how PhD students at UU use writing support services and what services are most popular. We, therefore, have 4 questions on the use of services like Grammarly and Ref-N-Write or other support software you'd like us to consider.

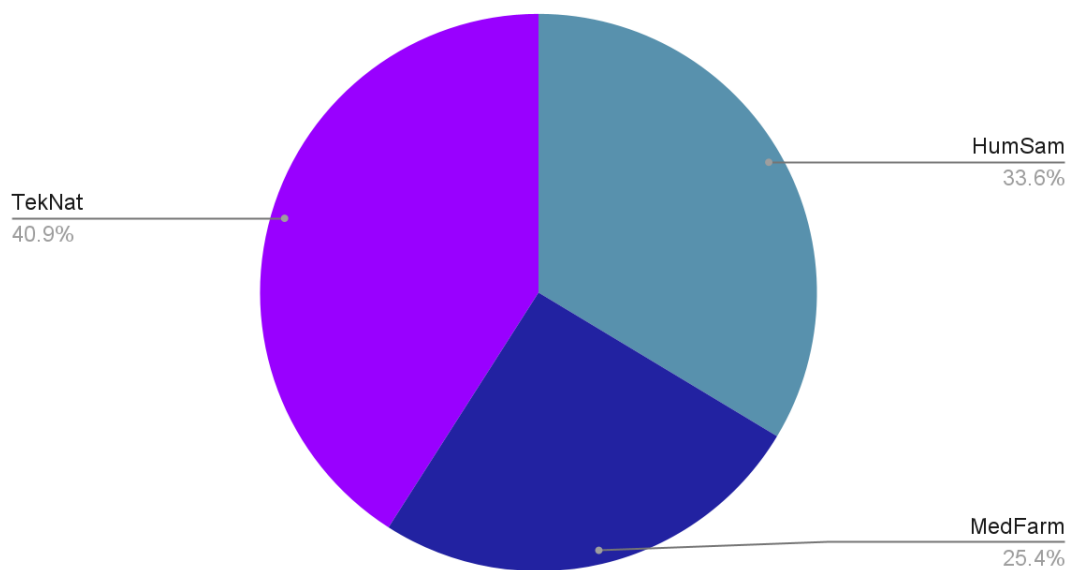
3) In the end you find the opportunity to report to us any issues you might experience in your PhD or ideas you'd like to present. DN is always working for the best of all PhD students and as such we'd like to hear what you think.

The Data taken in this survey is anonymised and will not be traced back to individual participants. The raw data will be analysed only within DN and only by the respective group. Aggregate results will be published in report form on the DN website after the evaluation has finished. The raw data will be stored only until the end of the academic year to protect privacy interests.”

## 1.4 Demographics and Sampling Bias

A total of 467 PhD students answered the survey. This represents 18.3% of the total 2548 number of PhD students active at Uppsala University in 2022. The number of participants was similarly distributed amongst the 3 Disciplinary Domains as illustrated in Figure 1-1. The exact number of respondents by departments, faculties, and disciplinary domains can be found in tables 5-1, 5-2, and 5-3, respectively, at the end of the report. TekNat is traditionally the largest of the domains, with the highest number of employees.

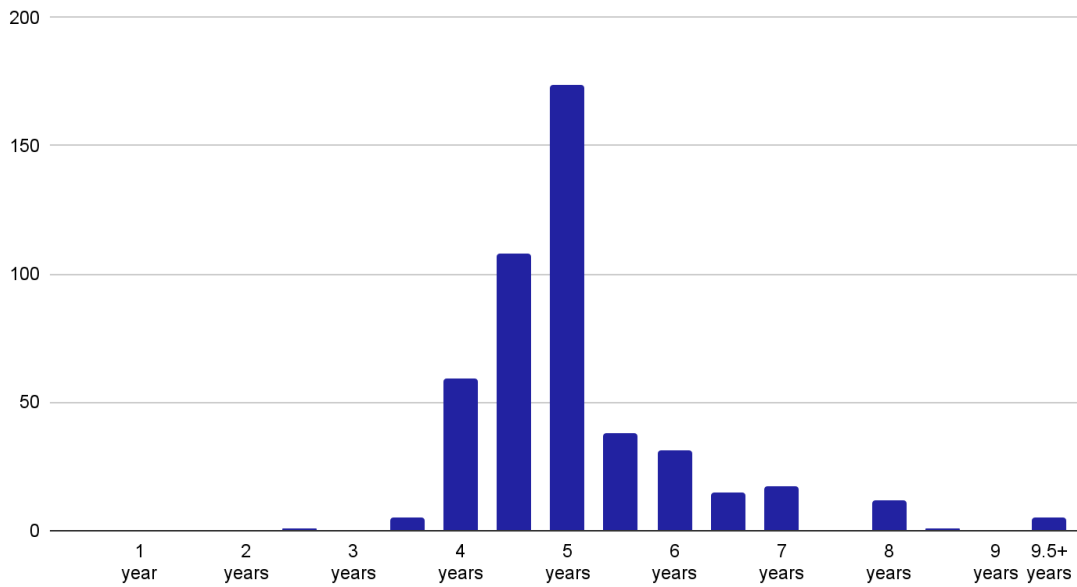
Distribution of survey responses divided by disciplinary domains.



**Figure 1-1.** Disciplinary domain distribution of the respondents. The disciplinary domains at Uppsala University are Medicine and Pharmacy (MedFarm), Science and Technology (TekNat) and Humanities and Social Sciences (HumSam). A total of 465 students have responded to the first question.

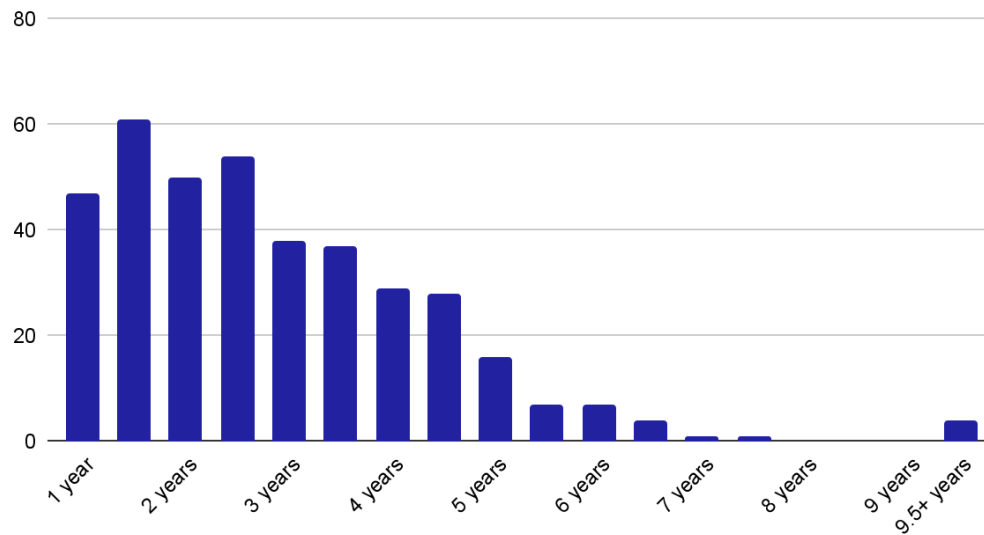
Additionally, we identified that the majority of PhD students that answered the survey are within the first two years of studies, as shown in Figure 1-3. It is worth keeping in mind this sampling bias when analysing the main results from this survey. It also reflects on the willingness of PhD students at earlier stages of their studies to answer surveys that will potentially have a positive impact on their course of studies. However, PhD students in the later stages of their studies are still represented in this survey. This reflects their motivation to provide valuable feedback through these surveys that can lead to positive changes for generations to come. The average respondent expects their PhD to take a total of 5.1 years including leaves of absence and time spent on other duties, see Figure 1-2.

## 2. How much time do you expect your PhD to take in total from start to end?



**Figure 1-2.** Expected total time of PhD studies, including work that is not directly related to writing a dissertation. The question received a total of 466 responses.

