

Analysis of consequences for doctoral students due to the corona pandemic

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The Doctoral Committee within

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SFS DK

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Summary

This report is based on the results of a survey conducted by The Doctoral Committee within Swedish National Union of Students, SFS-DK, among doctoral students in Sweden, as well as inputs that SFS-DK has received from university level doctoral student representation.

The aim of this report is to highlight the impact of the corona pandemic on doctoral students in Sweden. All doctoral students in Sweden have been affected by the corona pandemic, but to what degree of course varies.

Many doctoral students have in their responses argued that they need prolongation to have a fair chance of meeting the learning outcomes of their education. In SFS-DK we cannot judge how many doctoral students should be prolonged, but we see a need for the universities to address this issue. Until now most universities have said that this will be handled on a case to case basis, this gives room for very different treatment of doctoral students within the same university. Also this leaves it up to the doctoral student to negotiate prolongation with a department that might not have the financial means.

Our clear recommendation is therefore that all universities address this issue, clarifying under which circumstances prolongation can be given due to the corona pandemic, and that the financing of prolongation is handled at central university level.

Almost all respondents mention mental health as a common problem. Previous reports as "[Doktorandspegeln](#)" from UKÄ (2016) and "[Hur mår doktoranden](#)" (ST, TCO and SFS, 2012) shows that doctoral students as a group that struggles with high stress levels and poor mental health in general. It is not surprising that the current situation intensifies this issue, but it is therefore even more important that the issue is addressed and that actions are taken.

Many doctoral students also mention that having a sufficient work environment is currently challenging. As universities have gone over to remote teaching, and many recommend that their employees work from home, there is a void for how to carry out doctoral education. Doctoral students repeatedly mention lack of supervision, lack of contact with peers and other seniors as something that delays them. Also not all doctoral students can be expected to have access to a workspace at home. It is important to stress that it is the universities and not the individual doctoral students responsibility to ensure that the work environment allows for full-time work.

Doctoral students are in many cases also teaching in undergraduate courses. As undergraduate education has moved to be digital, it has required a lot of adaptation of teaching materials and methods. This takes time, and many doctoral students report that

they are using more hours teaching than previously, without receiving the appropriate amount of compensation. Doctoral students are not allowed to use more than 20% of their employment on departmental duties. If the teaching burden has increased for doctoral students, it is important that the universities see to that they are compensated appropriately. It should be stressed that when doctoral students use more time on teaching than they are compensated for, it means that they have less time for their own education.

Some doctoral students experience that their research projects are significantly delayed or fall apart. There can be many reasons for this, and it is important to notice that it happens within all fields. For doctoral students who experience long delays in their research projects, it is important that they receive support in how to handle this. For those whose research projects fall apart it is important that the universities address the issue. It adds an extra level of stress to an already stressful situation if so big issues go unaddressed.

While all doctoral students are affected by the situation to some degree, it is worth mentioning that doctoral students with children, international doctoral students from outside of Schengen, and doctoral students belonging to the risk group face extra challenges. We have been made aware that some doctoral students with small children have been suggested to go down in time, to compensate for the interference that taking care of small children at home may add to your work. While such suggestions may come from a good place, it should be stressed that this is in general not a suggestion that the universities have given to other groups of employees, nor should it be. International doctoral students' visa rights rely on them having funding for their doctoral studies. While they are not immediately affected, some fear that they will not finish on time due to the current situation, and not just run out of funding, but also lose their visa.

All of these issues and many more affect the doctoral students and their education. At the moment many of them goes unnoticed and undocumented by the universities. While doctoral education is very different from undergraduate educations, it is still an education and this needs to be remembered.

The individual doctoral education is governed by the individual study plan (ISP), and this is an appropriate tool to use when following the impacts of the corona pandemic.

In SFS-DK it is our clear recommendation that the universities should specify that when the ISP's are updated they should include information on how the doctoral education was affected by the corona pandemic, what measurements that was taken, and if the doctoral education has been delayed in any way.

