



Chalmers Doctoral Student Guild's Annual Report

The Doctoral Student Guild (DS) is a student union (SU) body at Chalmers University of Technology (Chalmers). It is the key coordinating body that represents the interests of all doctoral students across Chalmers in several boards and committees within the institution and outside of it. More specifically, our goal is to improve the existing conditions for doctoral students at Chalmers by:

- Representing the interests of doctoral students in several boards and committees at Chalmers.
- Identifying, preventing, and eliminating issues related to doctoral education at Chalmers
- Becoming a communication hub by facilitating a direct link between the PhD students and the institution groups
- Ensuring that the rights of every doctoral student are withheld

During the year 2021/2022 the Doctoral Student Guild (DS) board has been actively representing the doctoral students in several different committees and activities within and outside Chalmers. This report will briefly highlight the main activities performed in the committees, as well as summarize the internal activities.

General information about the activities and committees as well as full board meeting notes can be found on the DS webpage (<http://www.dokt.chs.chalmers.se/>).

During the year 2020/2021 the board consisted of

Elin Malmgren	Chair	Mechanics and maritime sciences
Masoud Bahraini	Vice chair	Electrical engineering
Adriana Canales Ramos	Board member	Physics
Andri Spilker	Board member	Space earth and environment
Anna af Hallström	Board member	Technology management and economics
Daniel Gyllenhammar	Board member	Technology management and economics
Andrea Fazi	Board member	Physics
Gustav Lindwall	Board member	Mathematical sciences
Ida Karlsson	Board member	Space earth and environment
Jingnan Zhang	Board member	Biology and biological engineering
Jonathan Edgardo Cohen	Board member	Architecture and civil engineering
Irene Lobo Valbuena	Board member	Computer science and engineering
Mareddy Reddy	Board member	Chemistry and chemical engineering
Omkar Salunkhe	Board member	Industrial and material science
Paul Imgart	Board member	Electrical engineering
Christopher Sauer	Board member	Chemistry and chemical engineering
Sigma Dolins	Board member	Industrial and material science
Ariadna Soro Álvarez	Board member	Microtechnology and Nanoscience
Tomas Deppisch	Board member	Architecture and civil engineering
Yin Zeng	Board member	Microtechnology and Nanoscience

1. Internal operations for the Board and the Guild at large

The Chalmers Doctoral Student Guild is a part of Chalmers student union and has during the operational year 2021/2022 represented all registered doctoral students at Chalmers University of Technology. During the year, the board had 5 board meetings of approximately 3 hours each. The minutes from the board meetings are available on DS website. During the board meetings the members report from their different activities and discussions regarding strategic topics of the doctoral studies are held. The main topics that have been addressed are detailed in this report.

During the year, DS has had 2 general assembly meetings. The minutes from the meetings are available on DS website. During the meetings lunch was provided to the attendings and the spring meeting was performed as a hybrid meeting to make it easier for PhDs working from our satellite campi Onsala and Lindholmen to participate.

Topics of the general assemblies:

November 2021

- Annual report and freedom from liability for the board of 2020/21.

May 2022

- Election of a new board for 2022/2023

1.1 Communication

It is of greatest importance that information relevant to doctoral education at Chalmers is communicated appropriately. However, communication across 13 departments and 1100 members is a challenging task which can always be improved. The 2021/2022 DS board had several activities to ensure that a clear and efficient communication channel is established between the institution and the doctoral student. We have maintained the independent [website](http://www.dokt.chs.chalmers.se/) <http://www.dokt.chs.chalmers.se/> as a means of communicating the most relevant information to both students and other stakeholders such as the university. Information pertaining to the current activities of the DS board has been regularly updated across several communication channels to reach as many members as possible with relevant and interesting information.

Two [newsletters](#) were sent out during the year: one in November and one in April. The newsletters were constructed by contained a lot of information on ongoing matters and the work of the DS. Tomas Deppisch and Andrea Fazi where the main responsible DS board members for this task. Some of the highlights in the newsletter decides from general information about the DS was:

- Introduction of the new DOMB to the PhD students
- An interview with the new DOMB (the interview with the DOMB is also available on the website)
- Information about the changes in the Alien Act legislation
- Information about the general assembly

- Social events announcements

Social events and meeting invites were also published on Facebook.