## 3. How much of that time has passed at this point?



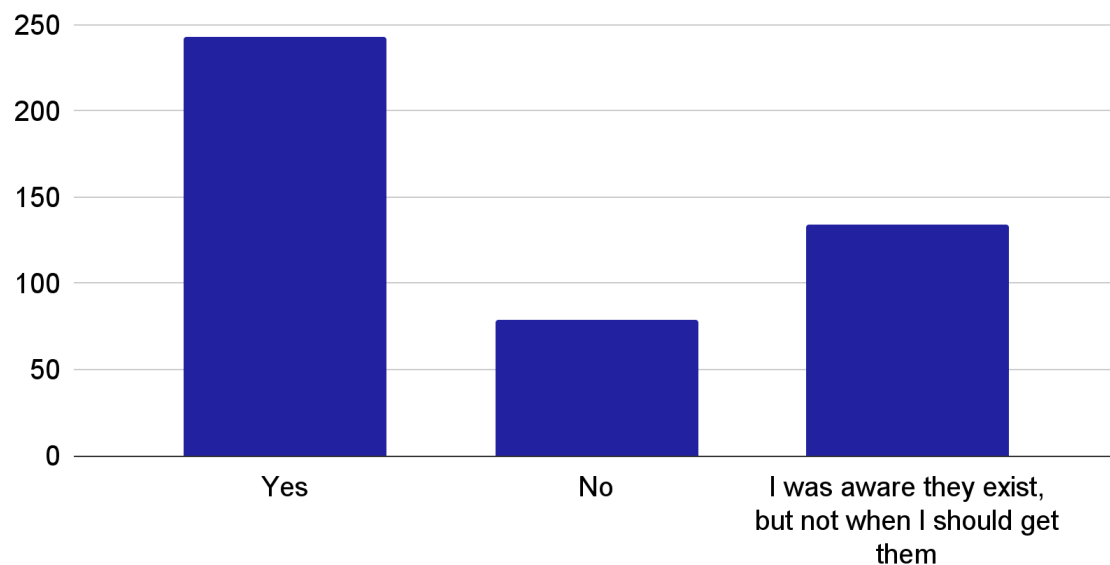
**Figure 1-3.** PhD stage at the moment of the survey. The question received 466 responses.

## 2. The 50% and 80% progress raises

### 2.1 Are PhD students informed about the 50%/80% progress raise and are they informed about the requirements needed to achieve them?

When assessing the knowledge about the raises after completing 50% or 80% of the PhD studies with question 4 of the survey, 53% of the respondents were aware of them and 17% had no prior knowledge about them, as seen in Figure 2-1. A third group of around 29% of respondents mentioned they were aware that these raises exist, but they are unsure of how to qualify for them. This situation reflects that many surveyed PhD students are informed about salary raises and when they are qualified to receive them. However, some more work is yet to be done for the 46% of surveyed students that have no prior knowledge or are unaware of the specific guidelines to obtain the raises.

4. Were you informed about the 50%/80% raise and what permits you to get them, by your supervisor or otherwise?



**Figure 2-1.** Were you informed about the 50%/80% raise and what permits you to get them, by your supervisor or otherwise? A total of 456 students responded to this question.

## Comments section

To understand the particular circumstances some PhD students might have, we included a comment section for this question. Around 14% of the participants (64/467) wrote a comment. We have clustered similar comments into three main categories reported here (the clusters might overlap):

- Special cases: Around 9/64 (14% of the comments) participants are PhD students under special regulations. They stated that this salary raise does not really apply to them, for several reasons (working in the clinic, employed by the region, double-degree and therefore paid by another university, special grants);
- Reaffirming the lack of knowledge about the raises: 14/64 (22% of the comments) participants reported that they don't have a clear idea about the rules and regulations of this salary raise;
- Reporting main sources of information: Around 9/64 (14% of the comments) reported that they received information about salary raise by several sources: other PhDs, SULF, PhD handbook, TNR. Some of them reported that the supervisor never mentioned it.

## 2.2 Do PhD students get their 50% and 80% progress raise in a timely fashion, once the requirements are met?

Our next goal was to identify how long it takes for the raises to be effective after achieving the respective milestones. This is illustrated in Figures 2-2 and 2-3.

Figures 2-2 and 2-3 summarise how long it took to get the respective raises. Out of the participants that were eligible for the 50% raise, 71% received it within 1 month after reaching the milestone, while 17% received it within 3 months. 12% of participants reported that the raise was effective after more than 3 months. Based on Figure 1-3, only around 41% (190 out of 466) of the respondents have already studied for more than 50% of their expected PhD time.

Similarly, based on Figure 1-3, only 112 participants (24%) have already studied for 80% of their study time. 58 participants eligible for the 80% raise have responded to question 7. According to Figure 2-3, 66% of them received the 80% raise within 1 month of reaching the milestone, while 16% received it within 3 months. Also in this case several participants (19%) reported that the raise was effective after more than 3 months.

5. After reaching the 50% raise, how long did it take for the 50% raise to take effect?

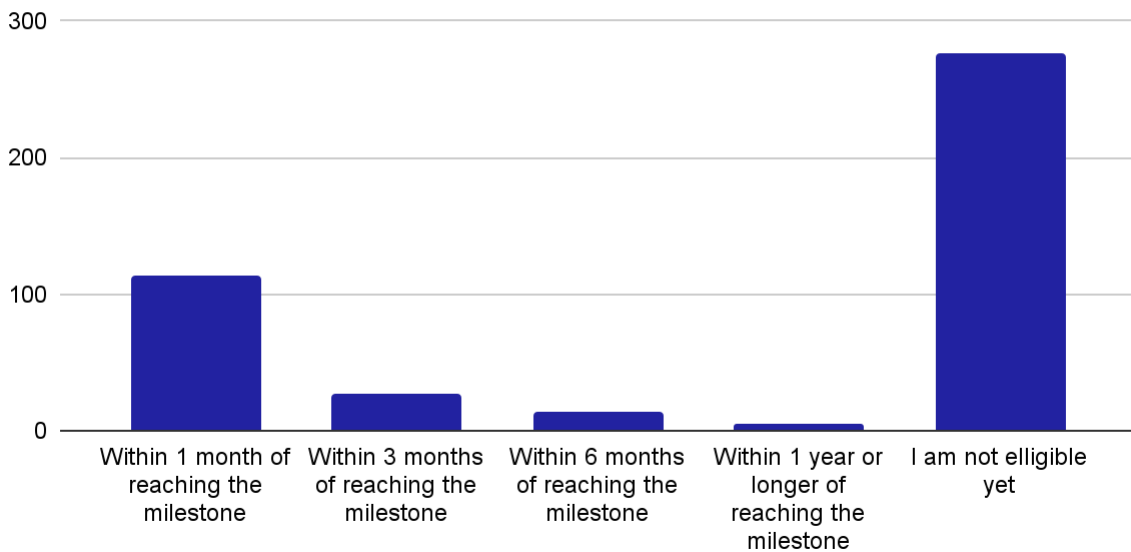


Figure 2-2. 159 students responded they were eligible for the 50% progress raise. 277 answered that they were not eligible yet. In total, 436 students responded to this question.

7. After reaching the 80% raise, how long did it take for the 80% raise to take effect?

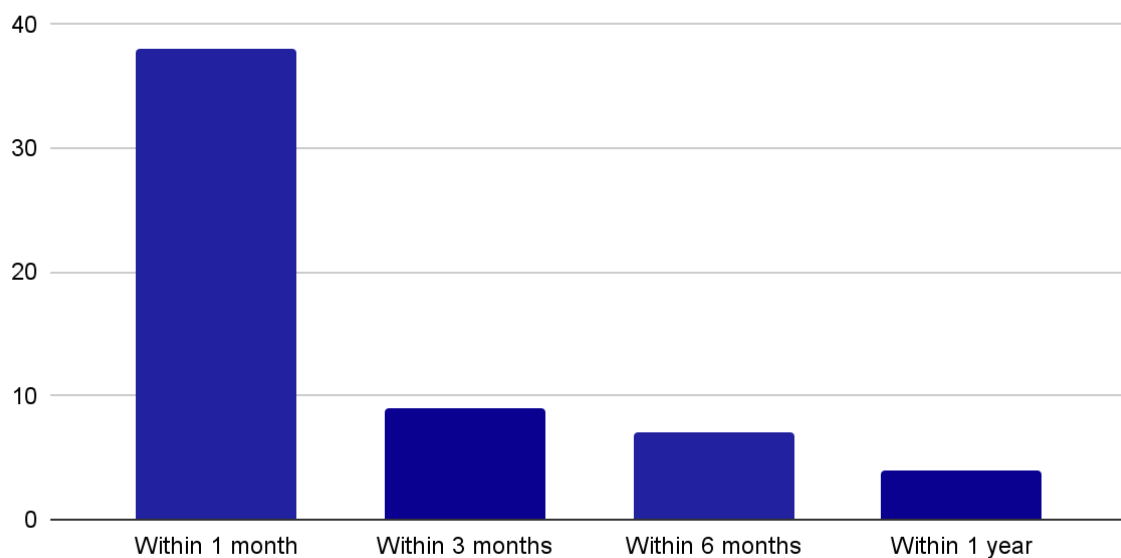


Figure 2-3. The graph illustrates the answers of 58 respondents. Additionally, 355 (not shown) answered that they were not yet eligible for the 80% salary raise. A total of 413 students have responded to this question.

### 2.3 Do the 50% and 80% progress raises on average coincide with 50% and 80% study time?

We identified that the average study time of PhD students surveyed is 5 years. With this in mind, we analysed if the implementation of the 50 and 80% raises in practice are in congruence with the same percentage of study time. For the 50% raise, surveyed students reported they qualified and received it after 2-2.5 years of study time. For the 80% raise, participants reported that they qualified and received it after 3-3.5 years of study time. The responses to these questions can be seen in Figures 2-4 and 2-5.

