

SWEDEN – Sveriges Doktorander (SDok)

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General information

In Sweden, the graduate education consists of 160 credits (note that 1 credit corresponds to approximately 1.5 ECTS credit), which is a length of 4 years. This could be enhanced up to 5 years by complementing with department work such as e.g. teaching and supervision of thesis workers. Among the 160 credits there are doctoral courses that range up to 80 credits. There are no tuition fees for graduate education in Sweden, and most graduate students are employed in one way or another at their universities.

PART ONE

General questions and discussion

1.

Are there significant changes in the situation of PhD candidates in your country as compared to last year? And in the situation of junior researchers? Please specify if your association considers those changes an improvement or deterioration.

No significant differences are found in the situation of graduate students in Sweden compared to last year. If one deterioration is to be mentioned then the increase in accepting graduate students to the degree of Licentiate (which is a degree between Master and PhD) has worried the SDok association.

2.

What main improvement would your association like to see in the situation of PhD candidates? And in the situation of post-docs and other junior researchers?

The improvement that currently is in focus is that SDok wants all graduate students to have similar employment conditions at all universities. There are today several differences in both the economic and social situation of graduate students.

3.

In general, what are the hottest topics (in Higher Education and Research & Development) under discussion in your country, in particular affecting young researchers? Specify at least two of these.

The current hottest topic is the upcoming proposal from the Swedish government regarding research and research education in Sweden. These proposals are proposed approximately with an interval of 4 years. In the upcoming proposal there are two main topics that are of most interest. The first is the actual funding from the government to the universities and if any special areas will receive some extra amount of money. The second is the duration of the Swedish research education, and the question is whether the length will be adjusted to fit the Bologna process rules.

4.

Which actions or activities has your national association been involved in this year? What are your association's future planned activities?

Our association has met frequently discussing the topics that are hot at each university. The association has also been focusing on various types of funding for graduate students. There are differences throughout Sweden and our association has through lobbying, articles and meetings been enlightening the situation as well as proposing how the problems could be solved.

5.

How does your national association define its area of activities? Following which procedure does your association get to establish its official positions (if any)?

The association defines the upcoming activities that are to be focused on for the upcoming year at their first meeting after each summer. The meetings are divided in two parts where the first and minor part (~25%) aims to exchange ideas and help between universities, and these issues are often local. The second and major part (~75%) of the meetings is for discussing issues of national matter. The SDok association is led by Rio Cederlund (chairman) for the year 2004/2005.

6.

Did your national association ever make a PhD survey or plans to make one? On which topics? Do you think these surveys would profit from data of other countries being included? How do you imagine Eurodoc contributing to that?

No PhD survey has been made from our association and there are no plans in arranging one. There are however several surveys made both locally at each university and sometimes national. The results from these surveys are analyzed by our association and actions are taken accordingly.

7.

Which are the ideas your association would like to put forward for EURODOC policy in 2005?

No specific ideas are put forward from our association for the EURODOC policy in 2005.

Bologna process and Lisbon strategy

8.

How would the application of the "Bologna Process rules", like comparability of structures, ECTS systems, Diploma Supplement, affect the Doctoral Level in your country [<http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/>] ?

The application of the "Bologna process rules" could affect the graduate education, mainly by reducing the length of the graduate education by one year. Regarding the ECTS system there are differences between the European aim of using them and how Sweden would like to use them. More specifically the main difference lay in that one aims for absolute grades whereas the other aims for relative grades.

9.

What is the position of your national association on the insertion of the Doctoral level as the 3rd cycle of the Bologna Process? What are your expectations or fears, if any, related to this?

Our association has strived for maintaining the length of the graduate education as is and does not see positively in an implementation of the Bologna process that would reduce the length. The 3rd cycle has not yet been implemented at any university today since most of them are awaiting the proposal from the Swedish government.

10.

Is the Lisbon Strategy [http://europa.eu.int/comm/lisbon_strategy/index_en.html] affecting the policy of your country as what regards the recruitment of young researchers?

The Lisbon strategy has not been discussed much and thus the affect on the policy of our country is limited or not known to us.

Labour conditions

11.