During the year an issue was discovered where many members of the doctoral student guild did not receive emails and information from the board. Two separate reasons were identified for this (through work from the Chair, IT, Student union officials and the university). First, an update to Chalmers' spam filter has led to all emails from the student union including DS being registered as spam. No solution has yet been found to this issue and the university is aware. Secondly, several members had no assigned emails in Ladok (the national system for university student registration etc.). As all contact information from the university and support systems is provided through Ladok this meant that the DS had no means to get contact information to the members. This was in part solved by working together with the PhD councils to contact all PhDs and ask them to add an assigned email. This is something which should be done by Chalmers's administration upon registration of the student and have been missed in some cases, and the issue should be monitored also in the future.

1.2 Finances

The vice chair Masoud Bahraini was the main responsible for the financial accounting during 2021/2022. The finances are presented in the financial record of the DS board 2021-2022.

1.3 PhD councils

Communication with the PhD student councils at the departments is essential for the work in the doctoral student union guild. Meetings have been held between the chair of DS and council chairs to discuss acute issues several time through the year, but the main communication channels have been through emails and participation from DS members in local council meetings. During the year the DS have had an appointed Local PhD council coordinator, Mareddy Reddy, who has overseen the contact with the local councils and two times during the year networking and discussion forums have been arranged between the chairs of the local councils to discuss issues and exchange ideas.

1.4 Collaboration with the student union (Chalmers Studentkår)

The collaboration with the Chalmers student union and its management team has been very active during the year, both through formal meetings and through participation by the current chair in social events and gatherings. The student union has a strong say in matters that affect student life at Chalmers, and it is valuable to foster an active relationship with them. New collaborations with the career officer have been developed and the result of this can be seen under the career section in this report.

1.5 Recruitment to the board

Omkar Salunkhe, Andri Spilker and Gustav Lindwall were elected as the DS election committee by the general assembly November 18th, 2021. The organization and the responsibilities of the committee are stated in the DS statutes. The nomination committee worked to get representation from all departments, and as a result recruited many new members to the 2022/2023 board and



nominated two individuals from each department except for Computer science which lacked representation. The number of members in the DS board is decided by the general assembly with support from the nomination committee (as stated in statues) and can therefor vary. After the election at the general assembly some departments now have three representatives, and computer science has one representative. In the general assembly it was discussed whether we should limit the number to two from each department, but it was decided to charge the new board with the task to investigate the issue further and propose a new procedure to the general assembly.

2. Policy and advocacy work

The advocacy work is a core operation of the Chalmers Doctoral Student Guild. This chapter outlines the work performed within advocacy work at the university, regional level, and national level. The main channel for his work is through direct representation in bodies, committees, and work groups. This chapter outlines the main issues through the academic year of 2021/2022. For full details see the public minutes from each university group and the DS board meeting minutes.

2.1 Representation

The DS is involved in several activities that directly impact both the quality of doctoral education as well as the overall environment for research. These activities are in the direct interest of every doctoral student employed at Chalmers. The DS is also indirectly involved in several other activities at the university which impact the quality of doctoral education. These advisory involvements are primarily through the representation at the various committees (such as at FUN). The stated goal for the year has been to provide active representation in bodies, committees, and work groups at Chalmers. Active representation has been defined in the plan of operations (POO) as DS representation in at least 75% of the meetings.