#### 6. How much study time had passed once the 50% raise took effect?

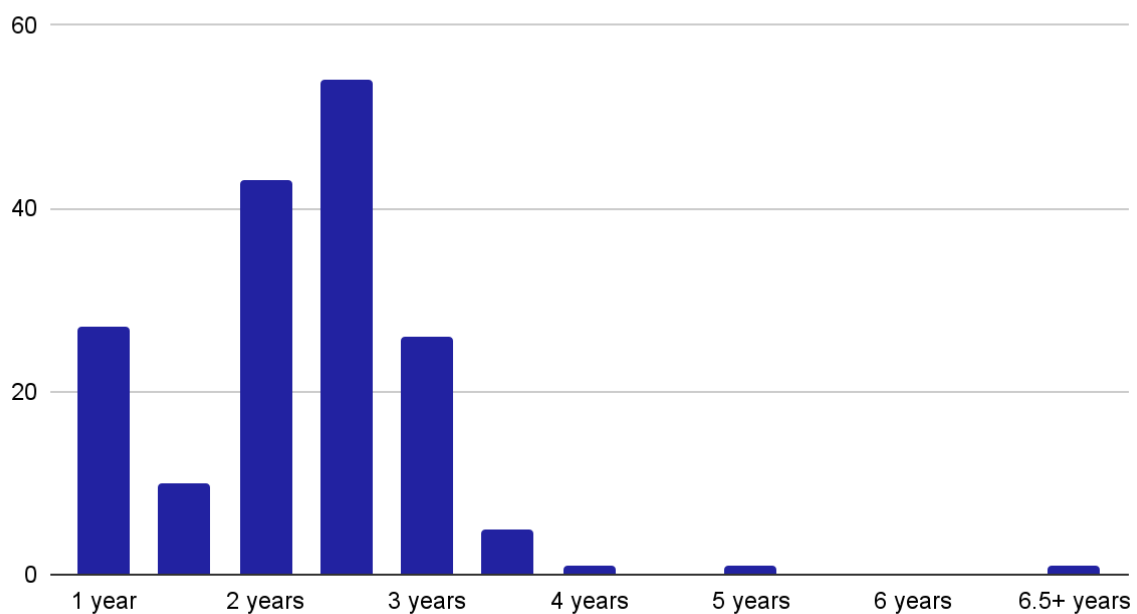


Figure 2-4. This graph illustrates the responses of 168 students.

## 8. How much study time had passed once the 80% raise took effect?

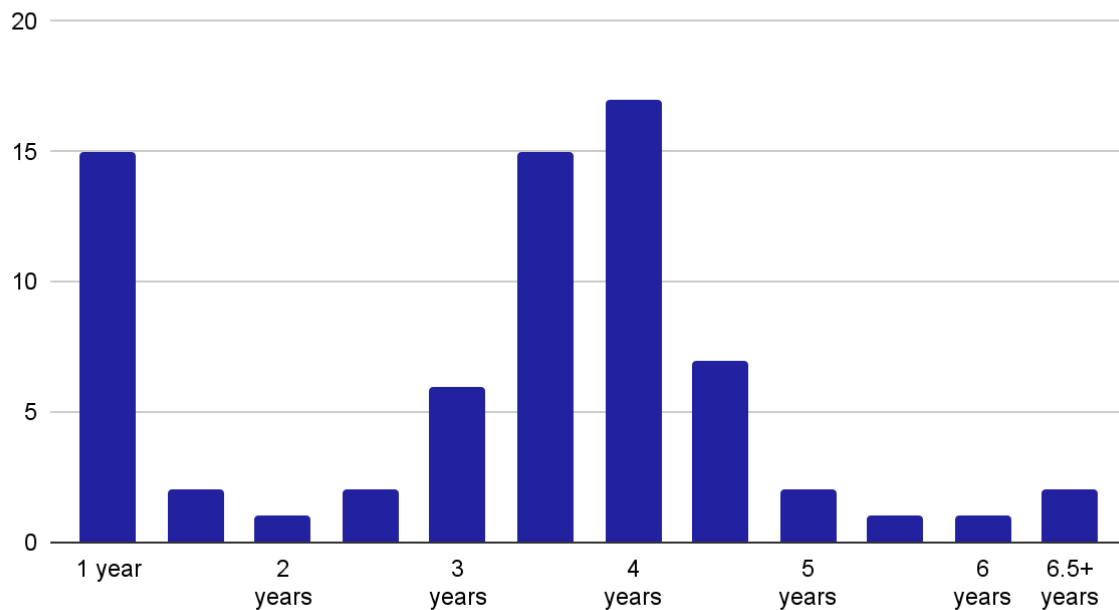


Figure 2-5. This graph illustrates the responses of 71 students.

## 2.4 Conclusion

According to our data, most PhD students seem to receive the 50%/80% salary raise within 3 months after reaching 50%/80% of their study time. There are several cases, especially around the 80% raise, in which it takes more than 3 months and hopefully, this survey would help raise awareness of these issues so the parties involved would take action to tackle these delays.

The general timing of eligibility of the 50% and 80% progress raises seems to correlate well with 50% and 80% of total study time passing. This too, however, has outliers where the raise comes much earlier, or much later.

### 3. Writing support services

The aim of this section of the survey was to investigate how PhD students are helped by writing support services (WSS) and the demand for financial support to pay for them from the university. We define WSS as “any services or software that aids in the process of scientific writing which can be accessed either online or offline”.

Although we asked the above questions, the survey lacked the definition of WSS, and a question of if the respondents know or have used WSS. Thus, it is uncertain to estimate how many respondents were aware of these services and had the experience to use them.

Questions 9 to 11 were answered by 89-96% of the total respondents (467 students). 16 people commented that they were not aware of these services, but there might be more respondents who wondered what WSS are, as mentioned in the introduction due to the lack of definition and question about it.

#### 3.1 Which kind of writing support services, if any, are PhDs of Uppsala University using and how important are they for their work?

The responses to question 9, “Are you currently using any of the following writing support services?”, are presented in Figure 3-1. Two-thirds of the PhD students that answered this part of the survey did not use any writing support service. Among the services listed as options, Grammarly was the most popular one. 30% of the students use either Grammarly paid or free version.

9. Are you currently using any of the following writing support services?

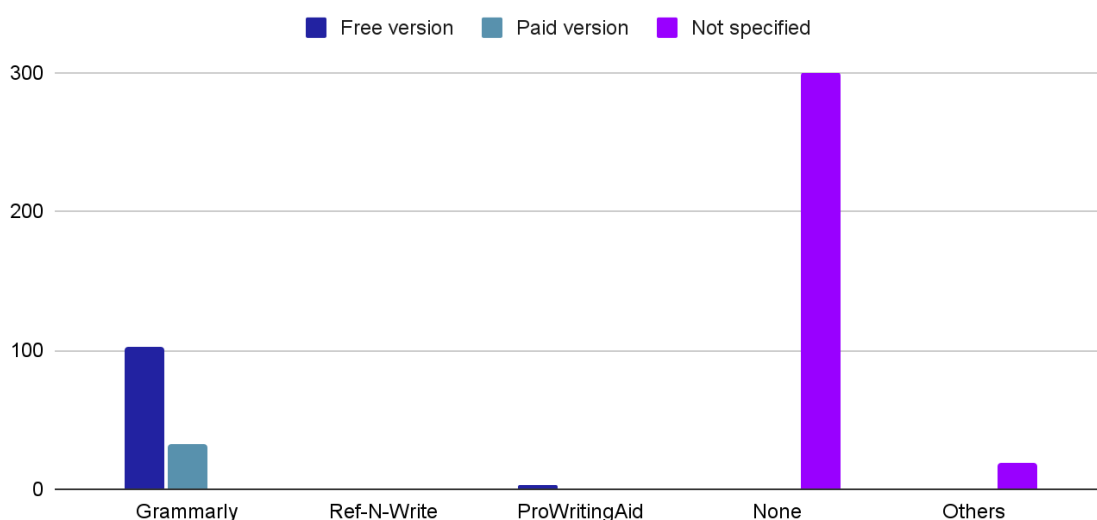


Figure 3-1. The number of respondents who use WSS. A total of 449 students have responded.

In Figure 3-2, all services brought up by the respondents as something they currently used are summarised by the number of mentions, meaning that the answers to question 9 are complemented by counting the comments. Among other services mentioned were Otter.ai, Qualillbot, Wordtune, Writefull, Reverso, DeepL and Chat GPT. Students also mention writing courses and some have hired or are planning to hire consultants or professionals to proofread their manuscripts/thesis.

