

HUM DOK

Report on doctoral students and teaching

2016-10-03

During 2016, teaching as part of doctoral studies was discussed within several student representative bodies at the faculty of arts.

Concerns were raised about the unequal allocation of teaching hours between different subjects, unclear rules and regulations regarding teaching, and a lack of transparency with regards to how teaching hours are given to doctoral students.

HumDok decided to raise these issues at higher faculty levels, and in response we were asked to find out more about the current teaching situation among doctoral students.

In this report we present the results of an investigation that was done during spring 2016. The report consists of a summary of teaching hours done by doctoral students at the faculty's institutions during 2015. It also presents the results of a survey that was sent out to all PhD candidates at the faculty.

We conclude by suggesting four measures that we believe would create more equal and transparent teaching opportunities for doctoral candidates.

//

The HumDok board

Maria Eriksson, Per Boström, Mattias Dahlqvist, Anders Haglund, André Baltz, Nuno Marques & Mardoেকে Boekraad

WHY IS TEACHING AMONG PHD STUDENTS IMPORTANT?

- Having teaching experience is central for a future career within academia, since pedagogic portfolios are examined for most of our future jobs
- PhD student's teaching has benefits for the general content of education since it converges education and research and provides more research-oriented education
- Teaching is also a way to make PhD's more included in the day-to-day activities of the institutions, and strengthens the institutional support of their careers
- Since anxiety over the future is one of the main sources for stress amongst PhD students, we believe that teaching opportunities can have positive effects for the general well being of doctoral candidates

CONTENT

CHAPTER 1.

Allocation of teaching hours among doctoral students during 2015	5
---	---

CHAPTER 2.

Survey report	9
About the respondents	11
Doctoral students who teach	14
Doctoral students who don't teach	21
Summary of survey results	28

CHAPTER 3.

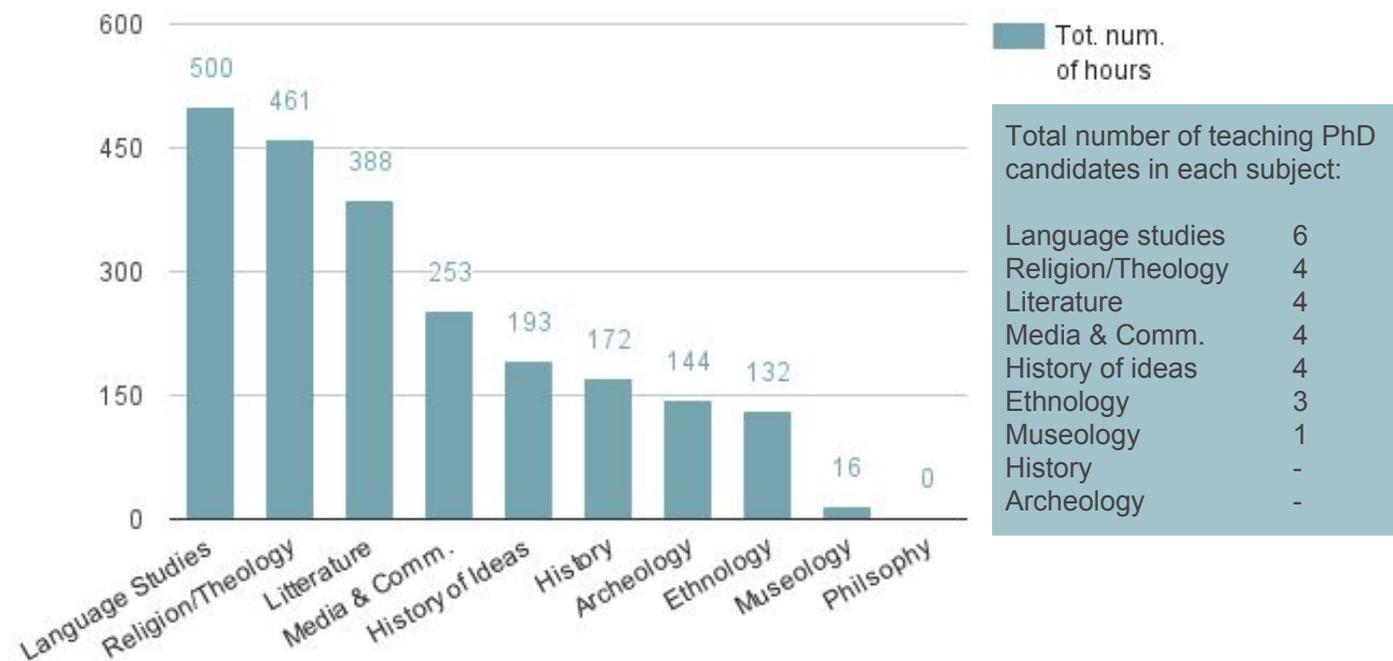
Concluding remarks and suggestions	30
------------------------------------	----