The DS has been actively represented in the following university groups:

University Group	Representative/s
Chalmers University Board (Chalmers AB board)	Elin Malmgren
Forskarutbildningsnämnden FUN / Research Education Council	Elin Malmgren, Paul Imgart Deputies: Gustav Lindwall
AJK / Work Environment and Equality Council	Paul Imgart
Faculty Council	Irene Lobo Valbuena Deputies: Ein Malmgren
Chalmers Research Foundation (Forskningsfonden)	Andrea Fazi, Jingnan Zhang
Forskningsnämnden (FN)	Daniel Gyllenhammar
Focus group equality	Irene Lobo Valbuena
Institutional Council (formerly: Library council)	Anna As Hallström
Forskarassistent rekryteringen (FOASS)	Christopher Sauer

The DS has not been represented at 75% of the meetings conducted by:

- Student Union council meeting (FUM)
- University evaluation group for sustainability

FUM representation has been restricted to when discussions directly related to Chalmers PhD students have been discussed. The agenda was read by Elin Malmgren, DS chair, before every meeting and the minutes was reviewed after they were presented to the members of FUM. The DS chair participated directly in one meeting to answer any questions FUM might have related to the Alien act Manifestation.

The University evaluation group for sustainability has been inactive this year and we have therefore not had any representative in this group.

2.2 The aliens act

In February 2021 a proposal was made to change the requirements for permanent residency in Sweden (also known as the Aliens act). This affects PhDs with a citizenship from outside of the EU and makes it much more difficult to be able to stay in the country for these students after they graduate, and in some cases also until they graduate. The members of the DS were updated on the issue through communication directly with the PHD council chairs as well as through a public statement made by the student union and DS, which was sent out to all members in December 2021. Chalmers was the first university to make a clear stance against this through Rektor Stefan Bengtsson. Elin Malmgren, chair, and Christopher Sauer, member of SFS DK, worked linked with Sveriges förenade studentkårer (SFS) doctoral student committee to stay updated on the situation and provide support on this national issue if and when possible. The Chalmers Doctoral Student Guild and GUDK (The PhD student organization for Gothenburg's university) held a manifestation at Götaplatsen with 200 attending in February 2022 to highlight the issue. Associated press releases were also published. Manifestations were held in several other cities throughout the spring of 2022.

2.3 Chalmers vision

Chalmers has adapted a new vision for the university after discussion and work within the university board for the past three-year period. During the year the content of the visions and its implications for the PhDs have mainly been discussed and analyzed by the chair Elin Malmgren and the student union representatives Catrin Lindberg and David Welander. The new vision was approved by the board and communicated in 2022. This vision contains more work than just the new phrases and slogans, specifically a plan to have a faculty funded from funds internal to the university in 20 years. When implemented, and during the implementation, this is likely to affect PhD a lot by changing the dynamics at the university and increase competition within the faculty. We as PhDs produce most of the articles and lab work at the university, so we need make sure to monitor this closely and keep close tabs on changes over time in the PhDs working environment.

2.4 The Covid-19 pandemic

The pandemic caused by the coronavirus has impact on PhD students and their education due to difficulties in setting up a remote workflow and establishing efficiency while working from home. Delays in experimental work due to restricted access to laboratories or instruments, dependency on external partners who have a complete or partial shut-down can be problematic. Cancelled

conferences and research visits are important for networking with the research community and potential employers. Psycho-social impacts due to social distancing and exclusion are expected as well as safety concerns due to risk of contamination when working in narrow laboratory spaces. The doctoral student guild has monitored these concerns through dialog and analysis of questionnaires. Discussions have been held with the university management on all levels to secure prolongations for affected students. At the current state, prolongation decisions will be handled at the departmental level and the documentation in the ISP is the basis for argumentation. FUN decided on a document in August 2021 designed to be attached to the ISP regarding these issues to support in the decision-making process at the departments.

2.5 Generic and transferable skills (GTS)

Chalmers offers a course package of interdisciplinary personal and professional development courses for doctoral students, i.e. the generic and transferable skills (GTS) package. The final proposal for a new GTS program was proposed to FUN in September 2021 after three years of pre-work where the DS has been involved through representation in working groups and university groups. The DS through Elin Malmgren and Paul Imgart wrote a response to the proposal (remissvar) which was presented to FUN and discussed together with the proposal. The response is published on the DS webpage and includes statements on the importance of maintaining a high quality in the research education for all students. As FUNs working language is Swedish the response was written in Swedish to be considered in the proceeding. Details were given to the board on the content continuously. The GTS package has been evaluated thoroughly and decisions on restructuring and improvements are in a process where DS is currently having a strong voice on how these changes can be most beneficial to the PhD students. The latest enrolment to GTS courses was not done in a decent manner. The opening of the registration was not properly announced and the courses opening at different times throughout the day. The courses and seats were also not promoted and difficult to find for many PhDs. Elin Malmgren, Chair, has had continuous meetings with the GTS team on these matters as well as matters arisen regarding the new GTS package.