Suggested measurements

- That the universities specify that all ISP when updated next time, should contain information about how the corona pandemic has affected the doctoral students education and departmental duties, what measurements have been taken to address any issues and if the corona pandemic has caused delays to the doctoral education.
- That the universities keep track of the consequences that the corona pandemic has for doctoral students' situation. In the long run through monitoring the information that should come in from the ISP, but also on a short term scale by initiating university level investigations of the doctoral students' situation.
- That questions about prolongation due to the corona pandemic are handled at central university level, instead of at department or faculty level such that all doctoral students have equal access, and to even potential costs.
- That the universities give guidelines for how to apply for prolongation due to the corona pandemic, including information about what documentation the doctoral student should include.
- That the universities clarify if the corona pandemic can be counted as a "Särskild skäl" regarding the prolongation of doctoral education
- That doctoral students who are experiencing an increased teaching burden should be given information from the university on how to document this.
- That the university specifically addresses the question about the mental health of doctoral students.

The role of the doctoral student, the ISP and the question of prolongation

The role of the doctoral student

As a doctoral student you are in a very peculiar situation. At one hand you are a student but at the other hand you are part of the research community. This sometimes makes it hard to remember that the doctoral education is an education, and in order to graduate you have to meet the requirements.

In the context of the corona pandemic, most universities have left it up to the departments on how the work is to continue. By this we mean both how the teaching is to be carried out digitally, but also under which conditions the research in the department is to be carried out. This has disproportionately affected doctoral students.

In many ways doctoral students are, even when they are not employed, being treated as they are ordinary employees in this situation. They are expected to adapt to the new situation if it only affects their work. This means that they should adapt their teaching, accept that the lack of access to resources might delay their research and much more. The extra teaching duties that come from moving courses online, the lack of time to do research, or the lack of access to resources seems as something unavoidable for the researchers at the universities, but there is a huge difference for the consequences this can have on your career depending on whether you are a permanent employee or a temporary one, and especially if you are a doctoral student.

Doctoral students have even been met with the approach from their department that they should use the opportunity to better planning of their studies" so that the students can "feel less stressed at their end of their doctoral studies".

Such a approach should make it clear that doctoral students are not ordinary employees, even when they are employed. They are students at doctoral educations. When they teach extra hours without compensation it means that they have less time to do their own research. When they lose access to resources it means that they lose time. The doctoral education is designed with a period of 4 years of full time work in mind. A doctoral student cannot be expected to complete the requirements for the degree in less time.

Also some doctoral students experience being asked to carry a financial cost. We have seen examples of doctoral students who have been suggested to go down in time. Either because of the lack of access to research resources, or because they have small children at home and therefore don't have the needed access to a workspace. The suggestion might come from a good place, but imagine asking the same of the more senior researchers or the administration staff at the university, it is simply unacceptable.

There are also students who report being pressured by the supervisor to come in to

work, even if their own judgement is that the work can be done from home. And conversely, doctoral students who are pressured by their supervisor to work from home.

Prolongation- the question about “särskilda skäl”

Prolongation of the employment of doctoral students is time added to the fixed-term contract in order to allow the student to take on additional tasks, such as teaching duties in their department, or to account for leave, such as parental leave. When it comes to reasons for why prolongation can be awarded, it is covered by the Swedish law – Swedish Higher Education act 5 ch. 7 § (in Swedish):

“En person får vara anställd som doktorand under sammanlagt högst åtta år. Den sammanlagda anställningstiden får dock inte vara längre än vad som motsvarar utbildning på forskarnivå på heltid under fyra år.”

“Den sammanlagda anställningstiden får dock vara längre [...], om det finns sär- skilda skäl. Sådana skäl kan vara ledighet på grund av sjukdom, ledighet för tjänstgöring inom totalförsvaret eller för förtroendeuppdrag inom fackliga organisationer och studentorganisationer eller föräldraledighet.”

Valid reasons for prolongation are sick leave, parental leave, duties in the military, trade union or student union, and other special reasons (“särskilda skäl”).

It is not clear what is meant by “särskilda skäl” and since the question of prolongation is handled very differently from university, and even from department to department within a university, there is a large variance across Sweden for what gives rise to this kind of prolongation.