Writing services used by PhD students, by number of mentions

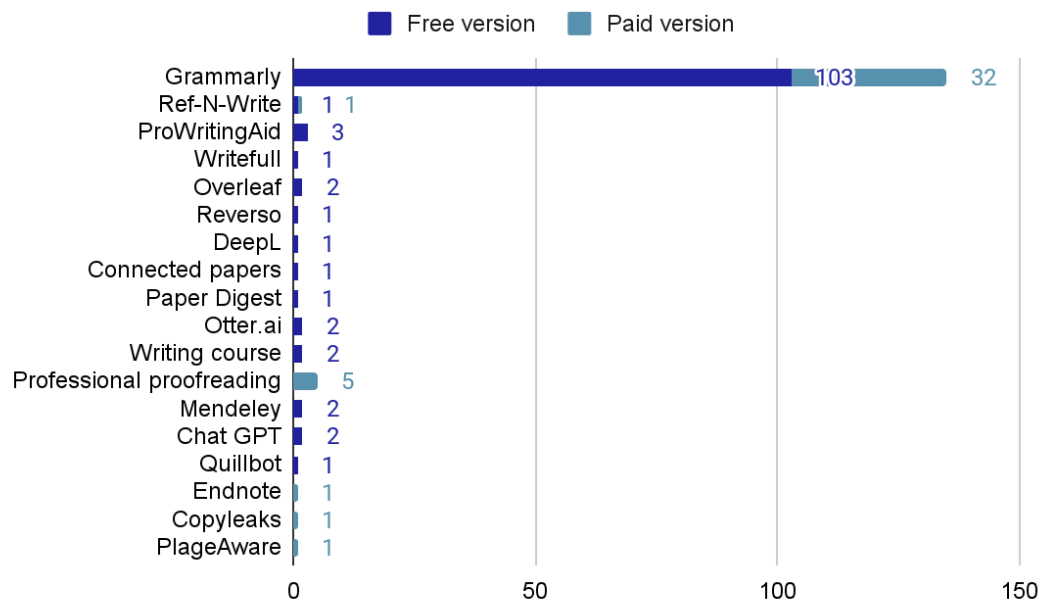
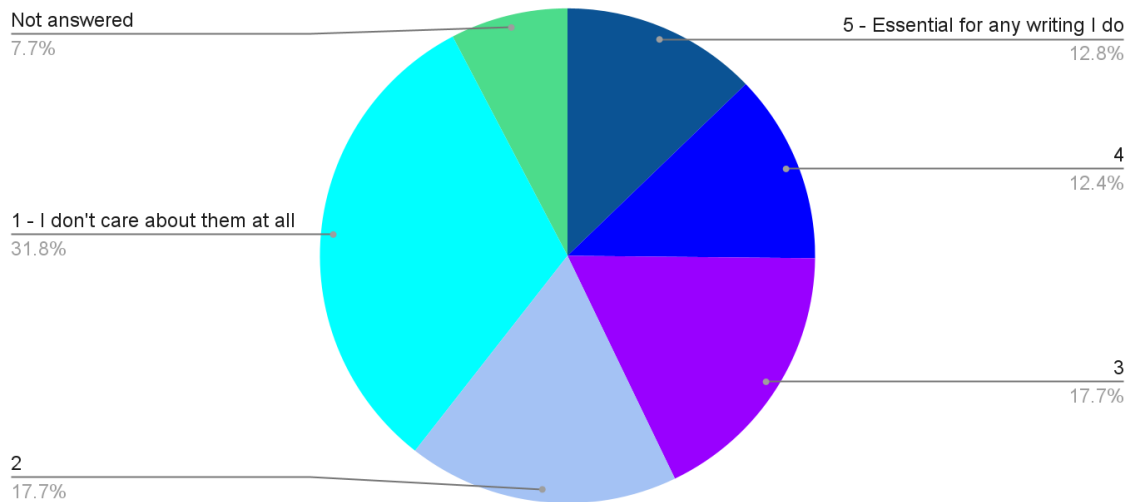


Figure 3-2. The number of WSS used by respondents. This figure includes mentions in the comments as well as the responses shown in Figure 3-1.

### 3.2 Is there a university or faculty wide demand for certain writing support services?

How useful writing support services are for the students was shown by the results of question 10 “How important are writing support services in your writing process?” in Figure 3-3 and 3-4 and question 11 “Are there any support services you have currently not used because they are behind a pay-wall, but would use if they were subsidised fully or in part by UU?” in Figure 3-5. According to question 10, more than half of the respondents were not benefited from WSS (54% answered as 1 and 2). Some students commented that they are taking the academic writing course or using proofreading services instead of writing support service software.

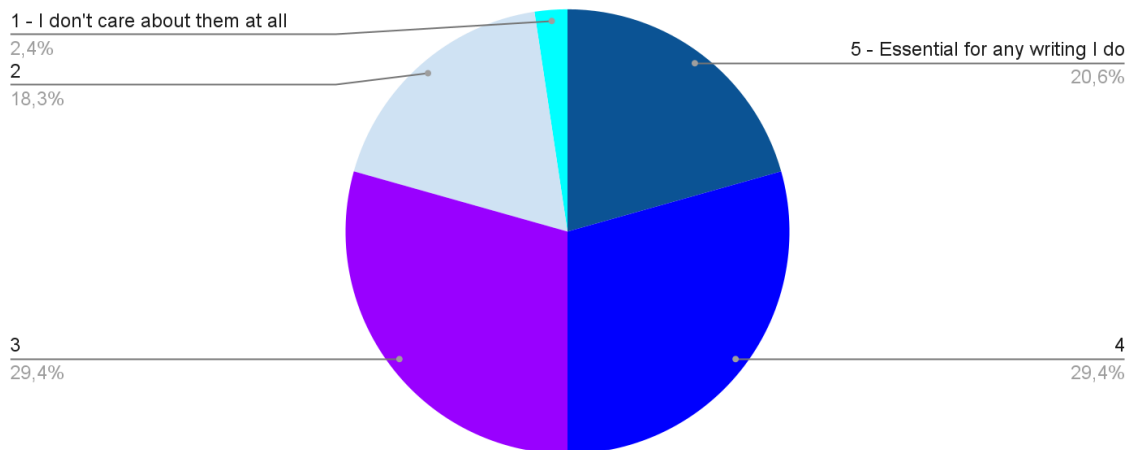
### 10. How important are writing support services in your writing process?



**Figure 3-3.** The importance of WSS by all respondents. A total of 433 have responded to this question.

However, students who do use a writing support service find it important, indicated by 50% answering question 10 with a number of four or higher as shown in Figure 3-4.

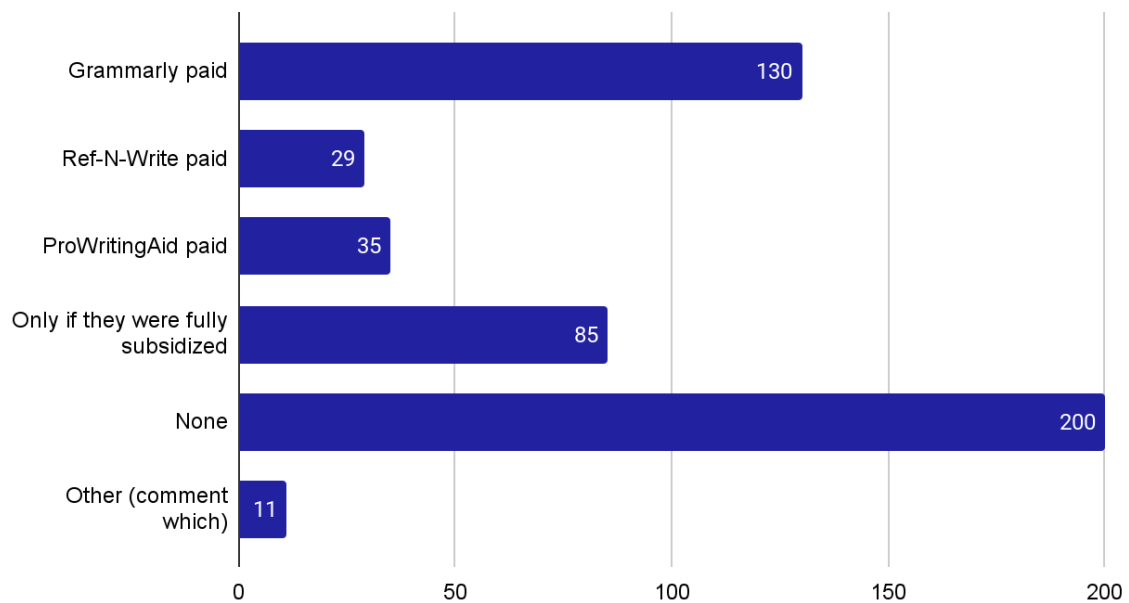
### 10. How important are writing support services in your writing process? - Only respondents who use at least one service.



**Figure 3-4.** The importance of WSS by respondents who use them. In total this plot shows 126 responses.

When asked if there are any support services they haven't used because it is behind a paywall but would use if they were fully or partly subsidized by the university, Grammarly paid was the most popular one, mentioned by 130 students while ProWritingAid and Ref-N-Write paid were mentioned by 35 and 29 students respectively. 11 respondents noted other services, such as <https://languagetool.org/>, Wordtune read, Overleaf premium, and Chat GPT paid.

### 11. Are there any support service you have not used because they are behind a pay-wall, but would use if they were subsidised by UU?



