

SDF Plan of Operations and Budget 2019¹

Introduction

The SULF Association of Doctoral Candidates (SDF), a section of the Swedish University Teachers and Researchers Union (SULF), has the mandate of monitoring section-related issues. According to the SDF statutes, the SDF board is tasked with:

- protecting and monitoring section members' interests in accordance with SULF statutes and decisions of the Congress or the central union board
- conducting membership recruitment
- carrying out advocacy and publicising the activities of the section
- acting as a preparatory body for the union board on section issues
- keeping the union board informed about the activities of the section

In addition to the statutes, the SDF Plan of Operations is based on the SULF Congress period operational focus, which, in turn, is based on Vision 2030. The three priority areas for 2016-2018 have been employment and career paths, education and professional influence.

At the time of writing (10 November), the operational focus for the SULF Congress Period 2019-2021 has not been finalized.² Therefore, the SDF Plan of Operations for 2019 will continue to follow the 2016-2018 operational focus, and the 2019 board will be charged with drafting a 2020-2022 SDF vision statement rooted in the priority areas in the SULF 2019-2021 operational focus.

Theme for 2019: Health and Social Security

Of SULF's three priority areas, during the financial year 2019, SDF will place extra focus on the priority area of employment and career paths through our chosen theme for 2018: Health and Social Security.

There is increasing concern in Swedish society in general and in academia in particular about rising levels of mental health issues and stress-related illnesses. PhD candidates are particularly vulnerable.³

¹ On 23 November 2018, the SULF Congress voted to abolish the professional sections as of 1 July 2019, but voted to create a new Association of Doctoral Candidates.

² The operational focus was finalized on 23 November 2018.

³ <https://sulf.se/faktabank/arbetsmiljo/>, <https://sulf.se/faktabank/organisatorisk-och-social-arbetsmiljo/>, <https://sulf.se/remissvar/trygghet-och-attraaktivitet-en-forskarkarriar-framtiden-sou-201629/>,

PhD candidates are often unaware that they have a right to sick leave and a right to prolongation of their working contracts equal to the number of days of sick leave that they have taken. Sometimes, supervisors discourage their supervisees from taking sick leave. Ensuring that the Swedish Social Insurance Agency (Försäkringskassan) gives the correct compensation becomes a full-time job for some people on sick leave, contributing to their stress and prolonging their recovery.

Furthermore, a significant portion of SULF's PhD candidate members come from outside of Sweden. They and the family members who come with them to Sweden often face difficulties accessing the Swedish social insurance to which they are entitled as working people in Sweden. They have been turned away from medical facilities, refused compensation for sick leave, refused parental leave, and denied their monthly child benefit payments.

For this reason, SDF's overarching theme for 2019 is *health and social security*. Within this theme, SDF hopes to continue its work toward its goals in several areas:

- Making doctoral candidates and their supervisors aware of their rights with regard to sick leave and/or other types of leave and prolongation of employment contracts and research time;
- Highlighting the mental health issues of doctoral candidates and seeking ways to mitigate the factors that lead to stress-related illnesses;
- Ensuring that all doctoral candidates and their dependent family members have access to the social benefits and insurance to which they have a right as workers employed in Sweden;
- Making residence permit renewal and paths to permanent residence and citizenship simpler and more straightforward for international doctoral candidates.

The plan of operations is put into practice through the mission statement, which SULF and SDF divide into the following four target areas:

- Board activities
- Membership activities
- Recruitment
- Advocacy and opinion building.

<https://www.svt.se/nyheter/vetenskap/enkat-visar-ofta-himmelskt-helvete-att-borja-forska>;
<https://sulf.se/ledare-i-universitetslararen/hjalp-sulf-astadkomma-battare-villkor-akademien/>

Board activities

The overall objectives of the SDF Board of Directors are in accordance with Section 13 of the SDF statutes as follows:

- To conduct business in accordance with the section's purpose and take decisions in the matters specified in the section charter;
- To execute decisions taken by the union representatives;
- To keep records of cases taken up and decisions made;
- To prepare matters to be presented to the representatives' meeting and draft the following year's Plan of Operations and Budget.

An active and well-qualified Board is required in order to achieve this. These objectives will be achieved through the following activities:

Board meetings. Hold at least two face-to-face meetings and three online meetings before the 2019 AGM and produce minutes of these meetings. At least one board meeting should be a retreat covering two consecutive days and, if possible, include board training and networking opportunities at a university where SDF has members in this retreat.

Board training. Board members are encouraged to undergo the internet-based basic union course and take advantage of any other union-related trainings offered during the year. The Chair/Vice Chair will invite lecturers/trainers in connection with board meetings for educational purposes in accordance with the board's needs and interests.

Facebook. Regularly update and market our Facebook page with information related to board activities, such as current board activities.

Handover to 2020 Chair and Board. Submit spoken and written information to the forthcoming Chair and perform an evaluation at the final Board meeting to identify what works well and what can be improved for the future Board.

Membership Activities

The overall objectives of SDF membership activities are to:

- provide relevant information for members about issues concerning doctoral candidates
- disseminate information to members about SULF and SDF operations
- provide advice and support for members on union and professional issues

These objectives are to be achieved through the following activities:

Newsletter. Send out a membership e-newsletter in English by e-mail 2 to 3 times per term.