In SFS-DK we are of the opinion that the corona pandemic is a “särskilda skäl”, and therefore, we call for a statement from the university in support of this.

This would be a huge support for doctoral students who are worried if their prolongation applications due to the corona pandemic would at all be considered.

Documentation in the ISP

The individual study plan (ISP) is the document that governs the individual doctoral education. It is a document that is filled in collaboration between the doctoral student, the supervisor and the department.

It contains information about the progression of the doctoral education, in terms of a list of passed and planned courses and a research plan. But it should also contain information of departmental duties carried, other reasons for prolongation such as parental leave, or representational work, as well as information on what resources that the doctoral student need to have access to in order to carry out their research.

In general the ISP must be updated at least once per year, and in the case of major changes happens to the doctoral education.

It is hard to find a doctoral student for whom the corona pandemic has not provided some form of major change. Therefore we in SFS-DK are of the opinion that all ISP's should, when updated, include information on how the situation has affected the individual doctoral student, and information on which measurements that have been taken or planned to handle the impact on the doctoral students' education due to the corona pandemic. The ISP should mention specifically whether the corona pandemic has led to any delays of the doctoral education.

The mental health of doctoral students

It is clear that the current situation gives rise to an increase in stress levels among doctoral students. Most of the feedback we have gotten mentions increased stress and/or anxiety in the bypassing. While this is very likely also the case for many other groups, it is important to remember that doctoral students are a group that already have been identified as having worrying high levels of stress.

Doctoral students have many of the same concerns as the rest of the society, they worry about their families safety, they are worried if the health-care system will be able to cope or not, and so on. But they also have concerns that are directly coupled to their status as doctoral students, they worry if their research projects will fall apart, if this will mean they cannot finish on time. Many have to begin with high stress levels, and the current situation makes it more unsustainable.

Many doctoral students are to write it plainly, lonely. Many responses mention that the lack of social stimuli is leading to a reduced motivation in their work. doctoral students are also in a situation where they can be insecure in their work and need to be in contact not only with their supervisors, but also with their peers. Some initiatives with social online video meetings can help.

For international doctoral students it is important to remember that they are far away from their family. They do not have access to the same information as their Swedish colleagues, and their social circles are often closely connected to their doctoral education.

In general, many doctoral students feel that they are losing time and are in need of prolongation to have a fair chance of achieving the learning outcomes of their education

Work/study/research environment

Nearly everyone who responded has mentioned being affected by the transition of the work environment to working from home. In particular, those with children find it difficult to maintain their usual working hours and to manage full-time work. Another common problem is the lack of a proper work space with the necessary equipment including an office desk and chair. Also in order to be able to work from home, many doctoral students need to bring university owned property with them home (like external screens and stationary computers), this raises the question about insurance.

Many respondents note that they have had less communication with their supervisor and respective research group, leading to less information in general and a lack of feedback on their work as a consequence of the corona pandemic.

Finally many doctoral students also report that they experience pressure from their managers when it comes to the question of working from home or not. This pressure can come in many different forms and not all of them are very professional. It should be stressed that the pressure can be both towards working from the office, even though you can carry out your work from home, but also that it can be working from home, even though you do not have access to a workspace at home.

Also some doctoral students mention that they have been suggested to go down in time, if their research does not allow for working full time at the moment, or if they have small children that interfere with their work. We want to stress that while the suggestions might come from a good place, such suggestions are extremely problematic. It is not something the universities suggest to other groups of employees, and in general it should be the workplace responsibility to ensure that full time work can be carried out, and not the individual doctoral students responsibility.

To work from home or not?

At most universities it is the individual departments that make the decision for when you may work from home. When it comes to doctoral students, the dual status many have as being both students and employees, have meant that most universities in the question of having access to the universities, have counted the doctoral students as employees, and that the default setting is that they doctoral students should continue to work from the office.

At the same time Folkhälsomydigheten recommends that those who can should work from home.

When it comes to the question about if a doctoral student should work from home or

not, many mentions that they are not heard and experiences that their supervisors, heads of departments, or other seniors, in some situations have very specific and limiting ideas about how they should carry out their research under the current situation.