1.

ALLOCATION OF TEACHING HOURS
AMONG DOCTORAL STUDENTS

In order to find out how much teaching is done by PhD students at the Faculty, we asked the student principals at the faculty's departments to provide us with numbers showing how much teaching was done by doctoral candidates during 2015. We received responses seven subjects and these teaching hours are presented on the following pages.

TEACHING DONE BY PHD CANDIDATES DURING 2015



CONCLUDING REMARKS

In total there approximately 30 PhD students who performed some form of lecturing during 2015, of all the subjects Language studies had the most hour in total, 500, but also the most PhD's active in teaching, six. Following language studies were Religion/Theology with 461 hours spread across 4 PhD's and then Literature with 388 hours also spread across 4 students. After these two there is a gap to MKV at 253 hours spread across 4 PhD's followed by History of Ideas with 193 hours over 4 PhD's, History with 172 hours, Archeology with 144 hours and Ethnology with 132 hours divided across 3 PhD's. Museology had 16 hours of teaching allocated to 1 PhD while Philosophy had no teaching.

Individually the amount of hours varies from 240 as the highest number of hours and 16 as the lowest. Religion/Theology had the most number of hours, 115, when divided equally across all PhD students and Ethnology and Museology had the fewest amount of hours per PhD student at 44 and 16 respectively. When dividing total amount of hours over all PhD students the average amount of teaching was 66 hours, which is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ week per year.

2.

SURVEY
REPORT

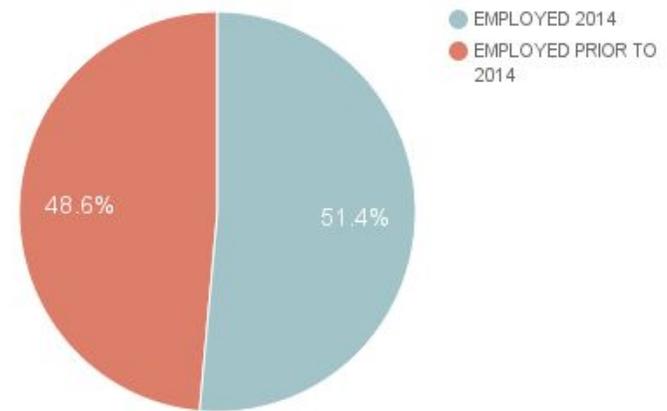
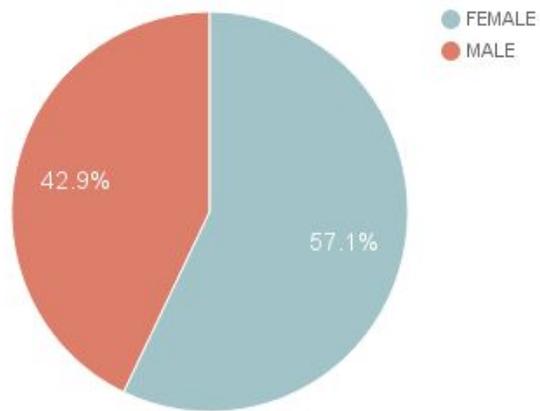
HOW THE SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED

HumDok's survey on doctoral students and teaching was sent out by e-mail to all PhD candidates at the Faculty of Arts between the 18th of May and the 17th of June, 2016 and consisted of 22 questions.

We made it clear that participation in the survey was anonymous and a reminder about participating was sent out two times via e-mail.

