

DN Action Report HT22–VT23

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The purpose of the document is to document matters handled by the Doctoral Board of the Uppsala University (*Doktorandnämnden, DN*) during the academic year 2022–2023. Primarily the target group is future DN actives, although the document is to be presented to the current DN actives in the June meeting of 2023. The document also serves a purpose of evaluating the goals we have set for ourselves, and to be helpful for steering the organization to the upcoming years.

The document is written by the chairperson alone, and its purpose is not to be an objective evaluation of the organization or the dealings of the chairperson. While writing this, I recognize that my view in writing about the organization I have led is limited. Nonetheless, my aim is to make a useful overview of the year.

In addition to being an internal document of the organization, it is also the purpose that the document or its contents are shared publicly on the DN website during the summer 2023. By this way, the doctoral students will have an open opportunity to see how the doctoral board has done during the year. This is only fair, as they are being represented by DN, they are the key stakeholders of DN, and they are being constantly advertised to by DN.

As always, you can always reach me out for any questions. In addition, any discussions related to the political and organizational outreach of DN are very much welcomed. Even though I'm somewhat an organizational nerd, I'm more defined by my laziness, so this document will most likely leave some unplanned gaps.

References

The operations of DN revolve around its regulations, found here:

<https://uudoctoralboard.se/docs/dn-regulations/>

The action plan for the current academic year was approved in the October meeting of DN. In this text it is referenced constantly, and you can either check the link directly or if the sharing options are not favorable for you, ask the current chairperson for a copy:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UE0z_olqjhm6JgZdWR2pP0PFf4wvRAIHFIGUDXfmI_8/edit?usp=sharing

Although I'm going to summarize meeting minutes of DN meetings for the academic year, it's best to always check the first-hand source. For the meeting minutes, see:

<https://uudoctoralboard.se/docs-category/minutes/>

All meeting materials and other materials produced during the academic year should be available in the Google Drive of the account dn@uufs.se. In addition, I have stored copies of the materials I've produced myself, so you can always reach out to me, as well.

Finally, I have prepared a so-called cheat-sheet document for the upcoming DN chairpersons. It gives a lot of perspective to the inner dealings of DN, and you can have it by either contacting me or some of my successors.

Evaluation of Action Plan Goals

Sexual Harassment within Uppsala University

The main task of the working group for the academic year was set to make a Harassment prevention booklet. The booklet has been prepared mainly during the spring term, and the project got equal opportunities funding from the Uppsala University. The funding is used for printing costs, graphic designer, and compensating the main workers with prolongation. In addition, a call for harassment testimonies was published in order for us to gather information related to the booklet. The booklet is still in progress, and hopefully it's published in the autumn 2023.

See the sexual harassment working group for a list of involved people

Internationalisation within UU and position of international students and researchers

Internationalisation-related issues have been one of the most talked about issues in the DN during the year. We mean by internationalisation-related issues all the issues faced by international students and staff in Uppsala University, for example language-related issues and migrational issues. Continuous discussions were held with the University throughout the year, and perhaps the single most important achievement was for DN to negotiate the English translation of the employment contracts to PhD students, which is currently being prepared at the university-level.

In addition, DN discussed a lot of issues caused by migration services, visas, and visa extensions. In addition to the aftermath of the Aliens act, we identified issues with the immigration system, for example long waiting times, excluding families' visits, exclusion from conferences and other learning activities during visa extensions, and so on. DN, led by the board member Jila Shamslatifi, teamed up with Junior Faculty, Postdoc Association, IFSS and Internationalization Department of UU to research the problems with migration-related issues more closely. A survey was conducted, analysis of which is to be completed by the early Autumn 2023.

COVID-related

Apart from singular COVID-related prolongation issues, COVID pandemic was not discussed during the year 2022-2023.

Housing and wellbeing

Housing and wellbeing of PhD students was not focused on during the year, although the livability working group met during the year a couple of times. The continuous issue of housing shortage in Gotland was identified.

Orientation and Career of PhD students, Spreading Information

DN did not organize any orientation for new PhD students, although the idea is still excellent for those who want to pursue such activities within DN. DN collaborated with Junior Faculty and Postdoc Organisations through the Life Beyond Academia Webinar series and the migration-related survey. In addition, we spread information related to the PhD handbook published last year.

