



# Supervision and study follow-up in doctoral studies

These guidelines have been established by the Faculty Board on 2022-02-22 and are valid from the same date<sup>1</sup>.

Reg. No. HS 2023/438

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<sup>1</sup> This is a translation of the Swedish version (Riktlinjer för handledning och studieuppföljning inom utbildning på forskarnivå dnr HS 2022/72). In the event of any discrepancy, the Swedish version of this document shall prevail.

## Table of contents

1	Introduction.....	3
2	Appointment of supervisors .....	3
3	Responsibilities and tasks for the supervisors .....	4
	3.1 Main supervisor .....	5
	3.2 Assistant supervisor.....	5
4	Practical matters concerning supervision.....	5
	4.1 Available supervision resources.....	5
	4.2 Advancement of the PhD student on the salary scale .....	6
	4.3 Change of supervisor.....	6
	4.4 Withdrawal of supervision and other resources.....	7
5	Transitional provisions .....	7
6	The document is valid from.....	7

# 1 Introduction

According to the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance Chapter 6, Section 28, there must be at least two supervisors appointed to each PhD student. One of them will be main supervisor. The PhD student is entitled to supervision during the education as long as the Vice-Chancellor, on the basis of Chapter 6, Section 30 of the Higher Education Ordinance, does not decide otherwise. A PhD student must be allowed to change a supervisor if they request to do so.

Supervision in doctoral studies pertains to the professional meeting between a PhD student and a supervisor. The time for supervision includes the time during which a supervisor and a PhD student meet and work on the PhD student's education. Also included in the time for supervision is time for work that takes place outside meeting hours, for example to review manuscripts, to establish and follow up on an Individual study plan, to plan mandatory seminars, licentiate seminars and/or public defence of doctoral thesis as well as to report results and other administration linked to the doctoral studies.

A supervisor represents the University of Skövde (the University) and has a great responsibility for the PhD student's education and for the PhD student achieving the national and locally established learning outcomes. The Individual study plan is a key tool for planning and implementing the doctoral studies.

## 2 Appointment of supervisors

A main supervisor and assistant supervisors are formally appointed in connection with the decision for admission of the PhD student. It is the supervisors' collected scientific competence that is a deciding factor in the selection of supervisors. The decision is made by the Dean after consultation with the Director of PhD studies. There cannot be more than three assistant supervisors. Additional assistant supervisors can only be appointed in exceptional cases. In such a case, a clear motivation must be attached to the application for admission of the PhD student. The Dean makes the decision on this.

At the University, the following regulations apply when supervisors are appointed:

- To be a main supervisor, a minimum requirement is the qualification required for appointment as a Docent.
- A main supervisor must be connected to the University either through employment, docentship or a contract for education in doctoral studies with another higher education institute, within the relevant area.
- An assistant supervisor must have at least a doctoral degree.

- At least one of the supervisors must have an employment with conditional tenure at the University.
- Family relationship or other close relationship between a PhD student and a supervisor is not allowed (See the University's "Guidelines on judicial disqualification judicial disqualification").

The main supervisor and at least one of the assistant supervisors must have undergone formal supervisor training or have the equivalent prior learning. In connection with the admission of a PhD student into doctoral studies, an agreement must be made on how the supervision will be organised and implemented by the appointed supervisors, including distribution of supervision time (see chapter 4.1). This must be continually specified in the PhD student's individual study plan.

### **3 Responsibilities and tasks for the supervisors**

Supervisors at the University must have professional approach to the doctoral studies. This entails that supervisors must:

- be well familiar with the national legislation on doctoral studies as well as the University's own regulatory framework for such education,
- take responsibility for that the planning and implementation of the doctoral studies are of a high quality and with a realistic scope in relation to the PhD student's time plan,
- be responsible for that administrative routines for supervision are followed,
- be accessible to the PhD student, be clear and consistent in their supervision and provide critical review of the results,
- continue to develop their competence in supervision,
- not take on more PhD students than they are able to provide adequate supervision to,
- be attentive to judicial disqualification in themselves and the PhD student's other supervisors as well as in examiners, opponents or other involved parties,
- promote equal terms by clearly counteracting any form of discrimination or harassment.