Some doctoral students report that their departments ignore the recommendations from Folkhälsomyndigheten and refuse to let them work from home, even when their job allows. Such pressures come in many different forms, it can come as a supervisor refusing to let doctoral students work from home, but it can also come much more subtle. The reports we have got mention how it can also come in the form of supervisors, department heads, or other managers making it unnecessary hard for the doctoral students to obtain permission to work from home, by constantly mentioning in emails, in zoom meetings and in person (e.g. when being in the office to print something) to work from the office, while never mentioning that it can be OK to work from home if tasks allow this. It goes so far that some doctoral students report that their managers also point out several times that our group is much less productive due to the fact that some people are working from home.

Others report that their boss does not allow them to work from home even when their job allows it. Directly telling them that if they want to work from home they must take sick leave or vacation.

The physical work space

In the case where doctoral students are encouraged to work from home, it often comes with an underlying assumption that all doctoral students have access to work space at home.

It is not all doctoral students who live in a place where they can have a home office, and it is not all doctoral students who can afford it either.

Even in the cases where the doctoral students do have access to a work space at home, many mention that they are not necessarily ergonomically adapted for working there all day.

Doctoral students also mention that it is unclear if resources such as external screens are continued to be covered by university insurance if you bring them home with you.

Contact with colleagues

In general the doctoral students mention repeatedly that they miss the daily interactions with fellow doctoral students and senior staff, seminars, study groups, etc. which are now not possible.

Supervision

There are almost as many supervisors as there are doctoral students, meaning there are many different approaches to how to handle the supervision situation.

When it comes to the question of the amount and quality supervision, it is clear that many doctoral students don't feel that they get sufficient supervision under the current circumstances. This is by no means to be understood as if they are unsatisfied with their supervisors. But their supervisors are also in academia, meaning that they also have had to adjust to digital teaching and digital supervision. Supervisors can also have children whom they have to take care of from home leaving them with less time for their normal duties, and not all supervisors feel equally comfortable with the transition to a more digital academia .

But the role of the supervisor in relation to the doctoral student covers more than just the actual supervision.

Some doctoral students report that their supervisors ignore the recommendations from folkhälsomyndigheten and refuse to let them work from home, even when their job allows. Other reports that their supervisors put extra pressure on them to work from home, ex. due to the doctoral student having children.

Others report their supervisor suggesting they reduce their official work hours to prolong the duration of their employment, such suggestions are often targeting doctoral students with children, or doctoral students where their research projects are currently standing still. This is especially problematic, as this is not something the universities in general recommend to other groups of employees, nor should it.

Access to resources

Many doctoral students have been or will be experiencing delays in their research projects, and for some doctoral students their research projects simply fall apart. This is of course also the case for other academics, but as we have stressed before, doctoral education is an education. When research is delayed or research projects are cancelled, it is not just a question about the specific research project for the doctoral student. It is a question about the entire doctoral education.

There are many different examples on how the situation has affected ongoing research projects for doctoral students, and we cannot list them all. However we try to list some different types of issues to highlight that this happens within all fields.

Field trips

Many research areas rely on field trips to collect data. These field trips can be of shorter or longer duration, but they almost always require the doctoral student to be onsite for a duration of time. At the moment traveling is very restricted, and for a foreseeable future this seems to be the case.

In general field trips are planned well into the future, depending on your research area field trips can be very seasonal dependent, so it is very hard to just postpone a field trip. Some doctoral students have doctoral projects that depend on them being able to conduct these field trips and are currently facing a very uncertain future.

Case studies

In many fields research is based on case studies. The specifics for case studies vary from field to field. In some case studies you follow a group for a period of time while in other fields this might not be the case.

It can be hard if not impossible under the current situation to continue ongoing case studies, as social distancing not only makes interviews and other people contact more complicated, but also can interfere with the research.

For case studies in the initial stage, when they are still recruiting participants, this recruitment process is also challenging.. This is ofcourse the case within the field of medical research, but also other fields experience these issues.

It is also worth to mention that some cases studies require ethical vetting, and that such ethical vetting in some cases is given for a specific period of time.