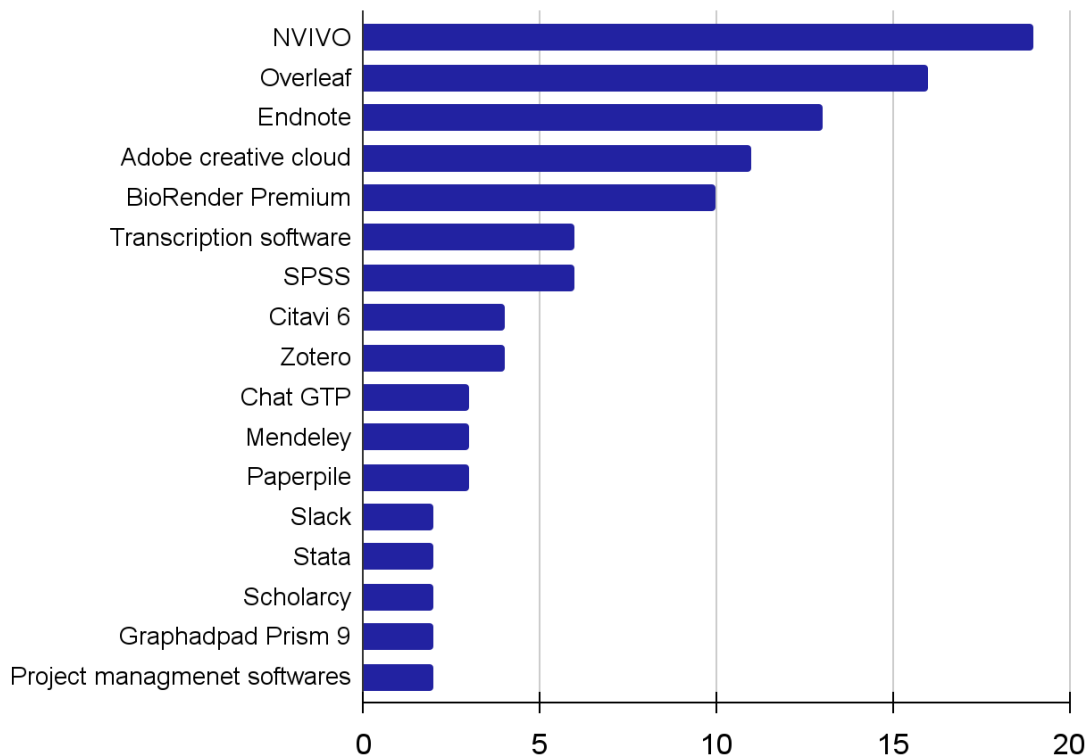
**Figure 3-5.** WSS which would be used by respondents with the university's subsidy. This question was answered by 426 students.

### 3.2.1 Other suggested support tools

Many tools were suggested in the free comments of this part and the answers of question 12 "Are there any other software or technical support tools you would like us to consider?". Those mentioned at least twice are presented in Figure 3-6. Tools with only one mention, not presented in the figure, were: SPAD (data mining and statistics), RStudio (statistics), Connected Papers (visualised search engine for scientific papers), Paper Digest, Research Rabbit, Dropbox, Trint (transcription software), Noise cancelling headphones, Mobile phone, Atlas.ti (data analysis), Sympolab (maths education), WolframAlpha (mathematical calculations and derivations), Otter.ai (transcription service), Reading tablet, Python, Wordtune (writing support), Support for Linux systems, Pymol (molecular visualisation), Snappene (molecular biology tool), ChemDraw (draw

chemicals), Microsoft office, OneNote (part of microsoft office package), Miro (online whiteboard), Notion paid (notetaking and organising), Jump (statistics), Mathematica (simulations and calculations), Pycharm (IDE for python), RedCap (online surveys), Roamresearch (note taking), Scrivener (organising writing), Maxqda (qualitative data analysis), Scapple (mindmapping), Reverso (translating), Bib it now (reference handling), ArGIS (GIS services), Matlab (calculations and simulations).

### Suggested software/technical support with more than one mention



**Figure 3-6.** The other suggested services by respondents

Overleaf, NVIVO and Endnote were the most suggested ones. Grammarly, Ref-N-Write and ProWritingAid in Figure 3-5 still have more votes than any software suggested in the free text. However, the software and tools in Figure 3-6 were completely unprompted by the survey. It is thus to be expected that fewer respondents take the time to think of their own individual answers. Of all suggestions or tools mentioned by student users, Writefull (specific for academia), Wordtune, and Quillbot would be counted as writing support services as they provide similar support compared to Grammarly and ProWriting aid, and Ref-N-Write. Overleaf, the second most requested service in the free comments, is a typesetting service using Latex, where the premium version would provide faster compiling, more collaborators on one project, better reference handling, and larger data

storage. Many students also mentioned reference services such as EndNote, Mendeley, and Zotero, Design software such as Photoshop and Adobe Design Illustrator, and statistics software.

### **3.2.2 Other findings from the comments**

One notable discovery in the comments is the differences in how PhD students pay for writing support services or other software they use in their work. Some students already pay by themselves while the Department of History, for example, provides Grammarly paid. For other software such as reference managers, the funds of the PhD student is used in at least one case and another one is planning to use part of his/her funds to pay for professional proofreading of his/her thesis. Another question of similar nature is how one accesses software without a university-owned computer. It should also be noted that some PhD students write their thesis in Swedish. There is a Swedish grammar program called Stava Rex, that is available through the University, but it was not mentioned by the students.

### **3.3 Conclusions**

Main conclusion of this part of the survey is that the majority of the respondents do not use any writing support services. Many lacked awareness that this is available for free. The writers believe that writing support services could benefit all PhD students, as the students who use any of these services state that they are important tools in the writing process. If any software should be subsidised by the university, Grammarly has the biggest probability to be used by a large number of students, as there are already students using this service. There are also many other kinds of tools that could help PhD students but except for Overleaf, the need is specific depending on the research topic; therefore, it makes sense for them to not be financed by UU as a whole, but rather by the respective departments.

One student also pointed out how life-saving grammar and writing software can be for people with dyslexia and other disabilities.

## 4. What moves the PhD student body? What are potential focus points for DN and the university to move on?

In this section, we make some notable highlights from the general comments of the respondents. In order to do that meaningfully, we first briefly comment on the questions analysed, explain our methodology, and characterise the answers in a general manner. Then, we divide the highlights into different categories and write down summaries of the categorised comments and issues identified. To flesh out the topics, we have selected some anonymous quotes from the PhD students regarding respective issues. Lastly, we write down giveaways in the form of core insights.

This section covers mostly the analysis of question 13:

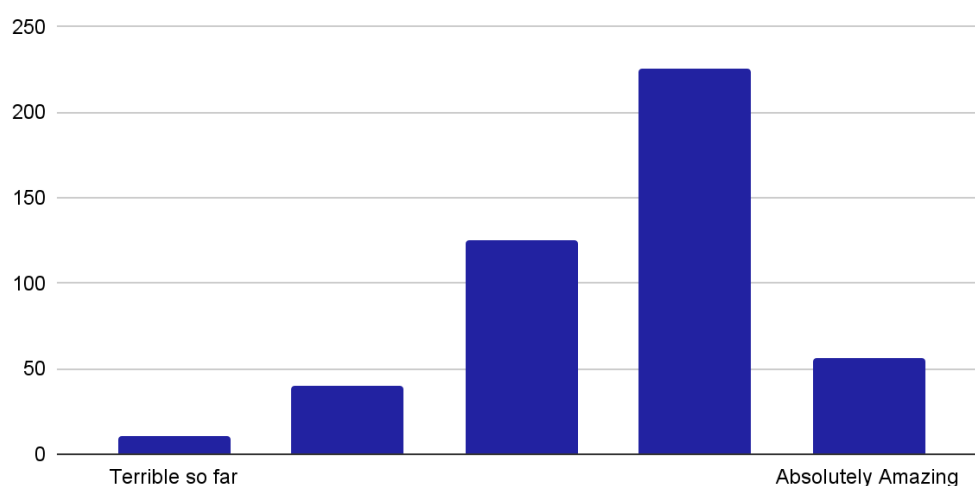
“Are there any other matters or issues related to your PhD studies that you want to mention to us? This can regard anything from, for example, issues with your supervision or work environment, to ideas in developing doctoral education or networking at UU, for example, ideas for events aimed towards PhD students.”

This open question received 134 answers. In addition to question 13, we also asked the PhD students a general numerical question related to their satisfaction with their studies.

“As an overall judgement: How satisfied are you in your PhD as of now? This just serves to give us a general idea. (1 = Terrible so far, 5 = Absolutely Amazing)”

The mean of the answers was 3.6 while the standard error was calculated as 0.9. The mode was 4, and the distribution was skewed to the higher values.

14. As an overall judgement: How satisfied are you in your PhD as of now? This just serves to give us a general idea.



**Figure 4-1:** Answers regarding the overall satisfaction of PhD students. A total of 458 students have responded to this question.

While these simplified statistics don't tell us anything about the circumstances of individual PhD students, they are useful when evaluating the open comments. Only 29% of the survey responses contained an answer to the open-ended question 13. Despite the answers to the question containing some positive output, the vast majority of the answers were interpreted as either negative or neutral. Our hypothesis is that the negative answers would be overrepresented in the open comments, as many satisfied respondents would not bother to comment on it. This evaluation is backed up by the seemingly satisfactory mean value in question 14, which implies that the majority of the PhD students are satisfied with their studies to some degree. A more detailed analysis and a breakdown by groups of certain statistics are in the section Aggregated Statistics.