2.6 Development of a new individual study plan system (ESP)

Upon request from FUN, a committee has been working with an electronic version of the individual study plan (ISP), harmonized for all PhD students. The platform would be called ESP, and be connected to the PhD student portal and to e.g. Ladok. The DS was involved in designing an electronic platform (2015/16) to aid in the seamless tracking of a doctoral student's progress (the study plan). This system was officially approved by the Institutional committees during 2017/18 with the decision to constitute a work group to evaluate its immediate implementation. A steering committee consisting of members from the DS board with other members from FUN and the institutional work groups was constituted and the implementation of the ESP is currently in progress. DS is ensuring its quality and giving constant feedback on the work in progress. Progress was made but due to the corona pandemic and economy in balance drastically slowed down. The ESP committee continued testing the platform during the academic year of 2021/2022. The project was delayed, and an Minimum Viable Product was launched in Q4 2021. The final formal meeting was held in February where the ESP steering group discussed the ESP platform and its possible use

and development going forward. A workshop was also held during the same meeting where ESP committee members participated and provided feedback. Going forward, Chalmers's priority is the external website so there is a possibility that less resources will be allocated for continued development and maintenance of the ESP platform. The reference group was led by Andreas Jonasson at Chalmers.

2.7 SACO: Trade union and wage negotiations

The DS has been actively engaged in matters dealing with labor rights and labor law (pertinent to the employment of doctoral students), mainly through the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (SACO). SACO is a trade union confederation of 23 affiliated associations out of which six are represented at Chalmers. SACO represents trade union members in issues like job security, rights, salaries, and the working environment. The most important task for DS representative is to take part in the wage negotiation, which is held between Chalmers and the trade union organizations SACO and ST. The DS member is responsible for the views and opinions of the DS board and members in this negotiation and this year's SACO representative was Daniel Gyllenhammar. The communication this year has been focusing on the aliens-act. When it comes to wage negotiation, the current contract is applicable for 3 years, hence no new contract has been negotiated. Moreover, specific cases has been managed for the doctoral students. The new agreement came in place in May 2021 and DS achieved a minor increase in wages for the next 3 years.

2.8 Doctoral student survey

This year the Doctoral student survey was revised from the latest 2020 version. It was launched during February/march, but the answering rates were quite low (319 answers, 34%). This is believed to be tied to mailing list issues. The survey was reopened for two weeks in 4 departments: K, IMS, SEE, E2. 81 new answers were collected (total 400 answers). The results are yet to be analyzed and compared to previous year. This to enable a platform for argumentation and the development of an improvement plan. This task is left for the upcoming year, as was planned and in line with previous years' workflow.

3. Social and Career activities

The number of social activities provided by Chalmers doctoral student guild has increased greatly over the past five years. Previous year's annual reports have provided a full list of activities performed during the past year, instead we provide an overview of activities and a description of the main events.

3.1 Social events

Andri Spilker has been the main responsible for organizing social events during the year. Regular hikes have been held throughout the year and in the beginning of the academic year a gathering for all PhDs in Slottskogen was held. In February a board game night was organized and in May a PhD party was held in the student unions car tram. All these events were open to all PhD students and hopefully contributed to spreading the word about DS.

3.2 Event with strategic partners in IKT

An event was organized by the council together with the student union and styrkeområde IKT at Chalmers as well as collaborating companies. The goal was to increase the opportunities for PhDs at the end of their studies to interact with companies and tie connections to the Swedish job market. Chalmers promotion arranged the online event. 45 PhDs attended and had the opportunity to make contacts with companies. The event was sponsored by styrkeområde IKT. The planning and organizing was supported directly by the student unions management team through Fred Andersson. Due to the state of the covid-19 pandemic it had to be held online, but future networking events should be held in person when possible.

