



Stockholm
University

DECISION
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Dnr SU FV-1.1.2-2491-16

Vice-Chancellor

Administrator:

Lovisa af Petersens
PhD, University Programme Director

Procedure for the withdrawal of a doctoral student's right to supervision and other resources

Introduction

Doctoral students are entitled to supervision and other resources throughout their training unless the Vice-Chancellor, pursuant to Chapter 6, Section 30 of the Higher Education Ordinance, decides otherwise. The possibility of withdrawing supervision and other resources from a doctoral student derives from the Higher Education Act (1992:1434), which stipulates that the higher education institutions' resources shall be used efficiently.

The procedure refers both to national regulations, particularly Chapter 6, Sections 28–31 of the Higher Education Ordinance, and local regulations at Stockholm University, particularly the regulations for doctoral studies adopted by the Vice-Chancellor, as well as the scientific area boards' guidelines for doctoral studies.¹

The procedure regulates the responsibility and preparation at the department and scientific area levels prior to the Vice-Chancellor's decision on whether or not to withdraw supervision and other resources. In addition, it regulates the responsibility and preparation concerning the doctoral student's right to appeal, as well as the right to request the recovery of supervision and other resources. "Other resources" refers to acceptable conditions for study (Chapter 7, Section 34 of the Higher Education Ordinance), such as training, a SUKAT account, a workspace, a computer, office supplies, library resources, and costs associated with courses. The procedure should ensure that the preparation process takes place in a legally certain manner.

¹ Please refer to the current decision-making and delegation policy of each scientific area board for more information. Decisions concerning doctoral studies may be delegated.

Preparation at the department level

In many cases, if the matter is handled appropriately at an early stage, the supervisors and the doctoral student can, with the help of the department's management, find a solution and avoid the need for a request to withdraw supervision and other resources.

Supervision and other resources may not be withdrawn for any period in which the doctoral student is appointed to a doctoral studentship. During this time, the doctoral student will retain the right to supervision and other resources.² Therefore, the question of withdrawing resources should be raised before it is time to extend the doctoral student's employment.

If a doctoral student neglects his/her obligations, the supervisors should bring this up with the doctoral student at an early stage. The supervisors should have multiple meetings with the doctoral student, with brief intervals, in order to focus on the performance requirements specified in the individual study plan. All actions taken and all agreements with the doctoral student should be documented in the individual study plan, including appendices.³ The actions and agreements should be followed up by the head of department in consultation with the director of graduate studies.

If the deviation is substantial and continues for more than six months, the supervisors⁴ should report this in writing to the director of graduate studies and the head of department. The head of department should give the doctoral student an opportunity to comment on the supervisors' report in writing.

In consultation with the head of department, the director of graduate studies should call both the doctoral student and the supervisors to a meeting to discuss the progress of the training and hear both sides of the story. Before the meeting, the doctoral student should be informed of the topic of the meeting and his/her right to bring a representative⁵. The meeting should be documented, and the minutes should be sent to all those attending.

Actions decided upon during the meeting may include a revision of the individual study plan, additional supervision, and/or a change of supervisors. A revision of the individual study plan should include a detailed timetable for the studies. Furthermore, it should be clear what

² Chapter 6, Section 30 of the Higher Education Ordinance. (When it comes to externally employed doctoral students, the employer's and the financiers' requirements should be documented in the financial plan, as well as in the individual study plan.)

³ The individual study plan should be reviewed at least once a year. The doctoral student and the principal supervisor should confirm in writing that they have read the individual study plan and any changes made to it. Chapter 6, Section 39 of the Higher Education Ordinance, and Regulations for Doctoral Studies at Stockholm University, 2014-12-18 (dnr SU FV-1.1.2-0138-14). Please note that individual study plans are public documents. See also information about individual study plans within the scientific areas of Science and Human Science.

⁴ A report may also be initiated by the head of department, the director of graduate studies, or other staff responsible for doctoral studies.

⁵ For example, a student union or trade union representative.

obligations each supervisor has and what other resources are available to the doctoral student. The revised individual study plan should, in consultation with the director of graduate studies, all supervisors, and the doctoral student, be adopted in accordance with the current decision-making and delegation policy.