Overall, the answers to open question 13 were interesting and useful. We categorised the answers into the following categories:

- A. Issues related to supervision
- B. Work environment and health-related issues
- C. Information flow to PhD students
- D. Issues within departments and faculties, language and money
- E. Residence permit and migration agency issues
- F. Studies and research
- G. Campus Gotland
- H. Social life and suggestions to DN

The categories themselves give a satisfying overview of the open comments, and together they cover almost every aspect of a daily PhD life. While going through the responses, we added single answers to different categories.

Some responses were left without further analysis. This may have happened due to several reasons, for example, not understandable comments, the comment's content based on non-factual matters, the comment's target being outside the scope of activities for DN, and so on. On the other hand, we decided to highlight issues from the response based on the following criteria: 1) how frequent the answer is, 2) how thematically close the response is to DN's operations, 3) does the answer provide important or new insight to DN or to UU, and 4) how tangible the issue raised is and is it possible to formulate follow-up actions based on it.

Finally, before further analysis of the answers, we note again, that in several open answers students indeed reported being satisfied with their studies.

## 4.1 Analysing the answers

### A. Issues Related to Supervision

The main root of the complaints mentioned in most of the comments was found to be related to supervision.

One issue mentioned several times was the ambiguity in getting one's rights, such as the prolongation if their supervisor is not supportive. It is even more difficult and less clear how to solve conflicts with one's supervisor if they are the director of studies or prefekt. In general, conflict management routines appear to be unclear for PhD students, for example, how to address micromanagement by a supervisor.

A noteworthy issue that was revealed in the comments coming from different departments is the change of supervisor. This has happened to be very hard and even sometimes not possible or denied by the department despite the official advertisements around this matter.

Some PhD students were willing to teach but their request was denied by the supervisor.

Another point that was brought up in the comments was about the unclear role of the second supervisor(s). Alternatively, the second supervisor feels powerless to help the student with conflicts with the main supervisor.

It has been mentioned that different requirements are needed for supervising a compilation thesis vs. a monograph thesis, and some supervisors do not have enough knowledge about the format that is not the most common one in their department.

*"I receive no supervision or tutoring from my supervisor. My research is effectively independent." - PhD student, Faculty of Social Sciences*

*"My supervisor [is] advising me to work during vacation because he has done it as a PhD student." - PhD student, Faculty of Science and Technology*

### B. Work Environment and Health-Related Issues

A good proportion of the comments considered work environment and health-related issues in their daily PhD life.

For example, some wrote that the expectations of being a PhD student are often not discussed such as the expected working hours, which leads to confusion and misunderstanding between the student and their supervisor or other colleagues.

In several comments, it was mentioned that the current offices are not well-suited for silent, independent work and raised the need for such environments on campuses.

Many comments revealed a real demand for mental support for PhDs with special needs or diagnoses. Moreover, it was suggested to train supervisors to learn how to have a more effective and supportive interaction with this group of PhDs.

There is a need for a clear policy regarding sexual harassment and dealing with sexist comments from senior employees, and in general poor behaviour in the work environment.

One of the most common words in the comments was “stress”. The topic of many comments was individual issues such as stress due to different reasons like lack of supervision, lack of time, the unpredictability of tasks, teaching and finding courses when needed.

Deficiencies in the accessibility of meeting rooms regarding microphones, wheelchair accessibility, hearing aid loops, etc were mentioned several times.

LAS (employment protection) rules work against PhD students in some cases and they are difficult to design to accommodate the nature of PhD studies.

*“Our understanding of the situation is that the university is willing to sacrifice our well-being in order to avoid conflicts with successful researchers. Economic gain for the university seems to be more important than a tolerable work environment for the university’s junior employees.”  
- PhD student, Faculty of Medicine*

*“The stress level at my department is really high. Burnout and emotional distress are almost normalised as part of the PhD process here.” - PhD student, Faculty of Social Sciences*

## C. Information Flow to PhD Students

Lack of a functioning information flow that meets the needs of PhD students was another major issue that was found in the comments. Information flow does not work as it should and many respondents do not know where to find the information they need at the right time.

For example, students in a department of the faculty of science and technology reported that they don’t know about sick leave practicalities, leaves of absence, and other important rights they have.

There are demands to have information about PhD courses and seminars inside and outside one’s department and faculty. Some respondents requested clarity about which email lists PhDs should be subscribed to as default to get all the relevant information. The information on PhD exchanges and research visiting opportunities is missing.

For PhDs coming from a non-academic background, there is a need to transfer knowledge on academia's informal traditions, norms, and other matters that make their daily academic life easier. Some comments asked for a yearly introduction lesson on the Swedish Academic System for new PhD students to give them a better perspective on the system they have entered.

#### D. Issues within Departments and Faculties, Language and Money

Some of the identified issues and remarks considered issues which can be solved only in the PhD students' respective department, faculty, or disciplinary domain, or are by some other ways spun by HR, administration, or other support facilities most often offered in the department level in UU. In this section, we also cover comments related to Language within UU.

Many comments reported a phenomenon that one labelled as Language Exclusion, which means people talking in Swedish even when non-Swedish people participate in the same discussion. In addition, translations of important documents and contracts were mentioned. Large waiting times for Swedish Language courses were also reported, and some students even wanted mandatory Swedish courses to force the University to increase its supply of these Language courses. Alternatively, we find it also crucial to highlight that one respondent reported an issue that Swedish is not used at all despite UU being a Swedish institution. This highlights the complexity of Language policy within UU.

One problem identified is the allocation of teaching for PhD students, for example how the PhD student can plan for their teaching, or in some cases when a teaching opportunity comes with very short notice. Another large issue identified is the allocation of teaching between English and Swedish students. Most of the teaching duties offered in many of the departments are in Swedish only, and here the English students might face hindrances in pursuing teaching experience. In some departments, the PhD students reported that the teaching duties they have been assigned take more time than what they are compensated for. Some answers reported not being compensated for supervising Master's students even though this should be counted as teaching time.

*"I haven't started teaching yet. I love the idea of teaching but not at a Swedish university, because of all the bureaucracy surrounding courses." - PhD student 1, Faculty of Theology*

Problems regarding the arrangement of travel to conferences or other business trips are also identified. The departments have vastly varying cultures in allocating travel funds to PhD students and reimbursing travel costs, and thus almost all information regarding this must be offered on a departmental level. Many relevant questions were raised: How does a PhD student apply for money for travel? How large is the allocated budget per single PhD student? How does the PhD student know if the department can afford the trip? Are there

alternative means of financing? This is closely related to the information flow section above. Some PhD students also commented that using the university's assigned Travel Agency increases the prices and thus reduces the PhD students' opportunities for participating in international conferences. In addition, to travel, other monetary and financing-related issues were brought up. In general, the PhD students appear to have low information on how their position is funded and whether there exists any vital information related to their PI's, supervisor's, or project's financial status. A student asked whether their supervisor can order the PhD student to take partial responsibility for searching for more financing for their respective project.

Few students complained about the small salary of PhD students. Additionally, the issue of costs of living and other expenses being increased due to inflation and other reasons was mentioned.

Regarding general HR affairs, many answers reported that information related to prolongation, PhD students' access to the real termination date of the contract (after prolongation, sick leave, family leave, and so on). The PhD students strongly believe that information such as this should solely be the departments' responsibility.

*“PhD students do not have access to the system containing information on hour prolongations; we have to reach out to the administration for this information, which makes the system untransparent and deprives us of control over our time” - PhD student, Faculty of Educational Sciences*

Specifically related to the medical departments and faculties – or the disciplinary domain of MedFarm as a whole – some students reported an issue that the clinical PhD students are not covered in agreements that consider full-time PhD students, despite them working full-time “within the university”, as their clinical work is not counted as a time allocated to their PhD studies. Here we identify a problem where the students can fall between the region and the university, as well as between their status as a PhD student and a clinical employee.

## E. Residence Permit and Migration Agency Issues

One major issue and a cause for problems are issues related to Residence permits, support regarding permit processes by UU or other authorities, and long and unpredictable handling of the application processes.

The extensions to residence permits take up to 6 months, and during this time the PhD students can not access international conferences, or other activities which are important for their studies. Many answers raised the question of how does UU support students during these processes? In addition, the students wished for more information about the extension applications.

The so-called Aliens Act was also raised multiple times, and it was reported to decrease the number of PhD students who wished to stay in Sweden after graduation.

In addition, many students reported that the handling times of migration processes were issues for them during the early parts of their studies.

Considering all the replies left in the open question 13, the most frequent topic was related to residence permits, Migrationsverket, and similar.

*“Because of the change in the law [Aliens Act] and the lack of an adequate response by the University, I cannot recommend that prospective doctoral students apply here [to UU].” - PhD student, Faculty of Theology*

*“And also how when you are in the process of renewing the residence permit you can’t leave the country and in some cases have to miss conferences, network and research opportunities because of that.” -PhD student, Faculty of Science and Technology*

## F. Studies and Research

One student asked that if course credits and degree requirements for PhD students change, should the students be allowed to complete the requirements they were initially promised? The student has had their Ladok credits lowered to adjust for new courses.

