



Lunds Doktorandkår

Ekonomiska Doktorandrådet (EDR)

January 20, 2022

The Economics and Management Doctoral Student Council at LUSEM (EDR) has read with great interest the self-evaluation report on Research Education by LUSEM's Department of Business Administration. We acknowledge the high quality of education in the Business Administration PhD program and are looking forward to a fruitful collaboration with the department to further improve it.

In November 2021, EDR conducted an online-survey among all PhD students at LUSEM regarding their satisfaction with their respective PhD program. In our following comments regarding the PhD program in Business Administration, we focus on the responses given by the Business Administration PhD students.

In total we interviewed 8 PhD students from Business Administration who have worked at the department for some time. As there is sufficient balance in gender as well as national origin among the respondents, we believe that the following comments address the situation of all PhD students at the Department of Business Administration. Based on the survey, we formulate five recommendations to further improve the Business Administration PhD program (please note that the order does not constitute a ranking):

- 1) Overall, the structure of the PhD program is clear to all students. However, students report a lack of information concerning certain formalities. This includes e.g. what rights they have as PhD students / employees at Lund University and how aspects such as sick leave, vacation, and salary are managed. We know that the department proactively informs its students during an introduction week about such aspects. However, starting a PhD is a busy period and some information might get lost. As such, we recommend that the department holds an additional event a couple of months into the PhD where remaining questions concerning the formalities can be addressed.
- 2) PhD students acknowledge the variety of courses offered at the Department of Business Administration. However, they report that the content of some courses is not updated on a regular basis. Also, students report that it is difficult to choose among optional courses as there is no overview of courses offered at other departments of Lund University, nor other universities in Sweden or abroad available. EDR believes that the PhD program would benefit from improvements along these dimensions.
- 3) We also asked PhD students about potentially new PhD courses not yet available at the department. PhD students in Business Administration expressed their interest in learning more about advanced methods for quantitative research, mixed methods, and



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entrepreneurship. As quantitative and mixed method research approaches are taught at other departments of Lund University, EDR believes that having a list of such optional courses available on Canvas would solve this issue. We also believe in the benefit of adding an optional course on entrepreneurship to the PhD program. According to our information such a course is currently not available at Lund University while Entrepreneurship forms an integral part of the Business Administration department.

- 4) In general, students report being satisfied with the quality of the supervision they receive. However, some students report that supervisors are not easily approachable and could be more engaged. While EDR acknowledges the general high quality of supervision at the department, we would welcome it if the department works on identifying critical cases and improving the situation for the affected students. In conjunction with this, some students express their concern about the work atmosphere at the department. Often, the affected PhD students feel that they do not have an adequate contact person for their problems. EDR believes that this issue needs to be addressed, e.g. by having multiple persons of trust at the department to which PhD students can turn.
- 5) Finally, the PhD students would welcome more information and preparation on how to continue in academia or find a job outside the university. While EDR acknowledges that there is a yearly career day at LUSEM for students at all levels, we believe that there is a need for more career-related information targeted specifically at PhD students. One idea would be to have regular “speed dating” events with potential employers.

We thank the Department of Business Administration and the group of external evaluators for considering our comments. We are looking forward to further discussing these points and a fruitful collaboration.

Sincerely for the Council,

Vinzent Ostermeyer

(Chair of The Economics and Management Doctoral Student Council)