

Utbildningsutvärdering med extern bedömning
vid Göteborgs universitet

**BEDÖMARUTLÅTANDE FÖR UTBILDNINGEN
PÅ FORSKARNIVÅ, INSTITUTIONEN FÖR
SPRÅK OCH LITTERATURER VID
HUMANISTISKA FAKULTETEN**

4.12.2018

Kort bakgrund

Bedömargruppen (se nedan) har haft i uppdrag att utifrån universitetets kriterier för utbildningsutvärdering enligt [policy för kvalitetssäkring och kvalitetsutveckling](#) och med stöd i [vägledning för utbildningsutvärdering](#) utvärdera utbildningen på forskarnivå, Institutionen för språk och litteraturer vid Humanistiska fakulteten.

Inför platsbesöket lämnade fakulteten och institutionen ett antal dokument till bedömargruppen (bilaga 1). Den 14 maj 2018 genomfördes ett förberedande möte där bedömargruppen informerades om uppdraget samt fick information om humanistiska fakulteten och institutionen för språk och litteraturer. Datum och form för platsbesök beslutades. Platsbesöket genomfördes den 2 oktober 2018 (program för platsbesök, se bilaga 2). Bedömargruppen har därefter med utgångspunkt i underlag och platsbesöksintervjuer via möte gemensamt utarbetat sitt bedömarutlåtande.

Följande personer har ingått i bedömargruppen.

- Johan **van der Auwera**, professor i lingvistik, Antwerpens universitet
- Ingunn **Lunde**, professor i ryska, Universitetet i Bergen
- Outi **Merisalo**, professor i romansk filologi, Jyväskylä universitet
- Pär **Eliasson**, doktorand i indologi, Uppsala universitet

Utbildningens främsta styrkor och svagheter samt bedömargruppens reflektioner och rekommendationer

Introduction

On the whole, the evaluation team was very favourably impressed by the doctoral programme of the department. All groups interviewed were satisfied with most aspects of the current situation. The 2009 fusion of several small departments seems to have been a success, providing e.g. more resources for supervision. Despite difficult physical conditions (on-going construction work) and worry about the financial aspects, the current system seems to function well. There is, however, some room for improvement for some aspects.

Scholarly quality of the programme

There is general satisfaction as to the scholarly content of the programme on the part of the doctoral students, the alumni, the supervisors and the administration. The Department actively encourages participation in conferences. Conference attendance gives study points, the supervisor reads the papers in advance and presentation skills may be honed in pre-conference seminars. There is also a course entitled *Vetenskaplig praktik*. As regards communication of scholarship to non-specialist audiences, supervisors, students and administration acknowledged its value. The above-mentioned course addresses even this aspect, but according to the administration, the goal is to pay more attention to it in all subjects.

There is a centralized course for supervisors which they are satisfied with.¹ Supervisors also expressed satisfaction as to a larger pool of both principal and secondary supervisors as a result of the fusion of several Departments. They also mentioned the scholarly networks of the institute both in- and outside GU as an extended pool of secondary supervisors. The Associate Head of Department for Doctoral Studies is the contact person for emergencies. However, supervisors pointed out a need for a more day-to-day type of support in the form of coaching or simply peer discussions.

The department leadership shows clear awareness of quality management and the need to constantly improve the programme.

Recommendation 1. Investigate ways to consolidate and share best practices in research education across subjects. Consider activities such as master classes (second half of PhD period) and joint seminars with English as *lingua franca*.

Recommendation 2. Communication of scholarship to non-specialist audiences might be more systematically targeted in all subjects.

Recommendation 3. In addition to the well-functioning central course for supervisors and the emergency support from the Associate Head of Department for Doctoral Studies, more informal modalities of coaching and peer support (e.g. brown bag meetings on a regular basis) in supervising should be explored.

¹ https://pil.gu.se/english/courses_in_english/supervision_in_postgraduate_education.

Critical mass

The Department of Languages and Literatures (*Institutionen för språk och litteraturer*) was created in 2009 out of several small departments devoted to a single language or group of languages. Its creation was a top-down initiative that was received well, by both the faculty and students. As a result, it became easier to draw upon competence not found in the earlier small departments. The measure fostered cooperation, created a bigger critical mass, and the new department acquired an identity of its own – it was not merely a conglomerate of the earlier departments. The department has achieved ‘a rare sense of homogeneity’ (student quote). This sense of positive belonging has affected both faculty and students. An easier access to diverse competence also led to more diverse groups of supervisors, again to the profit of both faculty and students.