Archives

In some fields the doctoral student needs to consult archives for primary sources, such as manuscripts. Such archive material often only exists in a few places in the world and it is rarely digital available. To gain access to the material the doctoral student needs to be able to travel to the physical archive. This is not possible at the moment, and it is unclear when it will be possible as well.

Laboratory equipment

Doctoral students working in labs face further issues that range from getting access to the lab to running out of lab supplies and then waiting indefinitely to get fresh supplies.

For doctoral students working in the fields of Chemistry, Biochemistry, Microbiology, Medical research etc, they can face a shortage of laboratory equipment, simply because there is now a shortage of normal standard laboratory equipment. The distribution of resources are being (rightfully) prioritized to those who are involved in corona pandemic research, the health sector in general and similar.

International research facilities

Within some research fields experiments are carried out at large research facilities. As travel is currently very restricted many of such experiments have either been postponed indefinitely or cancelled. This of course affects doctoral students, and it is important to be aware that the planning of such experiments can be a lengthy process. It is therefore uncertain for some doctoral students if they will have access to data within a timeframe that allows them to finish their doctoral studies on time.

International research stays

Many doctoral students are as a part of their doctoral studies expected to partake in longer research stays abroad. This expectation can even come in the form of a formal requirement in order to obtain the doctoral degree.

As such stays are canceled due to travel restrictions and universities abroad being closed, doctoral students are left in an uncertain situation, both about what they should do instead, but also about whether they will be able to fulfill these requirements.

Added workload due to digital teaching

Many doctoral students teach as a part of their doctoral studies. As the universities have switched to digital education, this has meant that the teaching duties have changed for a lot of doctoral students.

Shifting to online education means teaching in a different way than you are used and trained to, adjusting teaching material to fit a new format, recording lectures, assessment and grading of students has to be adjusted to the new situation, taking questions from students in a different way, more administration of teaching in terms of more planning meetings, giving feedback in a new way and many other things.

For many doctoral students this has meant that the time they use on teaching has increased without them being compensated for this. This means that the time they have left for their research etc has decreased.

Also a lack of proper equipment can place a financial burden on the doctoral student, in terms of investing in headsets, web cameras. Some departments have refused to fund this.

Teaching is not a part of doctoral education, and it is important to remember that when doctoral students do teach, they should be fairly compensated for it. From a doctoral perspective, the teaching duties belong to the departmental duties, and they should be compensated for the teaching duties they perform.

The doctoral education is an education, and this cannot be stressed enough. When doctoral students use more time than they are compensated for, on teaching etc. it is their own doctoral education that suffers.

It varies within universities from department to department how teaching is handled. At some places they track hours spent on teaching, while others have a lump sum for each course taught. Doctoral students are concerned that the extra effort they put into teaching due to the shift online is not counted in the compensation given for the courses.

Other issues

The formal requirements of the doctoral education

In some doctoral education programs, there are some very specific requirements you have to fulfill in order to obtain your PhD degree. This can refer to the number of credits you have to have passed, but also many programs require that you have presented material on international conferences.

Courses for doctoral students

Some doctoral students mention that they have tried, but that it was not possible to join for courses late. Other doctoral students mention that (mandatory or crucial) courses have been canceled. For doctoral courses it is not always the case that courses are offered on an annual basis.

The doctoral defense

At the moment most doctoral defenses have some digital aspect.

It is important that the transfer to a digital defense does not place an extra workload on the doctoral student in terms of organization. The doctoral students should not be expected to act as IT support for their own defense.

The doctoral defense is a public event, and it is important that the public can participate in a doctoral defense if they wish to. However it is important that the doctoral defense runs smoothly. The public has the right to ask questions at the end of the defense, but the doctoral student and the opponent should be able to give their presentations uninterrupted.

A few doctoral defenses have been subjected to what is called zoombombing, where a number of people have joined the doctoral defense with the intention of disrupting it. It is therefore important that the university offers support with the organization of the doctoral defense, and that they do not charge unnecessary fees for this task. A doctoral defense that runs smoothly and is not disrupted, should be something all doctoral students can expect, and not something that can only be afforded when they belong to research groups that can and will pay for it.