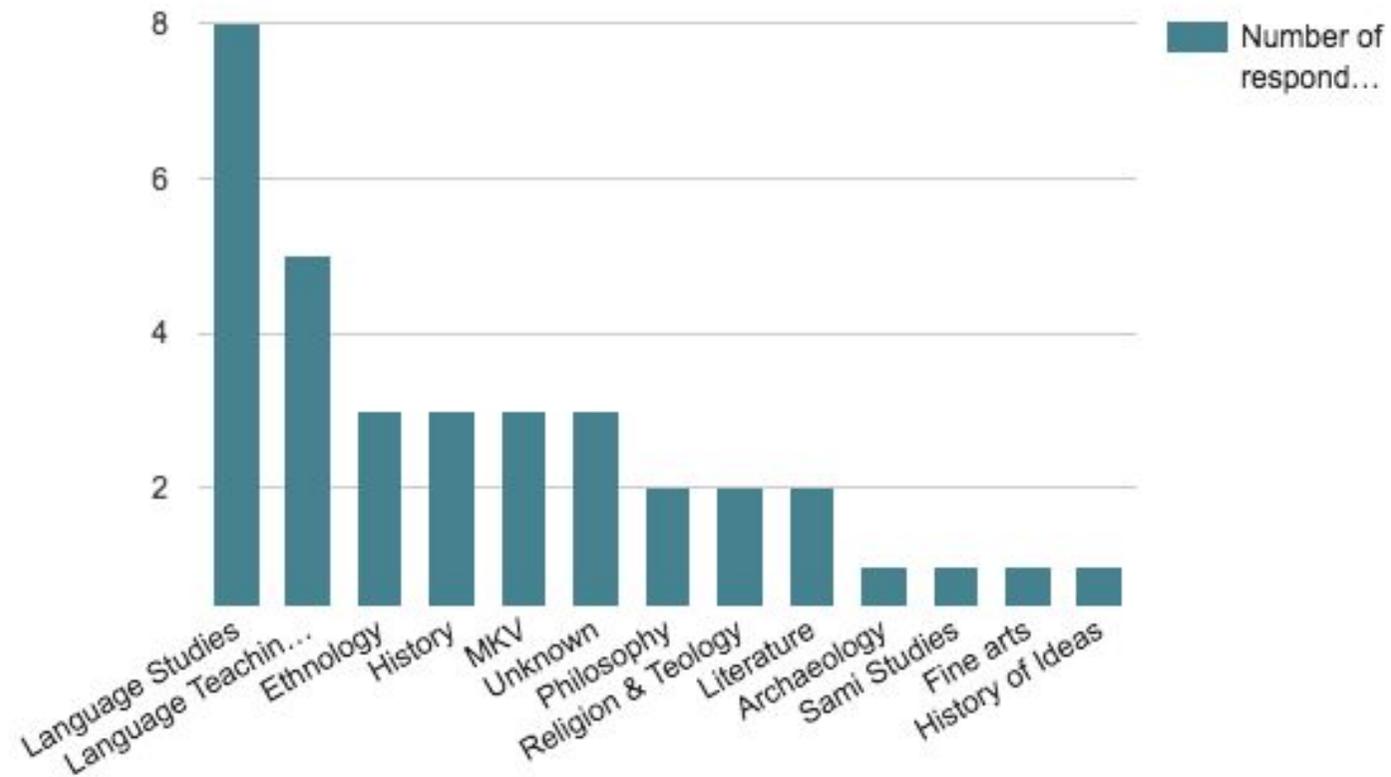
ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

35 DOCTORAL CANDIDATES ANSWERED THE SURVEY



ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

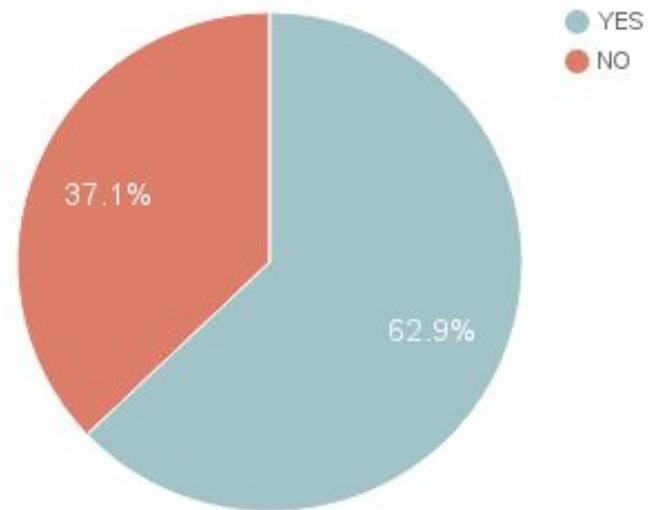
Question: Which subject do you belong to?



ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

35 responses

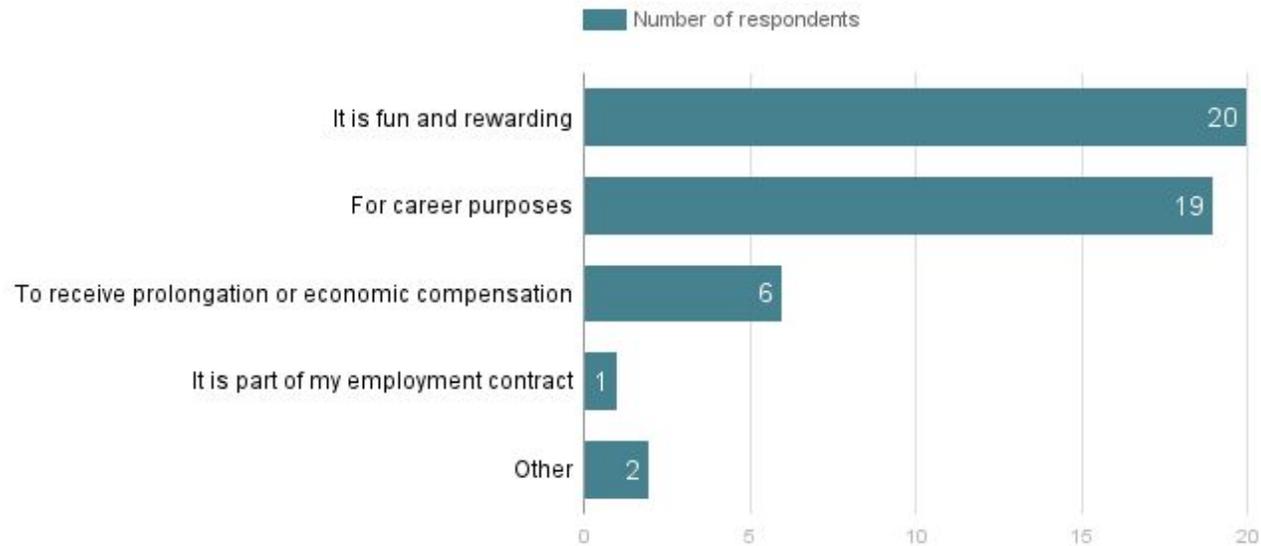
Question: Have you had any teaching responsibilities since you started your doctoral studies?