Nevertheless, there is still a critical mass problem. What were relatively small departments earlier are now relatively small subject areas (*ämnen*), and in each, the number of faculty members and doctoral students remains modest, in some more than in others. This has the risk that the few students of the smaller subject areas get isolated. Furthermore, the subject areas are defined in terms of specific languages or language families or groups, and they typically cater for the study of both literature and linguistics. Some faculty members and students work in both fields, but most do not. This is an additional reason for making the research cells small. Fostering cooperation or interest across the division between the study of literature and linguistics is possible, and for some people necessary, but for others it will be somewhat forced. For the latter, cooperation, in any form (seminars, lectures, supervision etc.), within either literature or linguistics outside of the department is more profitable.

For ‘outside of the department’, one should focus on the other departments of the faculty. The study of literature is also found in the Department of Literature, History of Ideas, and Religion (*Institutionen för litteratur, idéhistoria och religion*) and linguistics in the Department of Swedish (*Institutionen för svenska språket*).

Then the two fields are, of course, present in the other Swedish universities (and, less relevantly here, in other universities in the Nordic region and the world). For some fields the critical mass problem will be found there as well.

Recommendation 1. For exploiting all of the relevant local competence a PhD research school in the humanities at the University of Gothenburg offers interesting possibilities. It is recommended that the Institute investigate successful and less successful PhD research school initiatives elsewhere. An example of a successful PhD research school in linguistics and philology is that of the University of Bergen.²

Recommendation 2. For exploiting all of the relevant national competence, PhD research schools in either the study of literature or linguistics, i.e. national PhD research schools, offer interesting possibilities. It is recommended that the Department investigate successful and less successful national PhD research school initiatives elsewhere. Examples of successful national doctoral schools in linguistics are those of the Netherlands and Finland.³ A PhD research school in “oriental

² <https://www.uib.no/rs/lingphil>

³ <https://www.lotschool.nl/about>; <https://blogs.helsinki.fi/langnet-2016-2019/>

languages” could also be considered, as PhD students in those subjects often struggle to find fruitful research communities.

Recommendation 3. Encourage and promote activities in the research groups (“Areas of Research”) with a view to making them particularly useful and relevant for PhD candidates, and ensure that all new PhD candidates are offered membership in a group

Recommendation 4. Ensure that all relevant information gets out to everybody in an easy way, to be sure that the more isolated students, working in the smaller subjects, are included.

Length of study time

The list of doctoral students (appendix 1) comprises a fair amount of students having started their doctoral studies 1) between 1988 and 2005 (8 (9?) students; 2) between 2010 and 2012 (6 students). According to the Associate Head of Department for Doctoral Studies even these students are monitored. Concrete measures for activating the less active ones were, however, not described.

Recommendation. Activating measures directed at this specific group of doctoral students, such as seminars, meetings with peers, etc. should be encouraged.

Internationalization

The international character of the programme is obvious: the student corps is international and Gothenburg students can and do spend time abroad. Students and alumni much appreciated the international character of the doctoral training.

Recommendation 1. To further increase the international character, make the possibility of the ‘co-tutelle doctorate’ more prominent.

Recommendation 2. Make an effort to offer the University of Gothenburg as an attractive place for foreign non-co-tutelle students to spend part of their time there.

English as a lingua franca

It is obvious that the *lingua franca* in scholarship has become English. It is also obvious that international doctoral students at the University of Gothenburg will profit from learning Swedish, both from a scientific and from a cultural point of view. However, there could be circumstances in which international students cannot or cannot sufficiently work on their proficiency in Swedish, which could cause them problems. Of course, in the Department there is typically yet a third language, neither Swedish nor English, which should also be cherished, and which is often, if fact, both the object of study and the prime working language for the students.

Recommendation. Investigate to what extent academic life for the doctoral community of the University of Gothenburg should be conducted in English, in addition to Swedish and other curricular languages.

Empty corridors and offices

It is clear that some students – and faculty members – work best at the office, but some prefer the silence of a home desk. Even the latter should realize that information often passes in university corridors and kitchens, as do great ideas and actions of support. Consequently, there is an added value in being (more) present at the office. Of course, there is the added problem of the construction work, but this problem will solve itself.

Recommendation. Investigate how students and faculty could be more present on site (e.g. with informal seminars or with a special end-of-the-week or start of the week coffee break, lunch or drink). Since the problem is not specific to the Institute, investigate how other institutes deal with this issue.

