

## Motionens nummer 31

Motion till SULF:s kongress 2021

### Right to prolongation for doctoral candidates holding elected positions within SULF

The Higher Education Ordinance 5:7 states that union elected positions entitle doctoral candidates to an extension of their employment. This is further detailed in recommendations from the Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions (SUHF)<sup>1</sup>. However, those recommendations do not include important details such as how the extension should be financed and whether prolongation days are work days (excluding red dates and weekends). The recommendations are not binding.

Few universities have developed clear guidelines on these issues. Based on personal experience of current and former union representatives, SULF--DCA feels that this causes a great deal of unnecessary arbitrariness and emotional stress, not just among doctoral candidates with union roles but also in their departments. It is difficult to recruit doctoral candidates to union associations due to their heavy workload and limited time frame of their employment. The lack of clarity about prolongation is yet another obstacle for doctoral candidates willing to engage in union work. The burden of figuring out what the extensions should be and where the money ought to come from sometimes falls onto the doctoral candidates themselves, with the argument that they are elected to be active so they should provide these answers.

Union engagement is an important aspect of Swedish working environment and SULF--DCA feels that doctoral candidates need support in obtaining the prolongation that they are entitled to. One way to approach this issue is to ensure a predictable and stable funding source, for example, that prolongation for union positions should be financed centrally by the respective higher education institution, without burdening the department or research group budget. More specified guidelines are needed on financing and calculation of prolongation. Some good examples already exist:

- Stockholm University: *"The doctoral student must in advance notify the head of department which assignments are held so that the cost can be calculated in the institution's budget [...] The extension is paid for by the institution or equivalent at*

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<sup>1</sup> SUHF. REK 2020:2 Rekommendationer om förlängning av doktoranders anställnings- och studietid vid vissa förtroendeuppdrag. <https://suhf.se/app/uploads/2020/05/REK-2020-2-Riktlinjer-f%C3%B6r-f%C3%B6rl%C3%A4ngning-av-doktorandanst%C3%A4llning.pdf>

*which the doctoral student is admitted [...] Days refer to whole working days, not calendar days.”<sup>2</sup>*

- Uppsala University: *“There should be no lower or upper limit on the amount of prolongation the candidate may receive [...] The University should guarantee funding for prolongation for candidates with externally financed income [...] The extent of prolongation should be expressed in net working days. Conversion to calendar days should take into consideration weekends, statutory holidays, vacation time and part-time employment.”<sup>3</sup>*

### **The SULF Doctoral Candidate Association therefore submit:**

- that SULF investigate the current practices and challenges of funding and calculating prolongation for doctoral candidates engaged in union work;
- that SULF identify best practices of calculating and funding prolongation for doctoral candidates engaged in union work, and release an information material on this;
- that SULF collaborate with local Saco boards to ensure that all higher education institutions have in place specific guidelines on calculating and funding of prolongation of doctoral employment due to union work.

For the SULF Doctoral Candidate Association  
Jenny Iao-Jørgensen, Chairperson

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<sup>2</sup> Stockholms universitet. Prolongation of doctoral student employment. [https://www.su.se/polopoly\\_fs/1.434383.1554880498!/menu/standard/file/Prolongation%20rules.pdf](https://www.su.se/polopoly_fs/1.434383.1554880498!/menu/standard/file/Prolongation%20rules.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> The Doctoral Board of Uppsala University. Doctoral candidates' right to prolongation. <https://uudoctoralboard.se/docs/doctoral-candidates-right-to-prolongation/>