DOCTORAL STUDENTS WHO TEACH

22 responses, multiple responses allowed

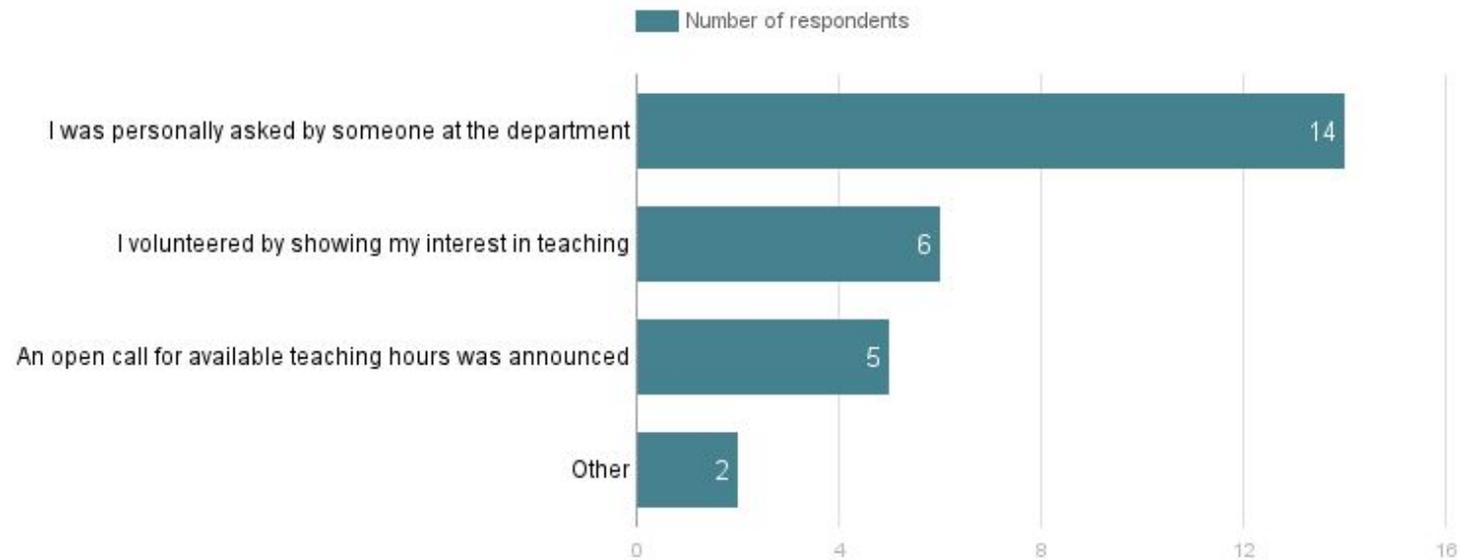
Question: Why do you teach?



DOCTORAL STUDENTS WHO TEACH

22 responses, multiple responses allowed

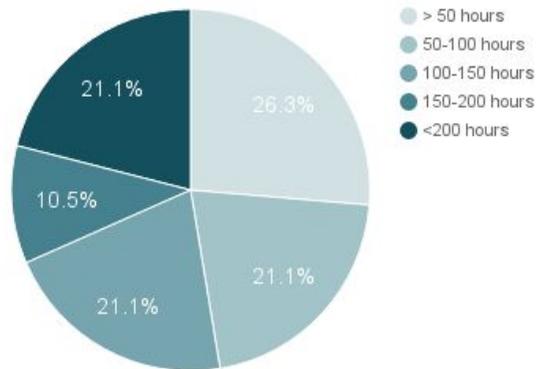
Question: How were you last assigned your teaching hours?



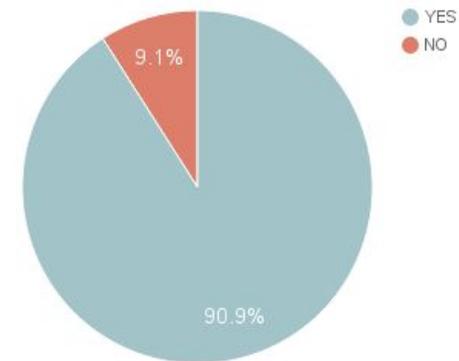
DOCTORAL STUDENTS WHO TEACH

22 responses

Question: Approximately how many hours have you taught (in total) since you started your PhD?



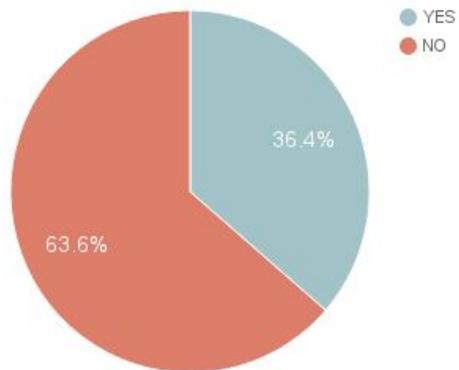
Question: Are you interested in continuing to teach during the rest of your PhD?