What are in your country the advantages and disadvantages of the PhD candidates' status (student/employee/mixed status/external)?

The graduate students benefit from a mixed status. The employee benefits with an e.g. social security net and student benefits in terms of e.g. discounts when traveling. Many of the graduate students however do not benefit from this situation since there are several other ways of financing your graduate education. Some of them do not offer support when graduate students are on e.g. maternity or sick leave. Foreign (non-EU) graduate students could receive a scholarship kind of funding from the university which also has limitations on the social security.

12.

What status does your association prefer for PhD candidates and why?

The primary aim so far has been to see the graduate students as employees.

Supervision and training

13.

Referring to the Eurodoc supervision and training Charter (to be found as Appendix 2 at : <http://www.eurodoc.net/workgroups/supervision/Eurodocsuptrain.pdf>) : is there any concern or action in your country at present to implement standards that would accommodate the standards outlined here? If this is not the case do you see a need to implement a charter of your own or another suitable document?

No information.

14.

How are doctoral examinations conducted in your country (number of examiners and other people involved, length and format of examination, any specific guidelines on criteria you are given on how PhDs are passed/failed...)? Do examinations vary in style or length in different subject areas or institutions? Are your theses an official publication?

There are some differences between the examinations although some components that most examinations have can be described. The thesis is usually printed one month before the dissertation. On the dissertation day the respondent and the opponent could give presentations, where the respondent describes his/her works and the opponent puts the work in a broader perspective. After this the actual questioning from the opponent takes place, and when this is finished the examination board (consisting of 3-5 people) have the opportunity to ask questions. Finally the audience is given the opportunity to ask questions, and all moments so far are public. After this session the examination board together with the examiner and supervisor discusses behind closed doors. Then they announce if the graduate student has passed or failed.

15.

What are the different routes you have to a doctoral qualification (for example this may be full time research, part of a teaching fellowship or be a longer doctorate with taught elements)? Also give details of any doctorates ("professional doctorates" or "taught doctorates") other than the research doctorate (PhD), such as EngD -doctor of engineering- or PsychD -doctor of psychology- : specify their length, entry requirements and any difference in level they may have.

One could divide the doctoral qualification in three major parts. One is full time research which could range from 2 year up to 3.5 years. Another is the doctoral course requirements ranging from 0.5 years up to 2 years. The third part is the department work which is a maximum of one year. The total duration of these three parts should not exceed 5 years in total.

16.

Are you aware of any means by which standards on research degrees in your country are monitored? For example, is there an outside agency that will audit institutions on their performance, or are there forums to evaluate performance? Please give any details you have on the above that will measure quality assurance in your institution.

There is a national agency for higher education (www.hsv.se) that conducts surveys and quality evaluations on both university level as well as national level.

International mobility

17.

Which are the main opportunities (institutional agreements and exchange programs) for the mobility of researchers offered in your country? Which of them are the most popular?

Most of the exchange is made on agreements between universities and no specific national exchange program exists.

18.

What is the awareness of young researchers about the possibilities of the various exchange programs? How could this be improved?

Limited knowledge regarding the exchange among young researchers. Difficult to implement a national system that would be of interest for graduate students.

19.

Which grants and scholarships are offered to enhance mobility of national researchers to go abroad? (list in order of their popularity)

There exist several grants and scholarships in order to enhance the mobility of fresh researchers. It is however not possible to list them all and not possible to rank them by popularity since this data is not available.

20.

Which grants and scholarships are offered to enhance mobility of foreign researchers to come to your country? (list in order of their popularity) Can foreign students and/or students from EU member states get a grant for PhD programs in your country?

Same answer as in question 19.

21.

Do you have any examples of institutionalized “joint degree programs” for European or international PhDs? (if any, indicate number of programs, their locations and concerned academic disciplines as well as number of participants and their origin/destination country) What are the requirements to get this label (whatever it is called)?

No examples on a national level, however there are joint degrees at some universities that have their own exchange programs.

Professional future

22.

Are you aware that the European Commission is about to release a European Researchers’ Charter and a Code of Conduct for the recruitment of researchers? Does your association have any opinion on these documents?

No we are not aware of this and thus do not have any opinion on the documents.

23.