Events, Community Building and Reaching out to PhD Students

Events of the DN were perhaps one of the liveliest activities of DN. DN established a new working group to focus on more events, and the working group started organizing a successful Friday Night Feverz after work event, which was held 4 times during the spring 2023. Latest of the installments in June 2023 attracted over 50 PhD students. In addition, the seminar series Life Beyond Academia, co-organized by Junior Faculty, attracted hundreds of students through the spring 2023. For example, the first webinar alone attracted over 80 PhD students. Additionally, DN continued financing the Science Fika.

DN tried to evolve its communications towards PhD students. By early summer 2023, DN still reaches out to most of the students via an email-list, although DN operates Facebook group “Doctoral student Uppsala” and the page Doktorandnämnden - the Doctoral Board of Uppsala University.

Other PhD Student Advocacy

DN discussed multiple PhD student related issues throughout the year, many of them considering salaries, prolongation, and other employment-related issues.

In addition, DN was represented by the chair in the biweekly Vice-Chancellors management councils, as well as in the dean day meetings, *studentsamverkan*, and other meetings with the university management.

DN Working Groups during the year

Working Group on Sexual Harassment

The working group was active and it involved have been Hanna Fredriksson, Meryem Saadi, Mohamed Al-Sabri, Elena Prats, Irene Muli, and Marie Moulin.

Working Group on Livability and Wellbeing

The working group met a few times during the year. Involved have been Ayesha-Mae Bilal, Elena Prats, and Irene Muli.

Working Group on Supervision

Details of this working group are unclear.

Working Group on Internationalisation

Working group was not established this year, but it gained a lot of activity during the year. Involved were Jila Shamslatifi and Lennart Spode.

Spring Survey Working Group

A working group was established to analyze the so-called Spring survey. See below for more details. The working group was led by Lennart Spode, and involved were additionally Oreste Affatato, Klara Kiselman, Endrina Mujica, Markus de Ruijter, Jila Shamslatifi, and Makoto Shigei.

Working Group on Events - The Eventorzzz

Established during autumn 2022. Involved have been Oreste Affatato, Ayesha-Mae Bilal, and Jila Shamslatifi.

Other operations during the year

Spring Survey

Following is quoted directly from the survey report itself.

Between January 24th and February 21st 2023, the Doctoral Board of the Uppsala University ("Doktorandnämnden", "DN") 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.

The report 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 ("Forskarutbildningsnämnden", 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 report consists of 36 pages, and you can access the full report on: <https://uudoctoralboard.se/docs/dn-spring-survey-report-2023/>

UUFS

Relationships with UUFS and the individual student unions were discussed during the year. Although the vision of the cooperation is still unclear at the end of the academic year, much useful progress has been made. For example, the DN chair is now routinely invited to SKUM and UUFS meetings.

Questionnaire to the departments

In addition to the Spring Survey, 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 decentralized administrative system, these different departments have different ways of interpreting certain university-level policies as well as other legal and administrative documents.

See the spring survey for a more elaborate description of the questionnaire.

Campus Gotland

In addition, DN discussed a lot the connection between DN and the campus gotland PhD students. DN recognized the need for Gotland students to be represented in DN, and additionally members of DN visited Gotland two times during the year to discuss timely issues with Gotland students. For conclusion, DN suggested that the permanent PhD member of Rindi's board could be incorporated into DN, and with them DN would be better suited to continue discussing both the issues in Campus Gotland and making the relationship between DN and local students more long-lasting.

Summary of matters discussed in the meetings

HT22

August

- First meeting of the year!
- Introduction and formulating goals for the year.

September

- Lots of updates from student representatives and PhD student ombudsman, especially around internationalisation.
- Budget was approved for the academic year.

October

- Plan of action was approved.
- Statement regarding students of Iran was approved.
- Salary thresholds of PhD students and writing support services were discussed. The discussion later led to the formulation of the spring survey.

November

- Operational grants to the faculty organizations were approved.
- The working group on events was established.
- Surveys and information gathering of DN were discussed in great detail.
- Anna Liv Johansson from UU came to the visit to discuss the 550th anniversary of the university.

