

The SULF Doctoral Candidate Association

Plan of Operations and Budget 2020

Introduction

The SULF Doctoral Candidate Association is the PhD candidate association of SULF, a politically and religiously independent union. According to the associations statutes, the SULF Doctoral Candidate Association board is tasked with:

- monitor and promote the interests of doctoral candidates in accordance with the SULF statutes and decisions made by Congress or the SULF Board,
- recruit members,
- work with opinion building and raise awareness of SULF's positions,
- act as a referral body on doctoral candidate issues for the SULF Board,
- keep the SULF Board informed about the activities of the Doctoral Candidate Association

In addition to the statutes, the SULF Doctoral Candidate Association Plan of Operations is based on the SULF Congress period operational focus, which, in turn, is based on Vision 2030. The three priority areas for 2019-2021 are critical power in society, professional autonomy and employment and working environment issues.

Theme for 2020-21: Mental Health

Mental health is our chosen theme under the period of the 2020-21 board. Previous works conducted by the board of the SULF Doctoral Candidate Association highlighted the rising levels of mental health issues among PhD candidates. Being a doctoral candidate is an inherently demanding position in many ways, which can, and does, lead to stress-related illness and mental health issues. Throughout the work conducted by previous boards of the SULF Doctoral Candidate Association we have seen examples that the mental health of PhD candidates in Sweden can be influenced by the research environment they are involved with such as lack of supervisory support, lack of freedom in research, work demands, harassment, discrimination or inequality. This also include other external pressures projected on PhD candidates' academic life such as securing social safety and social insurance for themselves and their families, residency and visa issues (in case of international candidates) and even dealing with cultural differences. Throughout 2020-21, the SULF Doctoral Candidate Association aims to raise awareness of these issues, as well as to offer support and advice to our members. Our areas of focus for 2020-21 are based on factors which our members have highlighted as those which show a strong correlation with positive or negative mental health outcomes. These are:

- Supervisory issues
- Rights and regulations
- Time management
- Language issues

Ongoing theme: COVID-19

The SULF Doctoral Candidate Association is aware of many potential issues faced by doctoral candidates in relation to the outbreak of COVID-19. Therefore, during the 2020-21 board, the SULF Doctoral Candidate Association is to keep up with ongoing developments related to COVID-19 and how these may affect doctoral candidates throughout Sweden. Where possible, the SULF Doctoral Candidate Association should raise these issues through appropriate channels.

The plan of operations is put into practice through the following four target areas:

- Board activities
- Membership activities
- Recruitment
- Advocacy and opinion building.

Board activities

The overall objectives of the SULF Doctoral Candidate Association Board are in accordance with Section 13 of the statutes as follows:

- Conduct activities in accordance with the objectives of the SULF Doctoral Candidate Association and make decisions on matters stipulated in the statutes.
- Execute decisions made by the Annual General Meeting.
- Keep minutes of all business conducted and decisions made.
- Prepare items to be presented at the Annual General Meeting.
- Propose the Annual activity plan.

An active and well-qualified Board is required in order to achieve this. These objectives will be achieved through the following activities:

Board meetings.

If the condition caused by the viral pandemic changes and allows hold at least two face-to-face meetings in addition to three online meetings before the 2021 AGM and produce minutes of these meetings. Otherwise replace the face-to-face meetings with online board meetings. If possible, at least one board meeting should be a retreat covering two consecutive days and, if possible, include board training and networking opportunities at a university where the association has members.

Board training.

Board members are encouraged to undergo the internet-based basic union course and take advantage of any other union-related training offered during the year. The Chair/Vice Chair will invite lecturers/trainers in connection with board meetings for educational purposes in accordance with the board's needs and interests.

Facebook.

Regularly update and market our Facebook page with information related to board activities, such as current board activities.

Handover to 2021-2022 Chair and Board.

Submit spoken and written information to the forthcoming Chair and perform an evaluation at the final Board meeting to identify what works well and what can be improved for the future Board.

Membership Activities

The overall objectives of the SULF Doctoral Candidate Association membership activities are to:

- Provide relevant information for members about issues concerning doctoral candidates
- Disseminate information to members about SULF and the SULF Doctoral Candidate Association operations
- Provide advice and support for members on union and professional issues

These objectives are to be achieved through the following activities:

Newsletter.

Send out a membership e-newsletter in English by e-mail two to three times per term.

Contact Day.

Arrange a Contact Day in autumn 2020 for doctoral candidates interested in The SULF Doctoral Candidate Association work. The day will be held in English and have a theme. If an on-site event is not possible due to the viral pandemic, consider online seminars and sessions during a day or two days. The day(s) will be marketed to members and all local associations will be notified about the event.

Annual General Meeting.