Which way can these European recommendations be better promoted and implemented at the national and institutional level?

No information.

24.

Does your association have any opinion on intriguing issues like the duration of contracts, the assessment of the scientific production, the different career paths and their comparability in academia and industry (or other)?

No information.

Gender equality

25.

Are there any initiatives in your country that you estimate to have been at least partially successful in reducing gender imbalances existing at the PhD level or at later academic stages? If yes, please give details. If not, please identify the probable reasons for this and indicate what the most important steps would be towards a program that really has a practical impact.

The strive to achieve a situation where all graduate students are enrolled in a social security system could help to reduce gender imbalances. This could be done by e.g. employing the graduate students much more than today or by offering graduate students on government training grants or scholarships to have the same social benefits as an employed graduate student. There are also attempts to allocate places in order to reduce imbalances at some universities. This is done by promoting good female researchers in the university system and allocate funding for them from the university.

26.

Are there notable differences in the gender distribution between comparable positions in academia and other sectors? What are the reasons for this? What is the tendency?

Yes, there is a higher imbalance in the gender distribution in academia compared to industry. One reason could be that academia is based on traditions that are not up to date.

PART TWO

1.

How many institutions in your country offer PhD degrees? Specify the different types of institutions with PhD awarding powers (research only institutions / universities / colleges / other), and their ratio.

In Sweden postgraduate programmes are offered at the higher education institutions, which have authorised areas of research. Universities have a general entitlement to award postgraduate degrees. The university colleges, which are entitled to conduct research in specific disciplines, are also entitled to award postgraduate degrees in the appropriate fields (National Agency for Higher Education, <http://wwweng.hsv.se>). In Sweden there are four research disciplines:

- the humanities and social sciences,
- engineering,
- the natural sciences and
- medicine.

Totally there are 21 universities and university colleges in Sweden with PhD awarding power (National Agency for Higher Education, Annual report 2004).

Postgraduate programmes are also offered at the 16 graduate schools that exist in various parts of Sweden (National Agency for Higher Education, <http://wwweng.hsv.se>). There are graduate schools in a number of fields. Each graduate school has a host university and a number of partner institutions. Graduate schools are intended to stimulate recruitment to postgraduate studies, develop postgraduate programmes and improve cooperation between universities and university colleges. The graduate schools are also intended to enhance the links between undergraduate programmes and research at higher education institutions that do not have their own postgraduate programmes.

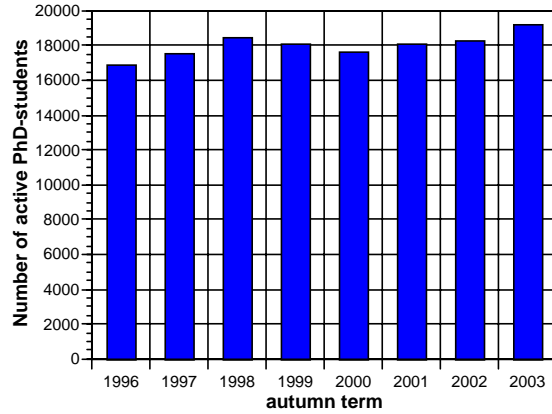
A graduate school offers systematic postgraduate programmes. They are characterised by:

- Explicit organisation
- Focus on supervision
- Systematic course offerings
- Organized collaboration between different subjects and various universities and university colleges.

2.

What is an approximate total number of PhD candidates in your country? What has been the trend in the past five years?

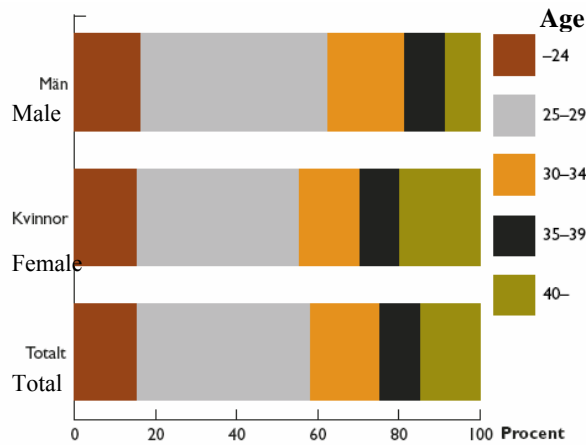
Autumn term 2003 there were 19.273 PhD-students active (with a level of activity of at least 10 per cent) at Swedish universities, which is 6% more compared to autumn term 2002 (Open database at National Agency for Higher Education, <http://nu.hsv.se>). However, before increase in 2003, the total number of Ph-students was in principle unchanged during several years. Below you see the diagram showing the total number of active PhD-students at Swedish universities during last 8 years (Open database at National Agency for Higher Education, <http://nu.hsv.se>).



