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LUND UNIVERSITY

School of Economics and Management

Faculty Board

Action plan for the prevention and management of conflicts between doctoral students and supervisors at the School of Economics and Management

Introduction

The School of Economics and Management has a strong research profile with ambitious research goals; several of the faculty's prioritised research areas are at the forefront in their fields. Research is the basis for both quality in education at all levels and for cooperation between the School of Economics and Management and wider society. A large proportion of this research is conducted by doctoral students. Research studies thereby play a central role for the daily activities of the School of Economics and Management and for its future development. In addition, research studies constitute the work and social environment of the majority of the faculty's employees – doctoral students, lecturers and administrative staff. It is thus essential for a good general work environment that research studies are characterised by tolerance, openness and mutual respect, a goal towards which the School of Economics and Management is continuously striving. For doctoral students to have a basically secure work environment with good relations to their supervisors and colleagues naturally contributes to ensuring peace and quiet for their research, stimulating intellectual curiosity and promoting professional development. Accordingly, it is of the utmost importance that the faculty works to ensure that doctoral students feel a basic sense of security in their work environment.

Nevertheless, conflicts can arise between supervisors and doctoral students, even in a basically well-functioning collaboration. The doctoral student is often strongly dependent on the supervisor, not only from a research perspective but often also for funding. In addition, a supervisor can have influential positions at the department level, indirectly making it difficult for the doctoral student to actively address an unsatisfactory and problematic relationship.

If a doctoral student ends up in a conflict situation, he or she should first turn to the department's director of research studies or the head of department. As a second step, the doctoral student should turn to the School of Economics and Management's vice dean responsible for research studies, and as a third step to the dean of the School of Economics and Management. The doctoral student always has the right to turn to the faculty.

Against the background of the above, the research studies staff at the School of Economics and Management has developed the following action plan to prevent conflicts between supervisors and doctoral students and to manage them when they do arise.

Step 1. Regular appraisals between the doctoral student and the supervisor

Pursuant to the School of Economics and Management's regulations for research studies (EHL 2013/182), an individual study plan is to be drawn up for each research student. In connection with all formal follow-ups of the individual study plan, the supervisor and the doctoral student are to meet and discuss any changes. Following the discussion between the supervisor and the doctoral student, the study plan is to be passed on to the director of research studies who prepares it for a decision by the head of department.

Step 2. Regular staff appraisals between the doctoral student and the director of studies

At the School of Economics and Management, the director of research studies (or the head of department) is to conduct an individual staff appraisal with the doctoral student once per year. This appraisal is to address the doctoral student's entire work situation, not least issues concerning relationships and collaboration, and any problems are to be documented. There is to be a template for these appraisals.

Step 3. Preparation in the supervisory team

Each department at the School of Economics and Management is to have a supervisory team. At least once per year, all admitted doctoral students are to be followed up in the supervisory team. If, during the discussions in steps 1 or 2, or during the meeting of the supervisory team, it emerges that there are any conflicts, or that a doctoral student has difficulties in his or her relationship with the supervisor, the department is to take appropriate measures. The responsibility for this lies with the head of department.

Step 4. Change of supervisor

Where necessary, there can be a change of supervisor according to the "Procedure for the change of supervisor at the School of Economics and Management", STYR 2016/860.

Responsibility: The departments are responsible for the introduction of steps 1–3. Furthermore, the departments are to define how and to what extent the action plan is to be applied for previously admitted doctoral students. The research studies staff at the School of Economics and Management is responsible for follow-up and evaluation of implementation by 31 March 2017 at the latest.