Organise an annual general meeting of representatives at SULF headquarters during May 2021. If an on-site event is not possible (due to the viral pandemic), find the best online solution for the event in collaboration with the SULF headquarters.

SULF Day.

Promote SULF Day on October 1st and encourage board members to participate in local activities and post their activities on Facebook. The content of the day is to be determined by the board elected in May and should reflect the year's theme.

Facebook.

Regularly update and market the associations Facebook page with information linked to membership activities, such as the internal SULF website and upcoming events.

Recruitment

The overall objectives of recruitment to the SULF Doctoral Candidate Association are to:

- Increase the number of doctoral candidate members of SULF
- Recruit union officials who are doctoral candidates

These objectives will be achieved through the following activities:

Local recruitment.

If the condition caused by the viral pandemic changes and allows, visit at least two local SULF associations at the universities where the membership level among doctoral candidates is low in order to discuss how SULF locally and nationally can reach out to, and support, doctoral candidates. If on-site visit or seminar is not possible, hold online seminars and live Q&A sessions in collaboration with the local SULF associations.

SULF activities for doctoral candidates.

Collaborate with the SULF central board so that doctoral candidates' interests are well represented in all SULF activities.

Benefits.

Continue to work with the SULF central board and headquarters to seek and implement new kinds of benefits for doctoral candidate members and doctoral candidate union officials and disseminate information about membership benefits.

The Nominations Committee.

Support the work of the 2021-22 nominations committee by inviting the members to the annual contact day and at least one board meeting during 2020 and provide support and education to the nominations committee. Ensure that there is a nominations committee for 2021-22.

Facebook.

Regularly update and market our Facebook page with information related to recruitment, information such as membership benefits and local SULF events.

Advocacy and Opinion Building

Close cooperation between the SULF Doctoral Candidate Association, the central board, and the SULF headquarters is a prerequisite for effective and fruitful work for doctoral candidates.

The association must also work with doctoral candidates involved in the local union and with SULF local associations. Likewise, it is important that the SULF Doctoral Candidate Association works with other organisations on issues specific to doctoral candidates.

The overall objectives of the SULF Doctoral Candidate Association advocacy and public opinion-building activities are to:

- Engage in advocacy and raise awareness of the section's activity by being active in the research policy debate
- Contribute information when requested
- Act as a preparatory body for the central board on section issues
- Keep the central board informed on section activities

These objectives will be achieved through the following activities:

Published material.

Publish at least two opinion articles or letters during the year.

SULF's central board

Collaborate with the SULF's central board, attend the board's meetings and contribute a doctoral candidate perspective.

Saco Student Council.

Collaborate with the Saco Student Council and attend their members' council and chairs' council to contribute a doctoral candidate perspective.

SFS-DK.

Meet the SFS-DK Chair or Board at least once to discuss collaboration on common issues.

Online visibility.

Improve The SULF Doctoral Candidate Association's overall online visibility.

Facebook.

Regularly update and market our Facebook page with information related to advocacy and opinion-building activities, such as our debate articles.

The SULF Doctoral Candidate Association vision document.

The SULF Doctoral Candidate Association will collaborate with SULF office and SULF central board to update the current The SULF Doctoral Candidate Association vision document. It shall be a document that both SULF and The SULF Doctoral Candidate Association stand behind.

Dialogue Meeting.

Organize a one-day dialogue meeting (online or on-site) with representatives from the SULF board, the SULF head office, Saco Student Council, and other interested parties to discuss better ways of coordinating work on the problems with Swedish government agencies faced by international academics in Sweden. Many of the issues The SULF Doctoral Candidate Association works with are also faced by international students, post-docs, lecturers and professors, but they are often framed as The SULF Doctoral Candidate Association issues.

Proposed 2020 Budget

In total 265 000 SEK was requested to cover the costs of The SULF Doctoral Candidate Association (table below). The Executive Committee approved 235 000 SEK for 2020 with the following cuts: 10 000 SEK for printing cost of informational materials and 20 000 SEK for the dialogue meetings.

Goal	Activity	Requested	Received
Board Work	Handover	3 000	3 000
	Board meetings	90 000	90 000
	Board training	10 000	10 000
Member Activities	Contact Day	60 000	60 000
	AGM	25 000	25 000
	SULF Day	2 500	2 500
	Social Media	500	500
Recruitment	Local recruiting	15 000	15 000
	Information material	10 000	0
	Nominations Committee	5 000	5 000
	Social Media	500	500
Advocacy and opinion building	Publications	2 000	2 000
	Saco Student Council	15 000	15 000
	SFS-DK	2 500	2 500
	SULF Central	2 500	2 500
	Online Visibility	2 500	2 500
	Social Media	1 000	1 000
	Dialogue Meeting	500	500
		20 000	0
		265 000	235 000