Specific group of doctoral students

Doctoral students with children

Doctoral students face the same challenges as all other employees with children face. Working from home is not as efficient if you have small children at home with you. When a child is sick, it is only one parent who can get VAB.

Others mention that even if their partner is on parental leave, working from home, can mean working from a home where there is a crying toddler next to you. Also if they have other small children, if one parent is on parental leave, there can be restrictions on how long the other child may be in daycare or kindergarten.

Doctoral students mention that while they face these challenges, they are still expected to meet their teaching deadlines etc, which means that it is their research that takes a hit.

What is worrisome is that some doctoral students with children mention that they have been asked or recommended to go down in hours to make up for the loss of efficiency. It should be noted that this is in general not something the universities have asked of other groups of employees that face similar problems.

Doctoral students with external partners

While many doctoral students have external collaborators, we see a need to mention the conditions of industrial doctoral students and doctoral students who are employed outside of academia.

Doctoral students who are employed outside of academia, are still enrolled at one of the universities, and it is the universities responsibility to ensure that they also get a high quality education.

For industrial doctoral students and doctoral students who are employed outside of academia they may experience severe delays in their research due to the company or the organization they work with closing down for a while, or in worst case closing down the projects they are working on. While the universities have little influence over these issues, they are still responsible for the quality of the doctoral education for industrial doctoral students and doctoral students who are employed outside of academia.

Doctoral students who are employed as doctors may experience a higher workload in the medical profession at the moment due to the corona pandemic. It is important not to forget about this group of doctoral students, and to ensure that their doctoral education does not suffer because they was needed to work extra hours in the medical sector under the corona pandemic.

International doctoral students

Some international doctoral students mention that since Sweden's official policy and

recommendations differ so much from other countries, that being a foreigner that reads news from other countries has made it scary to be in Sweden.

Others have mentioned that as a doctoral student who is not from the EU they rely on having sufficient funding to obtain a visa. The question of running out of funding due to delays then also becomes a question of being able to remain in Sweden until the end of their doctoral students .

Doctoral students with stipends

Doctoral students who are not employed are insured by Kammarkollegiet. This means that their access to sick leave, parental leave etc. are different from those who are employed. They can not be members of a trade union. Their access to unemployment benefits after graduation is less than those who are employed.

Doctoral students with medical conditions

Many doctoral students are relatively young, so it is easy to forget that they can belong to risk groups or have other medical conditions that complicates the situation. It is important to not forget about this aspect

Doctoral students without financing

Doctoral students who has recently run out of financing or doctoral students who runs out of financing during the corona pandemic should not be forgotten. Just as all other doctoral students they are still affected by the lack of access to resources, by the lack of proper workspace and by the situation in general.

Svensk sammanfattning

Denna rapport är baserad på resultaten från en undersökning bland Sveriges doktorander, som genomförts av Doktorandkommittén i Sveriges förenade studentkårer (SFS-DK). SFS-DK har även tagit emot respons angående undersökningen från doktorandrepresentation på central nivå vid Sveriges lärosäten.

Syftet med denna rapport är att lyfta fram konsekvenserna av coronapandemin på doktorander. Alla doktorander i Sverige har självklart påverkats av coronapandemin, men på olika sätt.

Många doktorander har i sina svar har nämnt att de behöver prolongering för att ha en rättvis chans att uppfylla kraven till doktorandutbildningen. I SFS-DK kan vi inte bedöma hur många doktorander som ska förlängas, men vi ser ett behov av lärosätena att ta itu med denna fråga. Hittills har de flesta lärosäten sagt att detta kommer att hanteras från fall till fall, vilket ger utrymme för mycket olika behandlingar av doktorander inom samma lärosäten. Det innebär att det blir upp till den enskilda doktoranden att förhandla om prolongering med en avdelning som kanske inte har tillräcklig ekonomiska medel.

Vår rekommendation är därför att alla lärosäten tar upp denna fråga och klargör under vilka omständigheter förlängning kan ges på grund av coronapandemin, och att finansieringen av prolongation hanteras på central nivå på lärosäten.