3.3 Representing Chalmers Doctoral Programs at Charm

During the year we have been present at Chalmers work fair CHARM which is a fair organized and held by Chalmers Student Union. We are there as representatives of Chalmers (as a part of our agreement with the university) to present PhD education as a potential career, the DS is responsible for a booth at the fair. Board members of the DS stands in the booth for one or two timeslots during the fair and talk to students and answer questions. The PhD representatives explains about what PhD education is, that you are employed by Chalmers etc. Gustav Lindwall was responsible for organizing the DS contribution to Charm this year. As such, Chalmers Research education was represented at the CHARM fair this year in full effect. A steady stream of curious young minds was informed on the PhD experience.

3.4 PhD webinar series

Headed by Adriana Canales Ramos, the DS organized an online workshop series for PhD students: "Navigate academia and maximize your potential". The series was comprised of 4 interactive online workshops focused on self-leadership, health, stress and personal development. It was held between the 29th of October 2021 and 3rd of December. Teachers for the series were Dr Mette Sjöberg Anthonsen, Dr Frida Rångtell, and Dr Déborah Rupert. The series have been funded by the union until now; however, they can't fund recurring events so if we want it to continue, we have to

find a new model (e.g. through the university). Discussions about fixed funding for it are still to take place.

3.5 PhD alumni event

Yin Zeng and Jingnan Zhang were responsible for an event where PhD alumni meet current PhD students and report about their career in industry. The event is a social dinner where current PhD students can gather with PhD Alumni of Chalmers, now working in industry. The event was first organized in 2018 with the aim to improve the offer of CHARM towards doctoral students and the interaction with industry. It took place Wednesday 13th of April at 6pm-9pm. 10 alumni was invited to present at the event. They came from several different companies (Volvo Group, Ericsson, RISE, Qamcom, BICO, LNF, Paulig Group) och PhD areas. 40 PhD students attended in person and online attendance was also possible (and used). A total of 95 PhD students registered to the event.

4. PhD student support

4.1 Doktorand ombudsman (DOMB)

The ombudsman (DOMB) is one of the most important services granted by DS to any PhD student who may experience a problematic situation in their PhD studies. The DOMB is bound to confidentiality and never acts on his/her own initiative. The DOMB can help the PhD student to identify issues, discuss potential solutions as well as be a support in meetings with supervisor or department. It should be noted that the DOMB is hired by the DS, and he/she directly reports to the board (i.e. is not a Chalmers employee).

Dr. Moyra McDill began her work as the DOMB in 2016 and acted as our DOMB up until mid-January 2022. A yearly report on the DOMBs work was written by Dr. McDill and published on the DS webpage in November 2021. Elin Malmgren presented the content DOMB report at FUN early spring 2022. The report outlines the content as well as the extent of the DOMBs work, but further insights on the situation for the doctoral students and detailed information not appropriate to disclose to the public has been discussed within the board and the DS chair when necessary.

4.2 DOMB recruitment

A new DOMB has been hired as of Jan 2022. During the fall of 2021 a requirement committee announced the open position. The recruitment committee consisted of Christopher Sauer, Yin Zeng and Anna af Hallström. Five eligible candidates were identified among 7 applicants. All were asked to come for an initial online interview. Three candidates were then brought in for an in-person interview at Johanneberg campus. All candidates were also asked to hand in resumes, cover letters and to answer a form to declare any potential conflicts of interest in representing the PhD students at Chalmers. References were collected once the recruitment committee had decided to focus on two preferred candidates. The onsite interview was conducted by the recruitment committee and the previous DOMB Moyra. After the interview the candidate spoke to the current chair (Elin Malmgren) and got a tour of the campus. The most suitable candidate was then suggested to the Board and chair to hire.

The recruitment committee asked Chalmers to post about the available position on Chalmers' job advertisement page. DS also used their own communication channels to advertise about the position. The DS chair also asked Chalmers officials whom they thought could have interesting ideas of candidates to approach.