The director of graduate studies will follow up any decisions together with the supervisors. Additional follow-up meetings and revisions may be necessary.

If the assessment is that the doctoral student *substantially*⁶ continues to neglect his/her obligations under the individual study plan in spite of actions taken by the department, the department board should submit a request to withdraw the doctoral student's resources to the relevant scientific area board.⁷

Request for withdrawal

The department board will request the withdrawal of resources to the scientific area board. The request should contain a summary of how the doctoral student has substantially neglected his/her obligations, as well as a statement that Stockholm University has fulfilled its own obligations under the individual study plan.⁸

The request should include the following documentation:

- A summary of the case.
- The doctoral student's individual study plans.
- A description of actions (in addition to what is stated in the individual study plan) that have been attempted or considered in order to facilitate the completion of the doctoral student's training.
- Documentation from meetings held between the doctoral student, the supervisors, the director of graduate studies, and the department's management.
- E-mail conversations and other relevant documentation that is available.
- The supervisors' assessments of the doctoral student's achieved results and the doctoral student's ability to fulfil his/her obligations under the individual study plan.⁹

⁶ Higher Education Appeals Board (Överklagandenämnden för högskolan), decision 2015-06-12, reg. nr. 245-259-15;

Higher Education Appeals Board, decision 2012-04-13, reg. nr. 451-14-12;
National Agency for Higher Education, decision 2007-06-28, reg. no. 31-4004-06;
National Agency for Higher Education, decision 2003-06-04, reg. no. 31-4564-02;
National Agency for Higher Education, decision 2009-08-19, reg. no. 31-1650-09.

⁷ Chapter 6, Section 30 of the Higher Education Ordinance, and Regulations for Doctoral Studies at Stockholm University, 2014-12-18 (dnr SU FV-1.1.2-0138-14).

⁸ Regulations for Doctoral Studies at Stockholm University, 2014-12-18, (dnr SU FV-1.1.2-0138-14).

⁹ Regulations for Doctoral Studies at Stockholm University, 2014-12-18, (dnr SU FV-1.1.2-0138-14).

Preparation at the scientific area level

Once the request from the department board has been submitted, the scientific area board will begin its own preparation.¹⁰ The case will be processed by the scientific area office¹¹, which is responsible for ensuring that the doctoral student is given an opportunity to comment on the request for withdrawal in writing.¹² The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, in consultation with the relevant dean, will decide whether the statement warrants further investigation.

The aim of the investigation is:

1. to determine whether the doctoral student has *substantially* neglected his/her obligations under the individual study plan to the extent that there are grounds for a decision to withdraw supervision and other resources;
2. to determine the extent to which Stockholm University and the supervisors have fulfilled their obligations under the individual study plan.

The investigation should establish whether the individual study plan has been drawn up and reviewed in accordance with Chapter 6, Section 30 of the Higher Education Ordinance and the local regulations at Stockholm University. In addition, it should describe in what way the doctoral student has neglected his/her obligations, and what actions the department has taken in order to help the doctoral student fulfil his/her obligations. Supporting documentation should be appended to the investigation.

If the investigation concerns a doctoral student who does not speak Swedish, written documentation and statements of key importance to the decision should be translated into English.

The investigation should be made in writing and conclude with a reasoned proposal for a decision.

Once the investigation is completed, the relevant scientific area board will decide whether there are grounds for the case to be referred to the Vice-Chancellor for a decision.¹³ The proposal submitted to the Vice-Chancellor should be accompanied by adequate documentation and statements.

If there are no grounds for withdrawal of resources, the relevant scientific area board will decide what other actions to take.

¹⁰ The case will be processed in accordance with the relevant scientific area board's decision-making and delegation policy.

¹¹ In consultation with the legal counsel function at the Strategic Planning and Vice-Chancellor's Office.

¹² Regulations for Doctoral Studies at Stockholm University, 2014-12-18, (dnr SU FV-1.1.2-0138-14).

¹³ Regulations for Doctoral Studies at Stockholm University, 2014-12-18, (dnr SU FV-1.1.2-0138-14). According to Chapter 6, Section 36 of the Higher Education Ordinance, the Vice-Chancellor may not delegate decisions pursuant to Chapter 6, Sections 30 and 31.

