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Regulation regarding the withdrawal of resources for doctoral students Policy document at Chalmers University of Technology AB

Regulations

According to Chalmers University of Technology AB (“Chalmers”) appointment regulation for doctoral programmes, a doctoral student’s resources can be withdrawn as follows:

If a doctoral student substantially neglects their undertakings as specified in the individual study plan or is otherwise judged to not have the ability or prerequisites to continue on towards their degree, the Head of Department may decide that the doctoral student shall no longer have the right to supervision and other resources for their doctoral studies. The decision on withdrawal of supervision and other resources may not be delegated.

Supervision and other resources may not be withdrawn during the time period the doctoral student has doctoral employment. For this reason, the question of withdrawal must be raised in good time before the current employment period is extended.

In what situations may resources be withdrawn?

The Head of Department may decide to withdraw supervision and other resources if the doctoral student substantially neglects their undertakings as specified in the individual study plan or is otherwise judged to not have the ability or prerequisites to continue on towards their degree. Examples of such cases include when the doctoral student, despite adequate supervision and other necessary resources for the planned studies, does not demonstrate the ability to complete their programme in a reasonable manner within the specified time.

When assessing whether resources should be withdrawn, consideration must also be given as to whether Chalmers has satisfied its undertakings as specified in the individual study plan. Thus, on multiple occasions, the supervisor(s) together with the examiner and Director of Studies should have tried in different ways to help the doctoral student to conduct their studies as specified in the individual study plan, e.g. through revisions of the individual study plan, extra supervisor support or change of supervisor. The withdrawal of resources for a doctoral student should be the last resort after all possible solutions have been exhausted.

The individual study plan is the most important document for the doctoral student's individual doctoral studies. There must be adequate documentation on progression and supportive measures implemented in order for a decision on the withdrawal of resources to be made. It is therefore important to have a clear and detailed individual study plan that is followed up regularly.

Significance of withdrawing supervision and other resources

A decision to withdraw resources for a doctoral student means, among other things, that supervisor resources, workplace, computer, phone and email address, access to laboratory space and equipment, and access to other teaching resources are all withdrawn.

A doctoral student whose resources have been withdrawn does not lose their place in the doctoral programme at Chalmers. The doctoral student has the right to apply to publicly defend their thesis or present their licentiate thesis at a licentiate seminar. If the doctoral student wishes to end their studies, for example to pursue opportunities in the labour market, they must submit a request to withdraw from the programme.

Impact on doctoral employment and other financial support upon withdrawal of resources

Resources may not be withdrawn during the time period the doctoral student has doctoral employment. If the doctoral student is employed as a doctoral student, a decision to withdraw the resources comes into effect when the current term of employment comes to an end. The first employment period for a doctoral student lasts one year. After this, employment is extended by maximum two years at a time. Thus, the department needs to take the doctoral student's employment conditions into account when starting the process to determine whether the doctoral student's resources should be withdrawn.

If the doctoral student has doctoral employment and an investigation into the withdrawal of resources has been initiated, the doctoral employment should be extended up until the time that the matter regarding withdrawal of the doctoral student's resources has been decided. However, the employment does not have to be extended if the doctoral student's study time has reached the maximum limit of four years (taking any periods of statutory leave into account).

If a doctoral student is employed by an employer other than Chalmers, the employer must be informed of the situation and the decision.

Right to a representative, interpreter, and consideration of conflict of interest

A doctoral student has the right to appoint a representative. The representative has the right to plead the doctoral student's case, the right to attend meetings, etc. At Chalmers, there is a doctoral student representative (Doktorandombud, DOMB) employed by the Doctoral Student Guild. A doctoral student whose resources may be withdrawn must be informed of this independent support function at an early stage.

Doctoral students who are members of a union can also contact the respective union for support and help with a representative.

If the case involves a doctoral student who does not have good command of the Swedish language, written documentation and statements must be translated into English upon request. An interpreter shall be hired if necessary.

As in all case management, conflict of interest must be taken into consideration when handling cases concerning the withdrawal of doctoral student resources.

Measures required before withdrawal of resources is applicable

If problems with the doctoral studies are discovered, the principal supervisor, along with the assistant supervisor and examiner, must address this with the doctoral student directly at an early stage and inform the Director of Studies of the situation which has arisen. The supervisors must conduct several status meetings at frequent intervals and set clear performance requirements based on the individual study plan. The Director of Studies shall monitor the process and move the date of the next study follow-up meeting forward. All measures and agreements with the doctoral student must be documented and followed up.

