

Motionens nummer 30

Motion till SULF:s kongress 2021

Best practices in Individual Study Plans

According to the Higher Education Ordinance 6:29, all doctoral candidates employed at Swedish Higher Education Institutions (HEI) must have an Individual Study Plan (ISP). The ISP is a legal document which describes the candidate's project, completed and future course credits, the accumulated activity, as well as other aspects relevant to the doctoral education. The ISP can be described as a binding agreement between the institution, the supervisors, and the doctoral candidate. Any party who does not adhere to this document may be held accountable. Doctoral candidates may risk forfeiting their rights to supervision and supervisors may risk their role as supervisor. The ISP is a core document for all involved, and its construction and revision must be taken seriously to ensure the quality and of doctoral education and corresponding research environment.

Currently, there is no standardised format for ISPs nationwide. Some HEIs do not even have an internal standard or template, which leads to inconsistent practices between faculties. Many institutions now use an integrated digital ISP format as a work instrument for all persons involved (e.g. managers, director of doctoral studies, beyond just doctoral candidates and their supervisors), linked to Ladok, but some persist with word-template ISPs. The content of what is to be included within the ISP also differs between institutions. Some HEIs include details on the rights and regulations for doctoral candidates within the ISP. Others outline responsibility distribution between supervisors, different types of risks (financial risk, ethical risks that may disrupt the quality and timeliness of the doctoral education) – a highly relevant field to address pandemic risks. The candidate may be unable to complete their ISP without ticking a box indicating that they are aware of their rights (to supervision, to change supervisor, etc.). Other institutions include only minimal detail in their ISPs.

The SULF Doctoral Candidate Association therefore submit:

- that SULF compile information about the content and format of ISPs used at HEIs in Sweden and collects examples of best practices;
- that SULF work together with HEIs to implement best practices regarding content and format of ISPs.

For the SULF Doctoral Candidate Association
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