Vice-Chancellor's decision

If the Vice-Chancellor decides to revoke the right to supervision and other resources, the doctoral student should be informed of the rules for regaining this right. The decision can be appealed to the Higher Education Appeals Board (Överklagandenämnden för högskolan). Information about how to appeal should be appended to the decision and provided to the doctoral student.¹⁴

Doctoral student's request to regain resources

If study resources have been withdrawn pursuant to Chapter 6, Section 30 of the Higher Education Ordinance, the doctoral student may, pursuant to Chapter 6, Section 31 of the Higher Education Ordinance, recover his/her entitlement to supervision and other resources on application to the Vice-Chancellor.

Such requests should be addressed to the Vice-Chancellor, Stockholm University, 106 91 Stockholm (registrator@su.se).

The relevant scientific area board will process the case and prepare a written investigation report. The aim of the investigation is to determine whether the doctoral student's prospective study results are of such considerable quality and scope (of whether the doctoral student has demonstrated this in some other way) that he/she is likely to be able to finish his/her studies and fulfil the remaining obligations under the most recently adopted individual study plan.

The investigation should contain a summary of the doctoral student's request and prospective study results. In addition, it should include the department board's analysis of the quality and scope of the prospective study results or the other reasons stated in the doctoral student's request.¹⁵ The doctoral student's request to regain the withdrawn resources should be appended to the investigation.

If the investigation concerns a doctoral student who does not speak Swedish, written documentation and statements of key importance to the decision should be translated into English.

The investigation should contain a reasoned proposal for a decision,¹⁶ which will be made by the Vice-Chancellor.

Information about how to appeal should be appended to any negative decision and provided to the doctoral student.¹⁷

¹⁴ Regulations for Doctoral Studies at Stockholm University, 2014-12-18, (dnr SU FV-1.1.2-0138-14).

¹⁵ Regulations for Doctoral Studies at Stockholm University, 2014-12-18, (dnr SU FV-1.1.2-0138-14).

¹⁶ The proposal for a decision should be well-founded, see the precedent-setting example: Higher Education Appeals Board, decision 2014-03-14, reg. nr. 245-49-14.

¹⁷ Regulations for Doctoral Studies at Stockholm University, 2014-12-18, (dnr SU FV-1.1.2-0138-14).

The doctoral student's right to appeal

The doctoral student has the right to appeal the Vice-Chancellor's decision to withdraw supervision and other resources, as well as the Vice-Chancellor's decision not to restore the doctoral student's entitlement to supervision and other resources.¹⁸

In the event of an appeal, it should be specified what decision is being appealed, what change in the decision is being requested, and why the decision should be changed. The written appeal should be addressed to the Higher Education Appeals Board, but sent to Stockholm University, Registrar, 106 91 Stockholm (registrator@su.se). At Stockholm University, the appeal will be processed by the relevant scientific area office.

When a decision is appealed, Stockholm University should, pursuant to Section 23 of the Administrative Procedure Act (1986:223), verify that the appeal has been submitted in due time. If the appeal has been submitted too late, Stockholm University should reject the appeal.¹⁹ In other cases, the matter should be handed over to the Higher Education Appeals Board.

The appeal should be forwarded to the Higher Education Appeals Board along with a statement and copies of other documents relating to the case.

If the Higher Education Appeals Board requests additional information or statements from Stockholm University, the subsequent processing of the case within Stockholm University should be handled by the scientific area office. Stockholm University's statement will be decided by the Vice-Chancellor.²⁰

According to Chapter 12, Section 5 of the Higher Education Ordinance, decisions made by the Higher Education Appeals Board cannot be appealed.

Additional information

A doctoral student whose resources have been withdrawn is still admitted to doctoral studies in the subject in question at Stockholm University. The doctoral student is entitled to engage in doctoral studies on his/her own, as well as to defend a doctoral/licentiate thesis at a public defence seminar.

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¹⁸ Chapter 6, Section 31 of the Higher Education Ordinance.

¹⁹ Such a decision can be appealed.

²⁰ On the recommendation of the relevant scientific area board in accordance with the current decision-making and delegation policy.