It was with great pleasure that the Chalmers Doctoral Student Guild could announce the new Doktorandsombud (DOMB): Dr Pascale-L. Blyth, Researcher, Åbo Akademi Institute of Human Rights, Finland.

The following job advertisement was used:

Information about the Board

The Board of the Chalmers Doctoral Students Guild (DS) is the representative body of PhD students at all departments at Chalmers University of Technology. It represents the PhD students' interests in several keyboards and committees at Chalmers. DS' goal is that PhD students at Chalmers University of Technology experience the best possible education and work environment.

Job description

The task of the Doktorandombudsman (DOMB) is to assist and help individual PhD students at Chalmers with problems that may arise concerning all aspects of doctoral research and employment. DOMB is hired directly as a contractor by the DS board and should not be bound to other duties which may affect the main responsibilities as DOMB. This means, for example, that DOMB should preferably not be affiliated to Chalmers other than through the DS. The workload typically is around 35% of a full-time employment but can vary depending on the demand for the DOMB's services. DS is looking for someone who has excellent social and communication skills and who is understanding and empathetic. The candidate should be unbiased and solely act to protect the interest of the PhD students. The candidate should also be able to support PhD students in potentially difficult conversations and thus be able to display authority. The candidate is furthermore trusted with keeping absolute confidentiality between the DOMB and their clients.

The main responsibilities of the DOMB are to:

- Offer regular consultation times at the DOMB office.
- Offer consultation by appointment.
- Be available to support the student in potentially difficult meetings.
- Be bound to absolute confidentiality and keep confidential case records.
- Write a yearly report on the DOMB's work.

Contract terms

The DOMB is hired as a contractor by DS. The first contract will be temporary (visstidsanställning) for up to 2 years. The DOMB is provided with a mobile telephone and access to an office space for consultations at the Chalmers Student Union building.

Qualifications

- Excellent communication skills, both written and oral, in English and Swedish.
- Experience with working conditions at Swedish Universities.

Eligible merits:

- Experience in supervision, especially PhD student supervision.
 - Teaching experience at university level.
 - PhD or a similar experience in research
 - Experience of working at Chalmers but no current affiliation with Chalmers.
 - Experience with student representation or counselling.
 - Familiar with rules and laws of the administration of Chalmers and the education sector of Sweden.
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4.3 Supervisor of the year

Each year the Chalmers awards the 'Supervisor of the Year' prize which is organized by the Doctoral student union guild. The visibility and importance that this prize carries requires emphasis. The award is a revered academic merit which acknowledges a supervisor at Chalmers, who has shown excellent supervision qualities and a large concern towards his/her PhD students.

The responsible for the supervisor of the year award from the DS this academic year was Adriana Canales Ramos, Masoud Bahraini, and Yin Zeng. Nominations were open for all PhDs at Chalmers to nominate PhD supervisors. The finalists were interviewed and a winner chosen. The award for 2022 was awarded by the Rector at the promotion ceremony in spring 2022. The prize was given by the Chalmers administration and the winner was awarded 25 000 sek as well as a diploma signed by the DS chair Elin Malmgren and Chalmers Rektor Stefan Bengtsson.

The Supervisor of The Year 2022 at Chalmers university of technology was: Torbjörn Thiringer

4.4 Introduction day

The introduction day has now changed from a mandatory half day session to a 2-hour voluntary lunch. It took place at Chalmerska huset and contained information from DS, the DOMB, the GTS team as well as the prorektor of Chalmers, Charlotte Wiberg. The main responsible for the DS was Andri Spilker. It was provided 3 times, but the GTS team is considering changing this to coincide with the introduction day for new employees. It will be a challenge to guarantee that we as the DS reach out to all students in the future, as the introduction day has been or main information point for the new PhD students at the university. Discussions on this matter has been held within the DS board, but no proposals on how to address the issue has been reached.

5. Final remarks

On the basis of this report the board of DS thinks that it safely can be said that DS has represented the doctoral student at Chalmers well and fulfilled all its obligations towards the organization during the activity year of 2021/2022.

DS chair 2021-2022

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Elin Malmgren'. The signature is written in a cursive style.

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Elin Malmgren