Acceptance criteria for cross-department or cross-disciplinary courses offered, such as the Academic Teacher Training, Swedish for Academics, Ethics, Introduction to Scientific Research, etc. were mentioned. The students would benefit from the majority of these mandatory and optional courses as early into their studies as possible, but instead, the acceptance criteria prefer students who have studied for a longer period of time.

The ethical review process related to research projects has been reported to be long and difficult for PhD students who often have no support. This phenomenon was reported by a few answers, one of them mentioned especially the study field of humanities.

Several departments also seem to lack PhD level courses, and the information regarding these is often scarce. Additionally, in the answers, it was noted that combining the employment status of PhD students with their responsibility of studying for (Master’s level) courses is difficult.

While the majority of the PhD students within UU are employed, some answers wished to highlight the issues of those PhD students that are not employed and instead financed by other means. This can refer to the general information available in the departments and other communication channels of the university.

## G. Campus Gotland

Some answers were related to Campus Gotland, and more specifically, the environment for PhD students located there. Some students reported feeling isolated and lacking similar networking and social opportunities to those in Uppsala.

While not being mentioned in many answers, most likely due to the low number of answers from Campus Gotland, this issue deserved a mention as the location of PhD students is often neglected both in DN's operations as well as in opportunities offered by the university.

## H. Social Life and Suggestions to DN

In this section we briefly analyse answers which revolved around the social aspect of PhD studies as well as suggestions to DN. The two slightly different notions are lumped together as the themes often appeared in the same answers.

Many students suggested that there should be more recurring afterworks and other informal parties. Additionally, a "PhD Network" was suggested, presumably as a place or a medium where PhD students could communicate and share their experiences.

One answer noted that getting prolongation for DN duties is complicated and that the "person responsible" doesn't answer emails. The chairperson suggests that there may have been a mistake regarding the address, and any prolongation-related questions to DN should be addressed to [dn@uufs.se](mailto:dn@uufs.se).

Additionally, many students reported poor networking opportunities at the university, especially regarding finding collaborators for interdisciplinary projects throughout the university. Finally, related to scholarships, some students reported that there should be events related to grants and scholarships.

## 4.2 Conclusions from the general comments

The answers to the open question 13 raise a lot of interesting questions and as such, they create an outlook of a grim life as a PhD student at Uppsala University. However, as stated above, they do not represent the PhD studentship at UU as a whole. Instead, they act as a collection of various issues, ranging from very local and personal problems to wide and national issues. To summarise and help the reader to gauge a better understanding of these issues from the perspective of PhD students, we provide a few core insights from these topics.

Based on the answers, there is a clear demand for a proper department-level – or otherwise well-tailored – information package aimed towards new PhD students in every department. In addition, an introduction training or similar "FAQ seminar" should always be provided to all new PhD students, preferably more than once per academic year.

There appears to be a lack of tools for PhD students to deal with different kinds of issues with their supervisors. How does the university or the student's respective department support the student to ensure that their rights are realised when a conflict breaks out? Additionally, there does not seem to be proper processes available to ensure how junior employees, such as PhD students, could report harassment within their workplace without them risking their future careers. In addition, several answers reported that their supervisor directly demands working overtime or that there "is a general feeling that one needs to work overtime".

Despite visa extensions and other residence permit related questions being outside the scope of the university, there is a demand for support services within the university to support the students with these issues. Based on the answers, this could, for example, mean support to find alternative ways to fulfil learning outcomes if a student misses a conference or a field trip due to a visa extension process, or support to help the students generally with migration issues.

In addition, many of the issues identified vary vastly between the departments. Thus, many of the issues can not be generalised further from the realm of the department the comment was given from. Despite this, it is crucial that the departments recognise the possibilities of different issues, and identify the right place where these possible problems could be tackled.

## 5. Aggregated statistics

Aggregated statistics were computed to assess the overall needs of the PhD students within the university. Of the participants that responded, the mean time that had passed for the participants was 2.4 years ( $\pm 1.7$  (SD)). The mean time expected to finish the PhD from start to end was 5.1 years ( $\pm 1$ ). The mean importance of writing support services was 2.5 (out of 5 points) ( $\pm 1.4$ ). Finally, the mean satisfaction score of the PhD was 3.6 (out of 5) ( $\pm 0.9$ ).

In order to examine the needs per individual area within the university, the data has also been stratified on the department level, faculty level, and domain level. The three tables below show the results at these three levels of the university. Note that departments with 2 or fewer responses were omitted from these results.

**Table 5-1** The aggregated survey results per *department*.

Department	Nr. Responses	PhD duration*	Years passed	Writing support**	PhD score
biology education centre	10	5.3	2.8	1.9	3.3
archaeology and ancient history	7	4.9	3.1	2.1	3.1
business studies	9	5.2	1.9	2	3.3
cell and molecular biology	7	5	2.1	3.6	3.9
chemistry - bmc	11	4.5	2	2.3	3.4
chemistry - ångström laboratory	21	4.9	2.3	2.6	3.5
civil and industrial engineering	3	5.3	2.5	1	4.3
earth sciences	23	4.8	2.1	2.3	3.8
ecology and genetics	4	5	2.2	1	4
economic history	5	4.4	2.1	2.6	3.2
economics	10	4.7	1.9	3.3	3.7
education	20	5.2	2.8	2.9	3.5
electrical engineering	8	5	1.9	3	3.5
food studies, nutrition and dietetics	3	6	2.7	1.7	4
government	9	5.4	2.5	1.9	4.4
history	7	5.3	2.9	2.5	3.4
human geography	8	4.9	2.3	2.4	3.8
immunology, genetics and pathology	15	4.6	2.7	2.7	3.7

informatics and media	7	5.1	2.2	3.8	3.1
information technology	35	5.5	2.7	2.7	3.6
law	9	5.3	2.2	2.5	3
linguistics and philology	7	4.9	2.4	2.6	3.7
materials science and engineering	17	4.5	1.8	2.6	3.6
mathematics	11	5.1	2.9	2	3.8
medical biochemistry and microbiology	6	5.2	2.6	1.8	4
medical cell biology	5	4.8	2.2	1.6	3.4
medical sciences	15	5.4	1.9	2.6	3.8
medicinal chemistry	9	5.2	2.3	2.1	4.5
modern languages	4	6	4.4	1.3	3.2
organismal biology	4	4.6	2	2.8	3.8
peace and conflict research	6	5.4	2.2	2.3	3.4
pharmaceutical biosciences	10	5.4	3	2.7	3.6
pharmacy	20	5.4	2.4	3.9	3.5
physics and astronomy	36	4.9	2.7	2.8	3.6
psychology	7	5.4	2.4	1.6	3.4
public health and caring sciences	13	5.1	1.7	2.4	3.6
scandinavian languages	6	5.8	3.8	2	3.8
sociology	5	5.1	2.1	2	3.6
statistics	3	5.8	3.8	1	3.3
surgical sciences	11	5	3.3	2.1	3.5
theology	11	5.3	2.4	2.3	3.5
women's and children's health	14	4.8	1.7	2.7	3.6

\* The column "PhD duration" refers to question 2 on the respondents' self-reported evaluation of the expected total length of their PhD studies. The number is given in years.

\*\* The column "Writing support" refers to question 10. How important are writing support services in your writing process?

**Table 5-2** The aggregated survey results per *faculty*.

Faculty	Nr. responses	PhD duration*	Years passed	Writing support**	PhD score
Faculty of Arts	24	5.2	3	2.5	3.4
Faculty of Educational Sciences	20	5.2	2.8	2.9	3.5
Faculty of Languages	19	5.4	3.2	2.3	3.7
Faculty of Law	9	5.3	2.2	2.5	3
Faculty of Medicine	79	5	2.3	2.4	3.7
Faculty of Pharmacy	39	5.4	2.5	3.1	3.7
Faculty of Science and Technology	190	5	2.4	2.5	3.6
Faculty of Social Sciences	73	5.1	2.3	2.3	3.6
Faculty of Theology	11	5.3	2.4	2.3	3.5

**Table 5-3** The aggregated results per *domain*.

Domain	Nr. responses	PhD duration*	Years passed	Writing support**	PhD score
Humanities and Social Sciences	156	5.2	2.6	2.4	3.5
Medicine and Pharmacy	118	5.1	2.3	2.6	3.7
Science and Technology	190	5	2.4	2.5	3.6

## 5.1 Conclusion

At the department level, various differences can be seen. Of the expected PhD duration, the mean value ranges from 4.5 years to 6 years between the departments. The desire for writing support services ranges from 1 to 3.9 (out of 5), and the overall mean scores granted for the PhD range from 3 to 4.5 (out of 5). At the faculty level, the differences become smaller. The mean expected PhD duration ranges from 5 to 5.4 years, the mean desire for writing support services ranges from 2.3 to 3.1, and the mean scores given to the PhD range from 3 to 3.7. At the domain level, the differences become even smaller. The mean expected PhD duration ranges from 5 to 5.2, the mean desire for writing support services ranges from 2.3 to 2.6, and the mean scores given to the PhD program range from 3.5 to 3.7. Thus, differences between departments seem larger than between faculties and domains. It should be noted that the different number of respondents per department

should be taken into account when interpreting the results, as well as the number of departments present in each faculty.

