

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

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Description:

The purpose of this procedure is to regulate the responsibility and preparation at the departmental and science area levels before reporting to the Council for Good Research Practice and pending the decision by the President on matters concerning the withdrawal of a doctoral student's right to supervision and other resources. The procedure also regulates the preparation of appeals as well as applications from doctoral students to regain their supervision and other resources.

This is a translation of a governing document.

In case of a discrepancy between the Swedish and the English versions, the Swedish version will prevail.

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1. Introduction

Stockholm University endeavours to secure a good recruitment process and training for doctoral students, so that the withdrawal of supervision and other resources will not become necessary. Good handling at an early stage can often have the effect that the supervisors and the doctoral student, with the help of the department leadership, find a solution which makes a notification of withdrawal of supervision and other resources unnecessary. Sometimes, however, such a notification is necessary. The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that the preparation and decision process is carried out in an effective and legally secure manner.¹

A doctoral student is entitled to supervision and other resources during their training unless the President has decided otherwise pursuant to chapter 6, § 30 of the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100). The possibility to withdraw supervision and other resources is based on the Higher Education Act (1992:1434), which requires the institutions of higher education to use their resources effectively.

This procedure refers to rules which apply at a national level, primarily the Higher Education Ordinance and the Administrative Procedure Act (2017:900). National rules also include practice decisions made by the Higher Education Appeals Board and the Swedish Higher Education Authority (and the former National Agency for Higher Education). The procedure also refers to local rules applicable at Stockholm University, see Regulations for education and summative assessment at third-cycle level (Governing Documents – Rules & Regulations).

In accordance with chapter 6, § 36 of the Higher Education Ordinance, the President cannot delegate decisions according to chapter 6, §§ 30 and 31 of the Ordinance.

At Stockholm University, cases concerning the withdrawal of a doctoral student's right to supervision and other resources, as well as the application from a doctoral student to regain these rights, are prepared by the Council for Good Research Practice pending the decision by the President. See Rules of Procedure for the Council for Good Research Practice (Governing Documents – Rules & Regulations).

This procedure regulates:

1. preparation and decisions at the departmental and science area level as well as in the Council for Good Research Practice on matters concerning the withdrawal of supervision and other resources,²

¹ For notification of a definite non-completion of third-level studies, see Regulations for education and summative assessment at third-cycle level (Governing Documents – Rules & Regulations). For matters concerning deviation from good research practice, see Procedure for handling of suspicion of deviation from good research practice (Governing Documents – Rules & Regulations).

² Other resources are defined as acceptable conditions for study (see chapter 7, § 34 of the Higher Education Ordinance). Such conditions include for example teaching, costs related to courses,

2. preparation of appeals of decisions made by the President, and
3. application from a doctoral student to regain supervision and other resources.

2. Preparation at the departmental level

Supervision and other resources may not be withdrawn for any period in which the third-cycle student has been appointed to a doctoral studentship or is receiving a doctoral grant (chapter 6, § 30 of the Higher Education Ordinance). During this period, the doctoral student retains the rights of supervision and other resources.³ When a case concerning the withdrawal of supervision and other resources is initiated, the remaining period of employment of the doctoral student should be considered in parallel, since decisions on employment constitute a separate process. At this time, there should also be consultation with the Human Resources Office.

If a doctoral student runs the risk of substantially neglecting their obligations described in the individual study plan, the supervisors shall discuss this with the doctoral student at an early stage. The supervisors shall have frequently recurring meetings with the doctoral student to put a focus on the requirements of performance and progress stipulated in the individual study plan. All measures and agreements with the doctoral student shall be documented in the individual study plan, including attachments. The individual study plan shall be reviewed at least once a year. The doctoral student and the principal supervisor shall certify in writing that they have taken due note of the individual study plan and the changes which are made in it (chapter 6, § 29 of the Higher Education Ordinance and Regulations for education and summative assessment at third-cycle level).⁴ The measures and agreements shall be reviewed by the head of department in consultation with the director of third-cycle studies.

If the neglect of the individual study plan is substantial⁵, that is, if the doctoral student has clearly neglected their obligations described in the individual study plan, while the higher education institution (Stockholm University) has fulfilled its own obligations according to this plan, and if the neglect continues during a period of six months, this shall be reported in

workplace, computer, office supplies, email account, SUKAT database account, library resources and expenses.

³ For externally employed doctoral students, the requirements made by the employer and the funder shall be documented in the funding plan and in the individual study plan.

⁴ For rules on the responsibility for reviewing individual study plans as well as signatures, see Regulations for education and summative assessment at third-cycle level (Governing Documents – Rules & Regulations). See also information about individual study plans at the Human Science Academic Area and at the Science Academic Area.

