

**SULF:s kongress 2024**

## Access to PhD courses

Higher education institutions in Sweden are not permitted to charge fees to students for taking courses in research-level education, per the ordinance on higher education fees (studieavgiftsförordningen, 2010:543). This assumption is a key part of the economic conditions intended to attract top talent from around the world to research-level education at Swedish universities. However, an investigation by the SULF Doctoral Candidate Association has revealed that some universities are charging hidden fees to PhD candidates, especially those from outside the EU/EEA. This can be done, for example, by labelling courses as Master's or Bachelor's level, even when offered in the context of doctoral studies. In other cases, courses are considered "reserved" for particular categories of applicants, for example by departmental affiliation, and other applicants are refused admission.

Practices vary between universities, but some appear to be intentionally exploiting loopholes in the law, or at the very least fall short of full transparency in their course admission and fee policies. In some cases, it appears to us that universities have charged fees unlawfully. This inconsistency and lack of clarity undermine the principle of free doctoral education and restrict candidates' access to valuable educational opportunities.

This situation has led to financial and practical barriers for many PhD candidates, especially those from outside the EU/EEA, and restricts their educational opportunities.

**The SULF Doctoral Candidate Association therefore submits that the Congress decide:**

- that SULF endorses the principle that research-level education at Swedish universities shall be free of charge, regardless of the candidate's nationality;
- that SULF shall engage with higher education institutions to improve transparency and equality of opportunity regarding admission of PhD candidates to courses.

*We wrote this motion in English, which is the main working language of the SULF Doctoral Candidate Association. Below is our proposal for decision in Swedish.*

## SULF:s doktorandförening hemställer därför:

- att SULF stöttar principen att forskarutbildning vid svenska lärosäten ska vara avgiftsfri, oavsett den studerandes nationalitet;
- att SULF ska uppmuntra lärosätena att säkerställa transparens och likabehandling vid antagning av doktorander till kurser.

Motionen undertecknas för SULF:s doktorandförenings styrelse av:  
Mohamed Al-Sabri, Chairperson