## 6. Doktorandnämnden's questionnaire to the Departments of UU

In addition to the survey directed to the PhD students in Uppsala University, DN gathered information directly from the 49 different departments of UU and received 16 answers. The departments that answered were ALM, Archaeology and Ancient History, Biology Education Centre, Business Studies, Chemistry (Ångström), Earth Sciences, Economics, Game Design, Literature, Mathematics, Medical Sciences, Peace and Conflict Research, Psychology, Public Health and Caring Sciences, and Sociology.

The purpose of the questionnaire to the departments was to help DN to gauge the plethora of different ways of operation amongst the departments in UU and thus help DN to evaluate and benchmark good practices from the departments as well as identify possible weak ways of operation from the point of view of PhD students. Within UU, the departments have a substantially large jurisdiction in matters related to PhD students. Due to the decentralised administrative system, these different departments have different ways of interpreting certain university-level policies as well as other legal and administrative documents.

Answers to the questionnaire were gathered from 20 Dec 2022 to 22 Jan 2023, and it consisted of the following questions:

1. How do the PhD students in your department gain the 50% and 80% salary increases? For example, are the increments recognised through completion of a half-time seminar, based on study time, supervisor evaluation, or by other means? Is there a document (a guideline or a prefekt's decision, for example) which is applied when increasing the salary?
2. Similarly, is there a guideline or a document which guides the prolongation in your department in accordance with UFV 2021/2081, or could you otherwise summarise on a general level how prolongation is applied in your department? For example, do the PhD students need to separately apply for prolongation with regard to teaching or study association duties? Is the prolongation counted for working days or calendar days? How does the student know when their contract ends, i.e. what their current total amount prolongation is?
3. UU decided on a Parental Policy Document (UFV 2005/119), and at least the Faculty of social sciences has made a decision (SAMFAK 2020/109) on how they interpret the document. The university's parental policy consequently states that a faculty committee can extend the period of study in such special cases when the parental leave "created special difficulties for the resumption of material collection, experiments or the like."

Do you have any faculty or department level decision which guides the parental leave decisions in accordance with the Parental Policy Document?

4. When making decisions regarding prolongation, salaries, parental leave, or other similar matters, can the PhD student appeal the decision made? If yes, how?
5. Do you have anything else you would like to share with us?

The departments could reply back in both Swedish and English.

Since the original purpose of the questionnaire was to help DN internally evaluate the methods of different departments within UU, full and public quality analysis of the answers was not made. However, the questionnaire contains relevant information related to this survey, and in some parts, the answers of the departments may have been referred to in this document. Next, we briefly provide the topical and aggregate summaries of the answers by the departments.

Based on the answers, the most common criterion for 50% and 80% increases is to measure an actual study time (i.e. after deducting prolongation, leaves, etc), closely followed by seminars or evaluations of supervisors. Even though most of the departments shouldn't have issues with this, the supervision-based prolongation can prove to be problematic if the PhD student isn't heard.

There are various ways in dealing with prolongation. Most of the departments regularly update the students with the time they have remaining, which is excellent. Some departments (for example Archaeology) have their own Programme Guidelines on what constitutes prolongation, most refer to UFV 2021/2081. Of course, there isn't a single optimal way to deal with prolongation, but the answers provide a good base for discussion. Also, it is noted that the differences between instances where counting working days is more optimal than calendar days can be difficult to determine.

Most of the departments don't have their own parental policy document and instead follow either the university-level document UFV 2005/119 or faculty-level guidelines, especially regarding the so-called additional prolongation: SAMFAK 2020/109, MEDFARM 2020/250, or supplementary guides based on the university-level decision by TekNat.

Many departments don't have any formal appeal procedures, but instead, they encourage students who perceive unfairness to discuss them with their supervisors, *studierektors*, directors of PhD studies, or *prefekts*. Some departments specify that if such an event happened, they would probably encourage students to write a letter of appeal to the Study Director and Prefekt. Most respondents found the question odd and thought that such cases would indeed be very rare. From this one can conclude that the question wasn't well formulated.

For more information and details regarding the answers to the questionnaire, please contact the chairperson of Doktorandnämnden at [dn@uufs.se](mailto:dn@uufs.se).

## 7. Summary

The goal of Doktorandnämnden's 2023 Spring survey was to gauge the current issues of PhD students at Uppsala University and identify potential focus points to act on.

The survey was spread via email to all PhD students who are at least 1% active at Uppsala University and have not actively unsubscribed from the DN newsletter. It received a total of 467 responses, which corresponds to ca. 18.3% of all PhD students at Uppsala University. Of the 14 questions asked, 5 were on the implementation of the 50% and 80% progress raises granted to PhDs at Uppsala University. 4 questions were on the use and demand of services that support the scientific writing process (software and otherwise). 2 questions were asked regarding the general work-related wellbeing and the other 3 regarded the general demographic of the respondents.

Both, the 50% and the 80% progress raise coincide well with the passing of 50% and 80% study time. Among the respondents, the 50% progress raise has been on average granted after ca. 2-2.5 years and the 80% progress raise after 3-3.5 years of study time. Once eligible, the raises were granted within a month in 71% of the cases for the 50% raise and 66% of cases for the 80% raise. Another 17% (50% raise) and 16% (80% raise) got it within 3 months of gaining eligibility. In 12% (50% raise) and 19% (80% raise) of cases, it took more than 3 months, and in multiple cases more than a year to get the raise after the student was deemed eligible. The communication of these raises leaves room for improvement. Even though 83% of the respondents generally knew about the raises, 46% of students do not know what they need to do to get them.

The writing support service with the largest usage among respondents is, by far, Grammarly. 135 students have reported using either the free or paid version of Grammarly, while the second most popular service (proofreading by a professional) was reported 5 times in the comments. It was possible for the same respondent to report multiple services. Beyond that, more than 20 services were mentioned in the question's comments and as part of the response options. Many of them have very specific areas of application, like an AI-based transcription of spoken word or support for drawing chemical reaction equations. The most often requested support services other than Grammarly were, in order of suggestions, ProWritingAid paid, Ref-N-write paid (both of which were prompted by the question), Nvivo, Overleaf premium and Endnote (which were completely unprompted, other than asking for suggestions). More than 66% of respondents have reported not using any writing support service at all. On a scale of one to five, where five is "essential for any writing I do", 28% of respondents have ranked writing support services at 4-5.

From more than 134 comments, a clear demand was found for a well-tailored information package that helps every new PhD student with their everyday life in their new role as PhD at Uppsala University and a life in Uppsala and Sweden. A lack of tools and information on how to make junior voices heard, such as that of a PhD student, and processes to report different issues that occur between the PhD students and their supervisors were also

commonly mentioned. Such issues can vary widely, from direct demands of working overtime to harassment. There is a distinct need for better support from the University when handling visa extensions and Swedish residence permits. Acts of the migration agency are largely beyond the reach of the university, however, the impact of these issues is large for PhD students, who are expected to work in international cooperations, go on field trips and speak at conferences within a very limited amount of time. Further concerns have been identified that can only be understood and approached at a departmental level.

On a scale between 1 and 5, with 5 being “Absolutely Amazing”, the respondents answered with an average of 3.6, indicating that these issues are also possibilities for improvement and that life is not always grim. Many PhD students are satisfied with their experience.

## 8. Author Contributions

Many thanks go to those who were involved in the making of the survey and this survey report.

The survey and its analysis were organised by Lennart Spode, a task delegated to him by the Doctoral Board of Uppsala University (DN).

The survey is based on an idea by Jila Shamslatifi. A raw draft of the survey was designed by Jila Shamslatifi and Lennart Spode. The final survey questions were designed by Lennart Spode, in cooperation with Jila Shamslatifi, Topias Tolonen, Oreste Affatoto and Endrina Mujica and DN.

The design of the report, including figure design, report outline, structure and colours, writing the introductory chapter and the final summary were led by Lennart Spode.

Endrina Mujica was in charge of analysing the responses and writing the report section on demographics and sampling bias.

Oreste Affatoto was the main responsible for the analysis and report section on the 50% and 80% progress raise.

Topias Tolonen, with the help of Jila Shamslatifi, were responsible for analysing the questions on the general well-being of the PhD students and writing the chapter “What moves the PhD student body?”.

Aggregated statistics were evaluated and collected from the survey responses by Markus de Ruijter. He also wrote the corresponding report section.

The questions to the departments described in chapter “6. Doktorandnämnden’s questionnaire to the Departments of UU” were formulated and communicated to the departments by Topias Tolonen, as the chair of DN. The chapter in the report was written by Topias Tolonen and Endrina Mujica.

The questions on writing support services were initiated and led by the PhD representatives Makoto Shigei and Klara Kiselman at the Doctoral Education Board (FUN) of the Faculty of Science and Technology. They were also the main ones responsible for analysing the responses and writing the corresponding section in the report.

Final proofreading was done by Lennart Spode, Jila Shamslatifi and Topias Tolonen.

Thank you to everyone who has responded to the survey!