⁵ The Higher Education Appeals Board, decision 2015-06-12, Reg. No 245-259-15; The Higher Education Appeals Board, decision 2012-04-13, Reg. No 451-14-12; The National Agency for Higher Education, decision 2007-06-28, Reg. No. 31-4004-06; The National Agency for Higher Education, decision 2003-06-04, Reg. No 31-4564-02 and The National Agency for Higher Education, decision 2009-08-19, Reg. No 31-1650-09.

writing by the supervisors⁶ to the head of department and the director of third-cycle studies. Relevant documentation shall be annexed to the report and the documents of the case shall be filed.

The director of third-cycle studies shall, in consultation with the head of department, invite the doctoral student and the supervisors to a meeting to discuss the progress of the doctoral training and to get the viewpoint of the doctoral student as well as that of the supervisors. Before the meeting, the doctoral student shall be informed about the subject matter of the meeting and their right to bring an advisor of their choice.⁷ At the meeting, the doctoral student shall be informed that a neglect of their obligations presented in the individual study plan may possibly result in the withdrawal of supervision and other resources. The doctoral student shall also be informed of the consequences of such a decision. The meeting and the feedback to the doctoral student shall be recorded and the notes of the meeting shall be dispatched to all participants.

Measures decided at the meeting can be e.g. a revision of the individual study plan, additional supervision and/or a change of supervisor. A revision of the individual study plan shall include a detailed timeline for the studies. It shall also clearly indicate the obligations of the different supervisors and what other resources are available for the doctoral student. After consultation with the director of third-cycle studies, all supervisors and the doctoral student, the revised individual study plan shall be adopted in accordance with the applicable decision-making and delegation policy.⁸

The decisions which have been made are followed up by the director of third-cycle studies in cooperation with the supervisors. Additional follow-up meetings and revisions of the individual study plan may be necessary.

If it is estimated that, despite the action taken by the department, the doctoral student continues to significantly fail in their obligations, the head of department shall make a report on the withdrawal of resources. When the report has been set up, the doctoral student shall be notified of the report and acknowledge receipt of the report. When the doctoral student has received the notification, they shall be given a reasonable time to deliver their opinion on the report. A deadline shall be given. When the report has been completed it shall be submitted, together with the statement from the doctoral student, to the department board pending a decision to refer the matter to the Council for Good Research Practice.

⁶ The report can also be initiated by the head of department, the director of third-cycle studies, or others responsible for third-cycle studies.

⁷ E.g. a representative from the student union or a union representative.

⁸ Note that the individual study plan can cover a period of less than a year. In some cases this may be advisable.

3. Notification from the head of department

The notification from the head of department to the department board shall include a summary of instances where the doctoral student substantially neglected their duties, and an account which shows that Stockholm University has fulfilled its obligations in accordance with the individual study plans.⁹

The notification shall include the following documents:

- A summary of the case, a chronological timeline which illustrates the case, documented records of the stages when there has been communication with the doctoral student as well as any opinion from the doctoral student on the notification made by the head of department
- All the doctoral student's individual study plans, including any attachments. If an individual study plan is missing or incomplete, this, as well as the reason for this, shall be accounted for.
- Excerpt from Ladok.
- General study plan.
- Assessments by the supervisors of the results achieved by the doctoral student and the doctoral student's ability to fulfil their obligations in accordance with the individual study plan.
- Statement from the doctoral student.
- Description of measures tested to enable the doctoral student's training, apart from what is apparent in the individual study plan.
- Relevant documentation from meetings held with the doctoral student, supervisors, director of third-cycle studies and the department leadership.
- Relevant emails and other documentation of relevance.

If the department board decides that there are grounds for a withdrawal of supervision and other resources from a doctoral student, the case shall be submitted to the relevant scientific area office. The head of department is responsible for sending the decision to the doctoral student.¹⁰

4. Preparation at the science area level

Upon receiving the department board's decision to submit a notification, the scientific area office shall ensure, without delay, that the dossier is complete (in consultation

⁹ See also Regulations for education and summative assessment at third-cycle level.

¹⁰ If the case concerns a non-Swedish speaking doctoral student, the decision shall be translated into English.

with the university legal counsel who is part of the secretariat for the Council for Good Research Practice).

Before the case is handed over to the Council for Good Research Practice, the doctoral student shall have been given access to all documents of the case and been given reasonable time to deliver their opinion on the documents. The responsible administrator at the scientific area office notifies the Council for Good Research Practice of the case.

5. The Council's preparation and decision

The Council's proposal for a decision shall be submitted to the President.¹¹ The proposed decision shall be in writing including a motivation, and all documents relating to the case shall be attached. If documents of importance for the decision have been added during the Council's handling of the case, the doctoral student shall be given reasonable time to submit their comments on the proposed decision and a deadline shall be specified.¹² The decision to propose to the President to withdraw supervision and other resources shall be sent by the responsible administrator at the scientific area office to the doctoral student and to the head of department.¹³

See Rules of Procedure for the Council for Good Research Practice (Governing Documents – Rules & Regulations) for information about the tasks and composition of the Council as well as the routines at Council meetings.