December

- Actions of UU regarding the developments of Iran were discussed.
- The Spring survey was discussed.

VT23

January

- Visit of the prorector Coco Norén. Discussed items were Iran, low number of new PhD students, internationalisation, residence permits, and harassment.
- Internationalisation and residence permits were discussed also without the prorector.

February

- Science Fika initiative funding was decided on.
- We decided on jointly organizing a panel regarding reproductive health together with Uppsala Student Union.
- First glance of the Spring survey answers were introduced, as well as the answers of the departments to their respective questionnaire.
- Research Bill input was given.
- DN's communications were discussed.

March

- Internationalisation and campus Gotland were discussed.
- Budget proposal for the next academic year was agreed on.

April

- Discussion was held related to visual guidelines of printed PhD theses after UU updated its related guidelines.
- The principles of student representation were discussed
- The discussions of DN's communications and internationalisation continued.

May

- Election meeting was held, and 69 applications were received for all of the positions.
- The Spring Survey report was handed in.
- Statements regarding the ethical review law and the Government decisions on University boards were discussed.
- Printed thesis visual guidelines discussion continued.
- The meeting lasted for approximately 4 hours.

June

- Filler elections were held.
- We decided to send a letter regarding the updated visual guidelines to PhD theses to the Communications Division of UU.
- We discussed the year and the action plan
- We discussed briefly a newsletter for DN events and the salary of PhD students

DN Officials and Student representatives during the academic year 22-23

DN Presidium

Chairperson	Topias Tolonen
Vice-Chairperson	Elena Prats
Vice-Chairperson	Irene Muli
Secretary	Ayesha Mae Bilal
Event manager	Oreste Affatato

DN Board Members

FDR ord	Matthew Rosenberg
HDR ord	Philipp Ronchen
HDR sup	Linda Pfister
JDR ord	Erik Grahn
MDR ord	Endrina Mujica

MDR ord	Markus De Ruijter
SDR ord	Qinya Feng
TDR ord	Lisa Bukhave
TDR sup	Gabriel Echazu
TNDR ord	Jila Shamslatifi
TNDR ord	Lennart Spode
TNDR sup	Aisuloo Aitkulova
UDR ord	Fabiola Stein
UDR sup	Kimberly Norrman

Doctoral Student Representatives

Advisory Board for External Collaboration	Elena Prats
Advisory Board for Internationalisation	Lennart Spode
Advisory Board for Research	Anna Hallberg
Assessment Panel for Educational Development Projects (PUMA)	Xin Mao
Board for Investigation of Misconduct in Research (NUAF)	Jakob Beise
Board of Women's Mental Health during the Reproductive lifespan (WoMHeR)	Fatih Özel
Center for Gender Research	Matilda Lindgren
Centre for Disability Research board	Sara Lundberg
Centre for Integrated research on Culture and Society (CIRCUS)	Catarina Cederved
Centre for Multidisciplinary Studies on Racism (CEMFOR)	Galyna Kutsovska
Centre for Research Ethics & Bioethics board	Elena Prats
DU-UU Grant Panel	Camilla Lyckblad
Electoral College	Gustaf Jansson Bjurhammer
Electoral College	Martin Häggkvist
Electoral College (suppleant)	Bim Kilje
Equal Opportunities Advisory Board	Subhalagna Choudhury
Equal Opportunities Advisory Board (suppleant)	Sarah Glännefors
Gender mainstreaming reference group	Karin Kristensson
Gender Mainstreaming Reference Group	Ivy Weber
Joint Committee on Work Environment Issues	Carla Sacchi
Library Board	Caroline Lindroth
Project Group KoF 24	Ebba Widegren
Project Group KoF 24	Sara Åkerman
Reference group for the language workshop	Bim Kilje
Scholarship Board	Johan Hagelin
Steering committee for the language workshop	Xin Mao
Steering Group for the Sustainable Future Project	Jakob Beise
Steering Group KoF 24	Topias Tolonen

Steering Group KoF 24	Kimberly Norrman
University Board	Cecilia Lindskog Whiteley
Uppsala Diabetes Centre board	Giovanni Fanni