If the supervisor(s) find that the doctoral student is continuously unsuccessful with regards to fulfilling listed objectives and demands despite the measures specified above, the supervisors must promptly inform the Director of Studies. The Director of Studies shall then convene a meeting with the doctoral student, supervisors and examiner to discuss the situation at hand. Prior to the meeting, the Director of Studies is responsible for informing the doctoral student of the content of the meeting, the significance of the process, the doctoral student's right to involve a representative (see the section "Right to a representative, interpreter, and consideration of conflict of interest"), and that the meeting will be documented and that these notes are signed by and then distributed to all participants.

Examples of measures that may be decided at the meeting include revision of the individual study plan, detailed action plans for doctoral student and supervisor(s), extra supervisor support and change of supervisor. An individual study plan revision shall include the content during the remaining period of the doctoral programme along with a timetable. It must clearly indicate what undertakings the different supervisors have agreed to and other resources available to the doctoral student.

The Director of Studies along with the supervisors will follow up on the decisions made. Further follow-up meetings and revisions may be required. If the supervisors find that the doctoral student, despite the decided measures, is not capable of completing the requirements of the programme, the principal supervisor must submit a report on the withdrawal of supervision and other resources to the Head of Department.

Report of withdrawal of supervision and other resources

The report shall be presented to the Head of Department and must contain an accounting of the following:

- In what way the doctoral student has substantially neglected their undertakings, and
- How Chalmers has fulfilled its undertaking as specified in the individual study plan.

The following documents must be appended to the report:

- All versions of the doctoral student's individual study plan
- Dated documentation from meetings from the preceding heading
- Any relevant documentation, such as email exchanges
- The supervisors' joint assessment of the doctoral student's current results and their ability to fulfil their undertakings as specified in the individual study plan
- The examiner's assessment of the doctoral student's current results and their ability to fulfil their undertakings as specified in the individual study plan
- The Director of Studies' description of the measures implemented to enable the doctoral student's studies

Investigation of the report

As soon as the Head of Department has received a report of withdrawal of supervision and other resources, the Head of Department must ensure that the doctoral student is informed that a report has been submitted, and the significance of the process. The doctoral student and the doctoral student representative shall be given the opportunity to submit a written statement in response to the report within two weeks.

The Head of Department shall have the report investigated, taking any statements from the doctoral student or doctoral student representative into account. If the doctoral student's employment is expected to expire before the case has been decided the employment, where applicable, shall be extended for an amount of time equivalent to the estimated amount of time required to reach a decision on the matter.

The Head of Department shall convene a meeting with the doctoral student, supervisor(s), Director of Studies, examiner, HR partner, manager, doctoral student representative and (if the doctoral student is a member of a union) the local union representative. If the doctoral student's manager also serves as the doctoral student's supervisor, the next manager in line shall be summoned to the meeting. The Head of Department is responsible for ensuring that the doctoral student is informed of the content of the meeting and the significance of the process before the meeting takes place. After the meeting, the Head of Department shall decide whether resources should be withdrawn.

As part of the assessment, the Head of Department shall consider whether Chalmers has fulfilled its undertakings as specified in rules of procedure for doctoral programmes and the individual study plan. Such undertakings may, for example, be making necessary resources available for the implementation of the doctoral student's research project and supervisor(s) having tried in different ways and on multiple occasions to induce the doctoral student to conduct their studies as specified in the individual study plan.

Decision

The Head of Department's decision shall be issued in writing with the grounds stated. Documents submitted with the report and received during the Head of Department's investigation, including the written statements from the doctoral student and doctoral student representative, shall be appended to the decision.

For a doctoral student with doctoral employment, the decision to withdraw the right to supervision and other resources means that the student will not be offered an extension of their doctoral employment. The doctoral student shall receive the decision no later than one month before the current employment period expires.

For a doctoral student with other study funding, the decision goes into effect from the time point specified in the decision. With external funding, such as for an industrial doctoral student, the time point should be decided in consultation with the financier.

If the decision is appealed to the Vice President and the doctoral student's contract is expected to expire before the matter is settled, employment shall be extended for a period of time equal to the estimated remaining processing time.

Appeal

A decision to withdraw a doctoral student's resources can be appealed to the Vice President responsible for Doctoral Programmes. The complaint shall be made in writing and shall be received by the university registrar (registrator@chalmers.se) no later than three weeks after the date the decision was delivered to the student.

The Vice President's decision, which is final, shall be issued in writing with the grounds stated and cannot be appealed.