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SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

Lund University

Department of Business Administration

Response to the evaluation report on doctoral education in Research Policy

The Department of Business Administration has received a report on the doctoral education in Research Policy. Below we present a summary of the panel's recommendations and the Department of Business Administration response.

Generally, the panel's observations of the programme fit well with the experience of both faculty and doctoral students who participate in the programme. In what follows below, we will address those aspects of the panel's recommendations that fall within the ambit of the department to address. These are the suggestions related to course content, sharing experience from remote seminars and the introduction of a component related to sustainability in the doctoral education for research policy.

We thought it would be important for the Department to do some succession planning in order to future-proof the Programme's existence. Some staff associated with the Programme will be retiring in the next few years and failure to replace them with staff who have comparable grant capture skills would be disastrous for the Programme, whose funding comes almost entirely from externally funded research projects. A five-year plan for the Programme from the Department would be worth the time invested in producing such a plan.

Department Response: This issue will be communicated to the recruitment group at the Department of Business Administration.

The Faculty could similarly develop a plan to provide overarching strategic direction for individual department/units and their PhD programmes. Such a plan would not need to infringe the autonomy of individual units or seek to prescribe what Programmes do in disciplinary and interdisciplinary contexts. However, it could provide some overall guidance and markers on key aspects of planning for the future, sharing staff development good practice and providing further support for students where they have requested it.

Department Response: The Department of Business Administration will investigate whether there is interest in pursuing this issue.

The Faculty appears to have several small PhD Programmes such as Research Policy and it would be worthwhile considering whether it might make sense to group these together in some way, sharing administrative support, research methods training, workshops, peer learning and support etc, without needing to sacrifice the individual distinctiveness of the Programmes themselves. While being part of Business Administration has worked reasonably well for the Research Policy Programme in the past few years, it may not necessarily be the Programme's 'forever' home.

Department Response: The Department of Business Administration will investigate whether there is interest in pursuing this issue.

Within the larger Faculty or Department level, one could then respond to the specific request from students in the Research Policy Programme for supplementing the annual careers event with half-day workshops on specific aspects of career searches and job applications. An occasional workshop on academic writing would also benefit those working towards a thesis monograph, as well as those utilising the compilation of papers format. If it does not already do so, the Faculty could run an annual doctoral conference for all its students, which would help facilitate wider networking and foster interdisciplinarity.

Department Response: The Department is already overseeing its career support to PhD students and will integrate these suggestions. Additionally, LU offers a career development programme, we will disseminate information about this in the departmental newsletter and encourage doctoral students to participate.

It would be worthwhile considering developing an active doctoral alumni group (including a social media platform) across the Department or even at the Faculty level. This would strengthen awareness of doctoral graduate employment trajectories and opportunities, as well as providing a valuable source of mentoring and support for doctoral researchers and a reservoir of expertise and knowledge about changing employment prospects, in addition to fielding people able to participate in occasional seminars and workshops.

Department Response: The Director of PhD studies will investigate how to address this issue together with the other supervisors in Research Policy.

The Department and Faculty could be more proactive in advertising international mobility possibilities to doctoral researchers, as well as considering the development of virtual and blended mobility options for those whose other commitments do not lend themselves to longer exchange visits.

Department Response: The Director of PhD Studies already provides information about mobility options to doctoral students via the departmental newsletter. Options particularly significant for research policy will be emphasized more in the future.

The Programme and the Department would find it worthwhile to investigate and summarise lessons learned in relation to doctoral education adaptations made during the Covid-19 pandemic, with a view to retaining some of those changes such as remote seminars or workshops which have been beneficial to all concerned.

Department Response: The Department kick off meeting will be used as a forum for exchanging information on how different research groups sustained research environments during the pandemic. Research Policy in particular had a monthly hybrid seminar which included colleagues from other departments in Sweden and in Europe. This worked well and we will include hybrid moments in our regular seminar schedule in the future.

There needs to be further scrutiny of the situation whereby the Department does not provide any fourth-year top-up funding for Research Policy students, even though it receives money for such funding for its doctoral students, as it chooses to only provide it for Business Administration doctoral candidates. All though the faculty has been very successful in attracting external funding, also for doctoral students, the Department's current strategy not to guarantee funding for the fourth year is likely to be negative for the ability to raise external PhD funding, as most projects are awarded for three years. We recommend the department to

consider the conditions for attracting external PhD funding and building larger cohorts for this Programme, in its funding strategy.

Department Response: Departmental financing of doctoral student positions is dependent on budget and priorities set by departmental leadership. There is no special policy for research policy, instead research policy benefits from whatever is the prevailing policy for business administration

The issue of making the voluntary interim Research Plan assessment seminar (which is de facto done by every candidate) compulsory needs resolution.

Department Response: The general syllabus for research education in Research Policy will be amended to include an obligatory research plan seminar.

Sustainability seems to be rather neglected by the Programme, as although there is a course available on it and no-one is discouraged from including elements of it in their thesis if they wish to do so, equally there is no protocol about the importance of all projects paying attention to sustainability and relevant sustainable development goals. We recommend that some clear advice on sustainability is provided to all new Research Policy students when they begin their studies.

Department Response: Sustainability is a research priority at LU and at LUSEM, research policy is however a meta subject. Research policy studies how research is funded, evaluated, etc. To the extent that sustainability is prioritised as a transversal theme for research in other areas, it will appear as a concern in research policy. It is not however clear how studying sustainability qua sustainability can improve our understanding of how research is funded, evaluated or prioritised.

It is not evident whether development sessions for experienced supervisors are regularly provided by the University or by the Faculty. If not, this is something that certainly needs to be considered. It is a sound way of spreading good practice and keeping supervisors up to date.

Department Response: PhD supervisors in Research policy will be encouraged to keep abreast of faculty plans and measures for updating PhD skills. All supervisors at the Department of Business Administration meet twice annually to exchange information.

Yours Sincerely



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