Nästan alla tillfrågade nämner mental hälsa som ett problem. Doktorander har länge identifierats som en grupp inom akademien som kämpar med höga stressnivåer och dålig psykisk hälsa i allmänhet. Detta har illustrerats exempelvis i undersökningar som "[Doktorandspegeln](#)" från UKÄ (2016) och "[Hur mår doktoranden](#)" (ST, TCO och SFS, 2012). Det är inte förvånande att den nuvarande situationen intensifierar det här problemet, men det är därför viktigt att frågan tas upp och att åtgärder vidtas.

Många doktorander nämner också att det för närvarande är utmanande att ha en fungerande arbetsmiljö. Eftersom lärosätena har gått över till fjärrundervisning, och många rekommenderar att deras anställda arbetar hemifrån, finns det ett tomrum för hur man bedriver doktorandutbildning. Doktorander nämner brist på handledning och brist på kontakt med forskargruppen som något som försvårar deras arbete. Dessutom kan inte alla doktorander förväntas ha tillgång till en arbetsplats hemma. Det är viktigt att betona att det är lärosätena och inte de enskilda doktorandernas ansvar att se till att doktorandernas arbetsmiljö fungerar för heltidsarbete.

Doktorander undervisar i många fall också inom kurser på grundnivå. Eftersom

undervisningen på dessa kurser nu ges digitalt har det krävt anpassning av läromedel och metoder. Det tar tid, och många doktorander svarar att de lägger fler timmar på undervisningen än tidigare, utan att få sin kompensation anpassad. Doktorander får inte lägga mer än 20% av sin tid på institutionstjänstgöring. Om belastningen inom undervisning har ökat för doktorander är det viktigt att lärosätena ser till att de kompenseras på lämpligt sätt. Det måste betonas att när doktorander lägger mer tid på att lära ut än vad de kompenseras för, betyder det att de har mindre tid för sin egen utbildning.

En del doktorander har svarat att deras forskningsprojekt är försenade eller faller sönder. Det kan finnas många olika skäl till detta, men det är viktigt att notera att det händer inom alla fält. För doktorander som upplever långa förseningar i sina forskningsprojekt är det viktigt att de får stöd för att hantera detta. För dem vars forskningsprojekt helt eller delvis måste överges är det viktigt att lärosätena tar upp frågan. Det lägger till en extra stressnivå i en redan stressande situation om sådana stora problem går oavgränsade.

Samtidigt som alla doktorander påverkas av situationen till viss del, är det värt att nämna att doktorander med barn, internationella doktorander som inte tillhör Schengen och doktorander som tillhör en riskgrupp står inför extra utmaningar.

Vi har blivit uppmärksammade på att vissa doktorander med små barn har föreslagits att gå ner i tid, för att kompensera för den störning som att ta hand om små barn hemma kan ge i ens arbete. Även om sådana förslag kan vara välmenande, bör det betonas att detta i allmänhet inte är ett förslag som lärosätena har gett andra grupper av anställda, vilket de inte heller borde.

Internationella doktoranders visum är beroende av att de har finansiering för sina doktorandstudier. Vissa som inte är direkt påverkade är ändå rädda för att de inte kommer att genomföra deras doktorandutbildning i tid på grund av coronapandemin. Det skulle kunna dels innebära att de inte har finansiering, men också att de förlorar sitt visum.

Alla dessa frågor och många fler påverkar doktoranderna och deras utbildning. För närvarande går många av problemen förbi obemärkta och odokumenterade av lärosätena. Medan doktorandutbildningen skiljer sig mycket från grundutbildningarna, är det fortfarande en utbildning.

Den individuella doktorandutbildningen styrs av den individuella studieplanen (ISP), och detta är ett lämpligt verktyg att använda när man följer effekterna av coronapandemin.

SFS-DK:s tydliga rekommendation är att lärosätena specificerar att när de individuella studieplanerna uppdateras bör innehålla information om hur doktorandutbildningen har påverkats av coronapandemin, vilka åtgärder som vidtagits och om doktorandutbildningen har försenats.