Contact Day. Arrange a Contact Day in late spring for doctoral candidates interested in SDF's work. The day will be held in English and have a theme. If possible, the Contact Day will also be streamed. The day will be marketed to members and all local associations will be notified about the event.

AGM. Organise an annual general meeting of representatives at SULF headquarters in relation to the SULF congress.

SULF Day. Promote SULF Day on 4 October on Facebook and encourage board members to participate in local activities and post their activities on FB. The content of the day is to be determined by the current SDF board and should reflect the year's theme.

Facebook. Regularly update and market our Facebook page with information linked to membership activities, such as the internal SULF website and upcoming events.

Health and Social Security Survey. Continue the work on the survey developed by the 2018 board on members' health, sick leave, and access to Swedish social insurance.

Starter Kit: Continue the work of previous SDF boards in developing a "Starter Kit" with information needed by new PhD candidates, particularly those coming from outside of Sweden.

Recruitment

The overall objectives of recruitment to SDF are to:

- Increase the number of doctoral candidate members of SULF
- Recruit union officials who are doctoral candidates

These objectives will be achieved through the following activities:

Local recruitment. Visit at least two local associations at the universities where the membership level among doctoral candidates is low in order to discuss how SULF locally and nationally can reach out to, and support, doctoral candidates.

SULF activities for doctoral candidates. Collaborate with the SULF central board so that doctoral candidates' interests are well represented in all SULF activities.

Benefits. Continue to work with the SULF central board and headquarters to seek and implement new kinds of benefits for doctoral candidate members and doctoral candidate union officials and disseminate information about membership benefits.

Information material. Continue work on the Starter Kit for new doctoral candidates , which will be available on SULF's website and in print.

The Nominations Committee. Support the work of the 2019 nominations committee by inviting the members to the annual contact day and at least one board meeting during 2019 and provide support and education to the nominations committee. Ensure that there is a nominations committee for 2020.

Facebook. Regularly update and market our Facebook page with information related to recruitment, information such as membership benefits and local SULF events.

Advocacy and Opinion Building

Close cooperation between SDF, the central board, and the SULF headquarters is a prerequisite for effective and fruitful work for doctoral candidates. SDF must also work with doctoral candidates involved in the local union and with SULF local associations. Likewise, it is important that SDF works with other organisations on issues specific to doctoral candidates. The overall objectives of the SDF advocacy and public opinion-building activities are to:

- Engage in advocacy and raise awareness of the section's activity by being active in the research policy debate
- Contribute information when requested
- Act as a preparatory body for the central board on section issues
- Keep the central board informed on section activities

These objectives will be achieved through the following activities:

Published material. Publish at least two opinion articles or letters during the year.

Saco Student Council. Collaborate with the Saco Student Council and attend their members' council and chairs' council to contribute a doctoral candidate perspective.

SFS-DK. Meet the SFS-DK Chair or Board at least once to discuss collaboration on common issues.

Online visibility. Improve SDF's overall online visibility.

Facebook. Regularly update and market our Facebook page with information related to advocacy and opinion-building activities, such as our debate articles.

SDF's vision document. SDF will collaborate with SULF office and SULF central board to update the current SDF vision document. It shall be a document that both SULF and SDF stand behind.

Dialogue Meeting: Organize a one-day dialogue meeting with representatives from the SULF board, the SULF head office, Saco Student Council, and other interested parties to discuss better ways of coordinating work on the problems with Swedish government agencies faced by international academics in Sweden. Many of the issues SDF works with are also faced by international students, post-docs, lecturers and professors, but they are often framed as SDF issues.

Proposed 2019 Budget

Target Area	Activity	Spent 2018 (through 10 Nov)	Requested 2019	Comments
Board Work	Handover	3 330	5 000	Travel for meetings between old and new chair/board members
	Board Meetings	88 344	90 000	Based on two retreats and two Stockholm meetings (not including Contact Day and AGM)
	Board Training	3 748	10 000	Travel for participation in courses, training, meetings
Member Activities	Contact Day	52 280	55 000	Travel and food for 30 participants, paid presenters
	AGM		25 000	Travel and food for 25 representatives and 5 guests
	SULF Day	0	1 000	Travel, fika, or additional media promotion
	Social Media	0	500	Promotion of important posts
Recruitment	Local Recruitment	13 907	15 000	Travel to present at universities
	Information Material	0	10 000	Printing of Starter Kit
	Nominations Committee	0	5 000	Travel to board meetings, Contact Day, meeting candidates
	Social Media	0	500	Promotion of important posts
Advocacy and Opinion Building	Publications	0	5 000	Promoted articles, such as on The Local
	Saco Student Council	11 000	15 000	Travel to Members' Council, Chairs' Council, Annual Congress
	SFS-DK	0	2 500	Travel to meetings between chairs/boards
	SULF Central	0	2 500	Travel to meetings with SULF central board, office staff
	Online Visibility	0	1 000	Promotion of website
	Social Media	0	500	Promotion of important posts
	Dialogue Meeting	0	20 000	Travel and food for 20 participants, possible paid presenters
Total		172 609	263 500	