### **3.1 Main supervisor**

In addition to the supervisors' general responsibilities and tasks, the following is also included in the role as main supervisor:

- To have scientific competence within the PhD student's subject area.
- To have overall responsibility for the supervision in terms of planning and implementation of the PhD student's doctoral studies.
- To jointly and in consultation with the PhD student, their supervisors and the Director of PhD studies draw up the Individual study plan no later than three months after admission. The Individual study plan shall after that be annually followed up and revised.
- Together with the PhD student be responsible for that the Individual and the General study plan are followed.
- To be responsible for ensuring that the PhD student advances on the salary scale (see chapter 4.2).
- To be responsible for reporting degree of activity, type of financial support and registration for continued PhD studies to student administration.

### **3.2 Assistant supervisor**

In the addition to the supervisors' general responsibilities and tasks, the following is also included in the role as assistant supervisor:

- To contribute with relevant complementary expertise and scientific competence.
- To support the PhD student in their education, for example through knowledge of the implementation of empirical studies and experiments.
- To participate actively in planning the work to ensure the PhD student's progression in the studies towards the intended learning outcomes.

## **4 Practical matters concerning supervision**

### **4.1 Available supervision resources**

A PhD student is entitled to regular meetings with the supervisors. The frequency of these meetings is determined by the supervisors and the PhD student in the Individual study plan and may vary over time to suit the current need.

For each PhD student that has been admitted at the University, the group of supervisors has 160 hours annually at their disposal for supervision. The distribution of this time is based on expected work effort; however, the majority of this time shall be given to the main supervisor. The distribution of supervision resources is specified in the PhD student's Individual study plan.

## **4.2 Advancement of the PhD student on the salary scale**

The main supervisor is responsible for reporting the achieved part of the studies for a doctoral degree to the Human Resources Office, in order for an advancement on the salary scale<sup>2</sup>. Template for certificates can be found on the University's website. Advancement on the salary scale takes place accordingly:

- When a minimum of 60 university credits alternatively 25 % of studies towards a doctoral degree has been achieved. Advancement on the salary scale must at the latest take place after a completed planning seminar (research proposal) and the PhD student has received a passing grade on it.
- When a minimum of 60 university credits alternatively 50 % of studies towards a doctoral degree has been achieved. Advancement on the salary scale will take place after the completion of a half-time seminar (thesis proposal) and the PhD student has received a passing grade, alternatively a licentiate degree.
- When a minimum of 180 university credits alternatively 75 % of studies towards a doctoral degree has been achieved. Advancement on the salary scale is determined by the main supervisor.

## **4.3 Change of supervisor**

According to Chapter 6, Section 28 of the Higher Education Ordinance, a PhD student is entitled to a change of supervisor. The application is made on a special form which is submitted to the Director of PhD studies for the subject in question. The decision is made by the Dean. A change of supervisor must be registered in Ladok.

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<sup>2</sup> Only applicable for PhD students employed at the University of Skövde.

#### **4.4 Withdrawal of supervision and other resources**

The Vice-Chancellor decides on withdrawal of supervision and other resources in cases where the PhD student has substantially neglected their commitments according to the Higher Education Ordinance Chapter 6, Section 30. Preparation of the case will take place according to "Guidelines for withdrawal of resources for PhD student".

### **5 Transitional provisions**

Since these guidelines entail changes in terms of supervisor categories and the maximum number of supervisors, the following transitional provisions apply:

- PhD students who have already booked/carried out their half-time seminar are exempted from the change and will maintain the supervisor categories that they currently have.
- For other PhD students (who have not yet booked/carried out their half-time seminar), the supervisors together with the PhD student will review how the existing supervisors are best distributed between the two categories "main supervisor" and "assistant supervisor". If there should, in these cases, be more than three assistant supervisors, an exception from the general recommendation can be granted to ease the transition into the new system.

Changes are documented on the form "Application for change of supervisor" and are handled according to applicable routine.

### **6 The document is valid from**

The document is valid from 2022-02-02 and replaces "Guidelines for supervision and study follow-up within third-cycle programmes in information technology at the University of Skövde" (reg. No. 2017/547).