Preparing for after the defense

The certainty of a 4-year period in which the doctoral students can focus on their research without financial worries is much appreciated. It contrasts sharply with the uncertainty of the period that follows, especially for the many doctoral students that have the ambition to stay in academia. The foundation of a successful academic career has to be laid in the doctoral period and for this, it is not sufficient to finish the doctoral courses and to defend a doctoral dissertation. What is needed is a good selection of convincing publications, conference presentations, international mobility, teaching experience and transferable skills.

Recommendation 1. Investigate whether students are sufficiently prepared for the life after the defense of the doctoral thesis.

Recommendation 2. Reserve finances for renewable local support for the postdoctoral period, either in the form of a postdoc or a *biträdande lektor* positions.

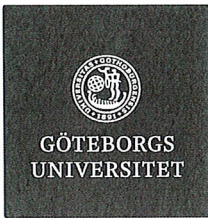
Recommendation 3. Investigate whether students know that they can get help with writing postdoc projects.

Recommendation 4. For those disciplines in which article publications matter much more than monographs, explain very early that students can steer their doctorate towards a collection of articles instead of a monograph. Formulate clear and accessible guidelines for such theses, as the genre is (still) not well known within the humanities.

Underlag till bedömargruppen

Bilaga 1

Program platsbesök, den *X/X 201X*
Bilaga 2



HUMANISTISKA FAKULTETEN

Beslut

Datum:
2018-06-14

Dnr:
V 2017/406

Mottagare:
HFS, institutioner vid den Humanistiska fakulteten

Ärende	Underlag för utbildningsutvärdering på forskarnivå vid Institutionen för språk och litteraturer
Bakgrund och beslutsunderlag (ev. hänvisning till föredragnings-PM)	<p>Enligt Vägledning för utbildningsutvärdering på forskarnivå med extern bedömning vid Humanistiska fakulteten, 2017-2023 (Dnr V 2017/406) ska dekan, i samråd med institution, besluta om det underlag som ska användas av den externa bedömargruppen. Nedanstående underlag har tagits fram av institutionen och diskuterats tillsammans med bedömargruppens representanter vid ett upptaktsmöte i maj. Bedömargruppen har uppmanats att inkomma med synpunkter på materialet och om det är ytterligare underlag som behövs.</p> <p>Innehållsförteckning Länkar: ASP, https://sprak.gu.se/utbildning/forskarniva/studieplaner Doktorandregler på fakultetsnivå, https://hum.gu.se/utbildning/forskarniva SPL:s styrdokument, https://sprak.gu.se/om/styrdokument. Se särskilt hp/vp, Utbildning på forskarnivå, policy för finansiering av språkgranskning och publiceringsbidrag Minnesanteckningar IR, https://sprak.gu.se/om/institutionsrad/arkiv-minnesanteckningar PBM, https://sprak.gu.se/om/prefektens-beslutsbote</p> <p>Länkar till seminariesidor mm: https://sprak.gu.se/utbildning/forskarniva https://sprak.gu.se/forskning https://sprak.gu.se/forskning/forskningsomraden https://sprak.gu.se/Aktuellt/kalendarium</p> <p>GU-box: Kursplaner</p>

	<p>HDR:s doktorandenkät Lista över doktorander och ämnen Lista över handledare Lista över alumner Kommentar och läsanvisning Kommentar från doktorandrådet Examinationsuppgifter</p> <p>ISP, tillgång via tittfunktion</p>	
Föredragande och övriga närvarande	<p>Mikael Strömberg, föredragande handläggare Houman Sadri, doktorandrepresentant, via telefon</p>	
Beslutas	<p><i>att</i> fastställa underlag för utbildningsutvärdering på forskarnivå vid Institutionen för Språk och litteraturer enligt innehållsförteckning ovan</p>  <p>Marie Demker, dekan</p>	
Kopia till	<p>Bedömargrupp, Viceprefekt för forskarutbildning, HFS</p> <p>Original till registrator</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

Schema platsbesök SPL

2/10 - 2018

9-9.30 Institutionsledning

9.30-10.30 Handledare

10.30-10.45 Kaffepaus

10.45-11.45 Doktorander

11.45-12.30 Lunch

12.30-13.00 Alumner

13.00-13.30 Institutions- och fakultetsledning återkoppling

13.30-15.00 Eget arbete