

The SULF Doctoral Candidate Association

Plan of operations 2021

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 2021-22: Moving forward after COVID-19

The chosen theme for the mandate period of 2021-22 is Moving forward after COVID-19. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone in one way or another, to a greater or smaller extent. Throughout the operational year of 2020-21, the SULF Doctoral Candidate Association, together with the Swedish National Union of Students' Doctoral Committee (SFS-DK), has highlighted some of the ways that the pandemic has affected doctoral candidates in Sweden. Now, when vaccinations are slowly starting to be rolled out, we can finally start seeing a light at the end of the tunnel, but even now it is not certain when the pandemic will end, and what will happen once it does. With this in mind, the board of 2020-21 believes that the pandemic and its effects, both immediate and long-lasting, will be one of the most important topics that the SULF Doctoral Candidate Association can work with for the coming operational year. The pandemic brought with it a lot of suffering and issues, but it did also cause some societal systems to change for the better. More support for working from home, travel free conferences, and easier participation in international courses are just a few examples of positive impacts on doctoral education. Therefore, throughout 2021-22, the SULF Doctoral Candidate Association aims to mitigate the problems that have arisen due to the pandemic, as well as work to keep positive changes moving forward, as we build a new normal.

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 of Directors 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

Hold at least two face-to-face meetings¹ and three online meetings before the 2022 AGM and produce minutes of these meetings. At least one board meeting should be a retreat covering two consecutive days¹ 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.

¹ If the COVID-19 situation allows

Facebook

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

Handover to 2021 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 2021 for doctoral candidates interested in The SULF Doctoral Candidate Association work. The day will be held in English and have a theme. The day will be marketed to members and all local associations will be notified about the event. If the COVID-19 situation allows, this will be a physical event, otherwise it will be held online.

Annual General Meeting

Organise an annual general meeting of representatives during April or May 2022. This can be held as a physical, online, or hybrid meeting.

SULF Day

Promote SULF Day on October 7th 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

Visit at least two local SULF associations at the universities where the membership level among doctoral candidates² is low in order to discuss how SULF locally and nationally can reach out to, and support, doctoral candidates.

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 2021 and provide support and education to the nominations committee. Ensure that there is a nominations committee for 2022.

Facebook

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

² If the COVID-19 situation allows

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 presedial 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 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.

Dialogue Meeting

Organize a one-day dialogue meeting 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.