



## **ACTION PLAN – EVALUTATION OF PHD EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED IT**

Dnr GU 2020/2637

Fastställd av IT-fakultetsstyrelsen 2021-12-08

### **Action plan – evaluation 2021**

Subject areas: Informatics, Applied IT with orientation towards education, and cognitive science

Finalized in spring 2021 the PhD education at the department of applied IT was evaluated by an external team consisting of Prof Ulf Melin (chairman, Linköping university), Prof Margunn Aanestad (University of Agder) and Prof Göran Larsson (University of Gothenburg).

One of the results from the evaluation was a number of recommendations. This document summarizes the IT faculty's plan for addressing these recommendations. The evaluation team also suggested prioritization of the different recommendations in needed ones and actions that can be implemented. Below we list the comments together with planned actions, timeplan and operative responsibility.

Comment	Needed actions	Time plan/ Status/Responsible
<p>Establish routines for a better information flow and communication between the management level, supervisors and PhD students to guarantee equal opportunities. For instance, to make sure that all PhD students have the same information on e.g. career advice, publication strategies, routines and handling of expenses covered by the department. It is important that this also is done in english.</p>	<p>Given that our PhD education has been growing rapidly the past years we are in a constant process of establishing formal processes, as well as making these easily available to PhD students and supervisors. Still given that we have a relatively small and diverse group of PhD-students (in terms of subject, employment, connection to research projects, with different career ambitions) it does not make sense to generate formal process for all aspects. However, information on all formal processes should be communicated and made available to all, as soon as they are decided upon.</p> <p>The increased involvement of PhD-students in advisory bodies and councils at the department and faculty level (see below) will also further enable a good flow of information.</p> <p>Make sure that all new processes are made available on the PhD-studies webpage, as well as communicated at the supervisor collegium and to the student representative.</p>	<p><b>When:</b> Continuous as new processes are established</p> <p><b>Responsible:</b> Deputy Head of department for PhD studies + communications officer</p>
<p>2. (Re-)start an active colloquium for supervisors as an organized arena sharing experiences, achieve collective learning and as a vehicle linking activities and actors more tightly together.</p>	<p>We have previously relied on a yearly conference for supervisors. Given the recommendation we have now in addition started to have two supervisor collegiums each semester. This could allow for collective learning, and also to increase information flow concerning PhD education as recommended in point 1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 yearly supervisor collegium meetings in addition to yearly conference.</li> </ul>	<p><b>When:</b> Already established</p> <p><b>Responsible:</b> Deputy head of department for PhD-studies</p>