3.

What is the average age of students entering doctoral programs in your country? What is/are the entry qualifications for getting into a PhD program (Bachelor's/Honours /Master's degree)?

60% of PhD-students entering doctoral programmes during the academic year 2002/2003 were in age between 25 and 34. The diagram below shows the age distribution and the distribution according to sex among the PhD-students who begun their education during the academic year 2002/2003. Two of five PhD-students are in age of 30 and older (National Agency for Higher Education, Annual report 2004).



Requirements for getting into PhD-programme

The higher education institution offering a postgraduate programme decides who is to be admitted. Applications to postgraduate programmes are submitted to the institution at which they are offered. In order to be admitted an applicant must have at least 120 credit points from undergraduate programmes, the specific admission requirements laid down by the faculty board, the capacity to complete the programme successfully and guaranteed financial support for the entire period of study.

4.

How many candidates defended their PhD last year? What has been the trend in the past five years? What is the average age of the PhD candidates at the time of completion of their doctorate?

Altogether almost 3,900 individuals were enrolled on postgraduate programmes in the academic year of 2002-03 (National Agency for Higher Education, Annual report 2004). This is 6 per cent more than in the year before and continues the previous year's increase after several years with no change in the numbers of new enrolments.

Totally 2.677 candidates have defended their PhD during 2003 (Open database at National Agency for Higher Education, <http://nu.hsv.se>). The number of PhD's awarded rose by ten per cent during the academic year of 2002-03. In ten years the number of PhD's awarded has doubled (National Agency for Higher Education, Annual report 2004).

The median age of PhD candidates in Sweden at the time of completion of their doctorate has lied between 35 and 36 during the last twenty years (National Agency for Higher Education, Annual report 2004).

5.

What is the nominal length of PhD programs? What is the average time from start to finish? What is the average active time spent to complete the PhD program? Are there official part-time modes for PhD programs?

A postgraduate programme according to Swedish system lasts for four years and leads to the award of a doctorate (PhD). After four years of full-time study or a total of 160 credit points a student may be awarded the degree of doctorate, a PhD. This requires the successful completion of the courses forming part of the postgraduate programme and the production of an approved thesis for at least 80 credit points. The thesis has to be defended in public.

The average net time to complete the PhD programme is about 4.5 years. The average gross time (include teaching) to complete the PhD programme is about 6 years (National Agency for Higher Education, Annual report 2004). The time spent studying for PhD degrees – both gross and net – has however remained more or less constant during the entire ten-year period.

6.

What is the percentage of PhD candidates who complete their PhD? Among those, what is the proportion of those who complete it within the allotted time period?

There is no information.

7.

What is the percentage of PhD candidates who withdraw? Are there interim qualifications for those who do not complete their doctorates (Mphil degree or other)?

There is no information.

8.

Are PhD candidates registered as such in any place (e.g. at a university or a ministry)?

PhD candidates are registered at their host universities.

9.

Are PhD candidates considered students? Do they have to pay fees? How much is it? Does this apply equally to foreigners (EU/ non-EU)?

PhD candidates in Sweden formally become employed by universities (if they have been appointed to doctoral studentships) and have equal rights as other workers (professors, teachers, administrative personnel). However, in reality, PhD-students are considered more as students.

PhD-students in Sweden, independent of nationality or country they come from, do not pay any fees.

10.

What is the proportion of PhD candidates who get funding for their research activity? Specify the different types of funding and their ratio.