6. Decision by the President

The case is presented by the scientific area office. If the President decides to withdraw the right to supervision and other resources, the doctoral student shall be informed about the rules related to the regaining of these rights. The President's decision may be implemented only when the decision has become final.

Appeals can be lodged against the decision to the Higher Education Appeals Board. Information on appeal shall be attached to the decision. The responsible administrator at the scientific area office sends the decision to the doctoral student and to the head of department.¹⁴

¹¹ Chapter 6, § 36 of the Higher Education Ordinance states that the President cannot delegate decisions according to chapter 6, §§ 30 and 31 of the Ordinance.

¹² Normally, the deadline set should be a week. If the doctoral student requests a delay, an additional week should be granted. If the case concerns a non-Swedish speaking doctoral student, written documents and statements of vital importance for the decision shall be translated into English.

¹³ If the case concerns a non-Swedish speaking doctoral student, the proposed decision shall be translated into English.

¹⁴ If the case concerns a non-Swedish speaking doctoral student, written documents and statements of

7. The doctoral student's application to recover their resources

If study resources have been withdrawn pursuant to chapter 6, § 30 of the Higher Education Ordinance, the doctoral student may, pursuant to chapter 6, § 31 of the Higher Education Ordinance and on application to the President, recover their right to supervision and other resources.

The application shall be addressed to the President, Stockholm University, 106 91 Stockholm (registrator@su.se).

The scientific area office handles the case and makes a written report. The purpose of the report is to establish if the doctoral student's intended study results are of considerable quality and extent, or whether the doctoral student has made a reasonable case that they can fulfil their remaining studies and obligations according to the most recently adopted individual study plan (chapter 6, § 31 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

The report shall include a summary of the application made by the doctoral student and any intended study results. It shall also include the analysis made by the department board of the quality and extent of the intended study results or other reasons presented by the doctoral student in their application. The doctoral student's application to regain withdrawn resources shall be attached to the report.

The report shall include a reasoned proposal for a decision.¹⁵

The responsible administrator at the scientific area office sends the case to the Council for Good Research Practice.

Before the Council's proposal for a decision is submitted to the President, the doctoral student shall be given a reasonable time to deliver their opinion on the proposal for a decision. The doctoral student shall confirm that they have received the report, and they shall be given a reasonable time to deliver their opinion on the report. A deadline for this shall be given.¹⁶

See Rules of Procedure for the Council for Good Research Practice (Governing Documents – Rules & Regulations) for information about the tasks and composition of the Council as well as the routines at Council meetings.

vital importance for the decision shall be translated into English.

¹⁵ A proposal for a decision shall be reasoned, see for example: The Higher Education Appeals Board, decision 2014-03-14, Reg. No 245-49-14.

¹⁶ Normally, the deadline set should be a week. If the doctoral student requests a delay, an additional week should be granted. If the case concerns a non-Swedish speaking doctoral student, written documents and statements of vital importance for the decision shall be translated into English.

The case shall be presented by the responsible administrator at the scientific area office pending a decision by the President.

Information on appeal shall be attached to a negative decision. The responsible administrator at the scientific area office sends the decision to the doctoral student and to the head of department.¹⁷

8. The doctoral student's right to appeal

The doctoral student has the right to appeal a decision made by the President concerning withdrawal of supervision and other resources *and* the President's decision not to let the doctoral student regain supervision and other resources, chapter 12, § 2, point. 6 of the Higher Education Ordinance.

When an appeal against a decision is lodged, the appeal shall state which decision is being appealed and what amendment is being requested, as well as the reason why the decision shall be amended. The written appeal shall be addressed to the Higher Education Appeals Board, but sent to Stockholm University, Registrar, 106 91 Stockholm (registrator@su.se).

At Stockholm University, the handling of appeals is the responsibility of the university legal counsel who is part of the secretariat for the Council for Good Research Practice, with the support of the scientific area office.

When an appeal has been made against a decision, Stockholm University shall, pursuant to § 45 of the Administrative Procedure Act, examine whether the appeal has been lodged in time. If the appeal has been lodged too late, Stockholm University shall reject the appeal.¹⁸

If not, the case shall be handed over to the Higher Education Appeals Board with copies of other documents in the case and a statement on the appeal. The statement from the University is determined by the President after presentation by the President's Office.

If the Higher Education Appeals Board requires Stockholm University to submit further information or statements, the continued handling of the case shall be carried at the President's Office.

Pursuant to chapter 12, § 5 of the Higher Education Ordinance, decisions by the Higher Education Appeals Board cannot be appealed.

¹⁷ If the case concerns a non-Swedish speaking doctoral student, the decision shall be translated into English.

¹⁸ Such a decision can be appealed.



9. Other information

A doctoral student whose resources have been withdrawn is still accepted to the doctoral programme of the third-cycle subject area in question at Stockholm University. The doctoral student has the right to pursue their third-cycle studies on their own, and they have the right to defend their doctoral thesis/licentiate thesis at a dissertation defence/licentiate seminar.