<p>3. Clarify mechanisms and arenas for participation and involvement for the (now more organized) PhD students to have an active influence on the PhD program.</p>	<p>Student representatives have a formal place in advisory bodies and councils and have been invited to these. However a great improvement in relation to this recommendation is that the PhD-students have started to organize themselves in a council, providing representation with local understanding of PhD students needs and wishes. Our impression is that this organization among the students will allow for a much more active influence in the activities where students already have formal representation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an overview over all positions where the department have doctoral student representation</li> </ul>	<p><b>When:</b> February 2022</p> <p><b>Responsible:</b> Deputy head of department for PhD-studies + coordinator of PhD-studies</p>
<p>4. Make sure that the industrial PhD students and students based abroad or outside the university are (more) included in the daily routines at the department and that timetables are adjusted to different possibilities to participate on-site vs. other commitments.</p> <p>Linked also to recommendation 1 above.</p>	<p>This will be adressed in two main ways. But first it is relevant to note that we do not accept PhD students based abroad, students have their main location of studies at the department, and are, in the case of students working at a nearby uiniversity college,sometimes based in a research environment outside of the department.</p> <p>The first important step is to increasingly connect the PhD-students to the divisions at the department. Our ambition is that this will make them more involved in division activities and allow for more interaction with the research environment.</p> <p>Secondly, and in particular in relation to part-time PhD-students, we are continuously trying to plan far ahead, allowing for participation to a larger degree. We also have made increasing efforts in relation to communication of seminars, activities etc. to make planning and thus participation easier.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Division managers have been instructed to invite PhD-students to department meetings</li> </ul>	<p><b>When:</b> Point 1 &amp; 2 already in place, point 3 is dependent on working cross department platforms for information exchange, but continous efforts have been ongoing for several years.</p> <p><b>Responsible:</b> Division managers, financial officers, deputy head of department for PhD-studies, communications officer</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Division managers now have full financial responsibilities of expenses, as well as planning of time for employed students.</li> <li>• Create a departmentwide model for distributing information on events (seminars, defences, etc.).</li> </ul>	
5. Share visions (e.g. the manifest) earlier and establish more effective routines to share the quality development and assurance process and linked documents among PhD students and supervisors.	Can be broken down into the ongoing work with creating relevant formal processes that can in turn be communicated (point 1). It also connects to suggestion 2 where more frequent meetings can be used for sharing information (as well as opening up for discussion on visions etc). This also connects to the next suggestion (6) where students will be able receive information about processes at the department as part of introductory course.	<b>Responsible:</b> Deputy Head of department for PhD studies + communications officer
	<b>Can be implemented</b>	
6. Create more generic and general courses for the PhD students (e.g. ethics, communication skills, methods, etcetera); not only courses in the respective subject areas, in order to strengthen the interaction between actors within the department.	<p>The development of departmentwide courses is ongoing. During the coming year several new course will start. There are several explanations for the experienced lack of courses, but most importantly new courses will start.</p> <p>During 22-23 the department will run the following courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductory course</li> <li>• Methods for the study of social phenomena in computational settings</li> <li>• Foundations of research on information technology</li> <li>• Research ethics</li> </ul>	<p><b>When:</b> All four courses will have run at least one time by the end of the academic year 2022/2023</p> <p><b>Responsible:</b> Deputy head of department for PhD-studies, researchers and teachers, coordinator of PhD-studies</p>
7. Further strategically discuss and evaluate the high proportion of individual reading PhD courses and the dependencies vs. (external)research schools.	This is an ongoing discussion where the department have to think about the tradeoff between having PhD-students, funded by PhDschools, allowed both national high quality courses, and international networks built in on the one hand,	<p><b>When:</b> Continous</p> <p><b>Responsible:</b> Deputy head of</p>

	<p>and the power and control over the educational process of the students that we educate at the department. Currently (and historically) More than half of the PhD students at the department is in some way connected to a PhD-school.</p> <p>This suggestion connects directly to suggestion 6, and we foresee a good balance between courses at the department relevant to several subjects, participation in PhDschools, courses taken at other faculties and universities and individual courses adapted to each students project</p>	<p>department for PhD-studies + whole faculty</p>
<p>8. Develop a more ambitious onboarding and introduction for new PhD students – extend the introduction day/s for new PhD students to one week in or-der to offer more basic and common information to all student regarding HR, data protection, ethics, outreach activities.</p>	<p>See point 6. A new introductory PhD-course will start the coming year.</p>	
<p>9. Create a strategic plan for how to create a better balance between the three research areas (and PhD student education subject areas) – i.e. how to address the fact that cognitive science is significantly smaller, less developed and more fragile subject area (for PhD students and senior staff members) at the department level. Clarify the links to the organizational structure, the study plans and the discuss the number of credits (courses vs. thesis) in this work (ASP).</p>	<p>Several, partly connected suggestions.</p> <p>Concerning the size of the different research areas at the department this is a constant topic for strategic discussions and part of our strategic planning at the department. However, it is also highly dependent on partly external factors such as recruitment, external funding. Given this, it is clear that balance is not prioritized, but rather the growth of all areas of research (i.e. as long as cognitive science grows, it is not a problem if other areas grow too, even though this would sustain an imbalance).</p> <p>There is an ongoing work of re-designing the study plans. In this process both researchers, supervisors, students have been involved. We have also engaged in cross subject exchange with the aim of making the ASPs as homogenous as possible across subjects.</p>	<p><b>Responsible:</b> Deputy head of department for PhD-studies + faculty + department management</p>

<p>10. Clarify the role that ISP should have for supervisors and PhD students and to what extent it should be an active (dynamic) instrument in supervision.</p>	<p>Through the evaluation it has come to our attention that this is unclear.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create a formally decided model, which in turn can be communicated to supervisors and students through channels described above.</li></ul>	<p><b>When:</b> january 2022 (in time for the yearly reviews of ISPs)</p> <p><b>Responsible:</b> Deputy head of PhD studies + coordinator of PhD-studies</p>
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