There are four major financing forms of PhD programmes in Sweden (National Agency for Higher Education, Annual report 2004):

- Appointed to doctoral studentships (44%). This group of PhD candidates has workers rights and duties.
- Other form of appointment at a higher education institution (e.g. teachers, adjuncts...) (13%). This group of PhD candidates has workers rights and duties.
- Government training grant (9%)
- Scholarship (8%)
- Other (26%). This form includes PhD candidates who have another employer than the university (often industry) independent if this employment closely connected to the PhD programme or not. These candidates called "industry PhD-students".

11.

What is the average stipend/salary or bursary of the PhD candidates with funding (please give references for comparison: national minimum salary, average salary, salary of people with the same skills)?

Monthly average net salary, net government training grant and scholarship in euros are given below.

Doctoral studentships and other form of appointment at a higher education institution: **1500 €**

Government training grant: **1100 €**

Scholarship: **1000-1200 €**

For comparison we give the information about monthly average net salaries in Sweden for four professional categories (Statistic Sweden, <http://www.scb.se>):

- Business economist 2450 €
- Estate agent 2022 €
- Engineer and technician 1900 €
- Nursing staff 1333 €

12.

What is the proportion of PhD candidates having workers rights and duties? Specify the rights and duties provided to these PhD candidates (social, unemployment benefit, taxes etc.).

Conditions for PhD candidates financed by doctoral studentships, government grants or scholarships

Financing form	Doctoral studentships or other form of appointment within university	Government training grant	Scholarship grant
Proportion of PhD candidates (%)	57	9	8
Workers rights	Yes	No	No
Net monthly income (€)	1500	1100	1000-1200
Pensionable income	Yes	Yes	No
Extra pensions agreement	Yes	No	No
Sickness benefit	Yes	Grant prolongation	No
Parents allowance	Yes	Yes	No
Group life insurance	Yes	Yes	No
Occupational injury insurance	Yes	No	No
Unemployment benefit	Yes	No	No
Holiday month	28-35 days	No	No

Source: Swedish National Association of PhD students (SDok)

13-14.

What is the proportion of PhD candidates that practice teaching during their PhD program? Are they paid separately for their teaching duties? What is the amount of time spent on this activity?

In Sweden, the doctoral programme consists of 160 credits, which entails four full time years of doctoral studies. This is often complemented (for PhD candidates with doctoral studentships appointment, $\approx 44\%$) with teaching or other institutional duties at the respective department (varied between 0 and 20%, usually one year or maximum 20% annually during five years). Teaching does not give any supplementary income, but it gives a valuable experience and an additional merit, which are important if the PhD candidate plans for further academic carrier after completing PhD studies. According to Swedish regulations all persons that are teaching at a university should undergo a pedagogical education (minimum 2 credits). This is however not yet fulfilled at the universities due to various reasons.

15.

What proportion of PhD candidates are involved in collaboration between academia and industry during their PhD?

There is no information.

16.

*What are the numbers of incoming and outgoing PhD candidates in your country every year?
What are the numbers of incoming and outgoing junior researchers (postdoctoral level)?*

The most previous data concerning incoming PhD candidate and outgoing PhD after completion of their doctorate is for the year 2003 (Open database at National Agency for Higher Education, <http://nu.hsv.se>).

The number of incoming PhD candidates and outgoing PhD candidates (after completing of the PhD programme) during the period January – December 2003:

Incoming: 3.282

Outgoing: 2.677

There is no reliable information concerning incoming and outgoing junior researches.

17.

What is the proportion of PhD candidates who remain working in academia after they defended their PhD?

There is no reliable information.

18.

What proportion of young researchers go to R&D departments in companies? How many of them are involved in programs provided by the government to support the employment of young researchers in the private sector (if any)?

There is no reliable information

19.

What is the average salary of young doctors in academic and private sector?

The average net salary (very approximate) of young doctors in academic and private sector is 1.980 € and 2150 € respectively.

20.

How many members (local organization or individual) does your national organization have? Specify if they are local organizations (how many of them) or individuals (how many of them). At how many of the PhD awarding institutions do you have members?

The national union of PhD students, "Sveriges doktorander" (SDok), has 16 of 21 awarding universities and university colleges in Sweden as members. Two individuals from each of the member university - one elected representative and one depute member - represent the respective local doctoral organisation.