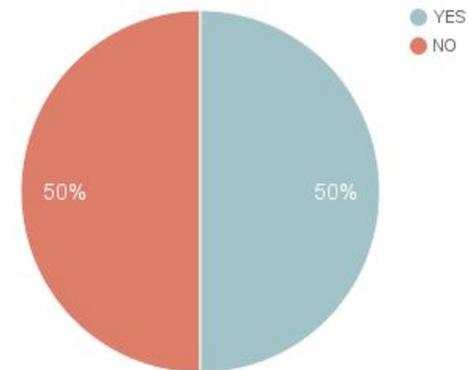
DOCTORAL STUDENTS WHO TEACH

22 responses

Question: Have you ever said no to teaching?



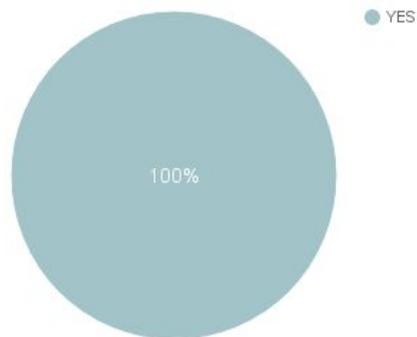
Question: Have you ever requested more teaching hours?



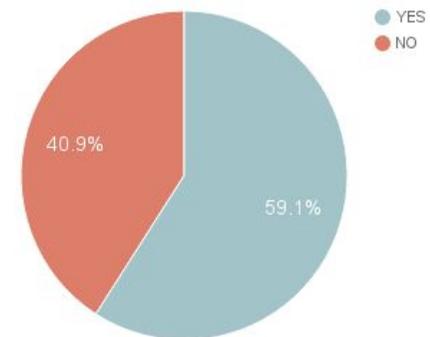
DOCTORAL STUDENTS WHO TEACH

22 responses

Question: Will you receive prolongation for the hours you have spent teaching?



Question: Are you satisfied with the compensation you are given for your teaching hours?



DOCTORAL STUDENTS WHO TEACH

18 responses

Question: When you think about the full process of your teaching (from recruitment to actual teaching), what do you think could be improved?

Responsibilities, what part of a course that you are involved in... A lot of times there comes extra responsibility than what was first decided upon

I think teaching should be something you may choose or not. Also the compensation is too small, I ended up spending a lot more time than I am compensated for.

Less online but more campus courses.

Clarity in how the teaching is assigned to different phd students (e.g. more transparency on why certain people get to teach on specific courses)

More openness with regards to teaching opportunities in other subjects

More opportunities to teach

DOCTORAL STUDENTS WHO TEACH

18 responses

Question: When you think about the full process of your teaching (from recruitment to actual teaching), what do you think could be improved?

More feedback on actual teaching, more active recruitment rather than me having to ask if I could teach (it's crucial for my future career).

Teaching often takes more time than you expect (including planning, actual teaching and examination) and it is sometimes hard to adjust the number of hours spent according to the hours you get compensated for.

A teaching team would be nice, and some more hours in compensation for full courses.

My and others recruitment should not be because of who you know and affiliations (or the lack thereof). There should also be a given minimum/maximum amount of time for teaching given to everyone, just as other universities are known to formalise it.

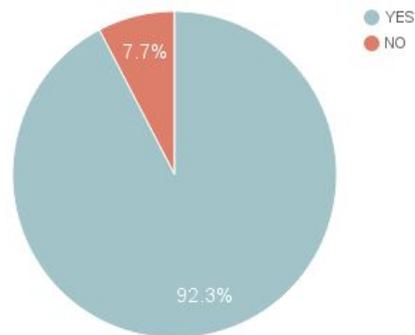
Everything. I just received an email asking if I wanted to teach, maybe 2 weeks before the course started. But I guess you have to take what's given to you.

More lectures and seminars (not just supervising students writing thesis)

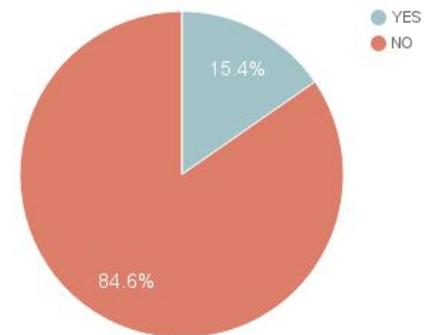
DOCTORAL STUDENTS WHO DON'T TEACH

13 responses

Question: Are you interested in teaching during your time as a doctoral student?



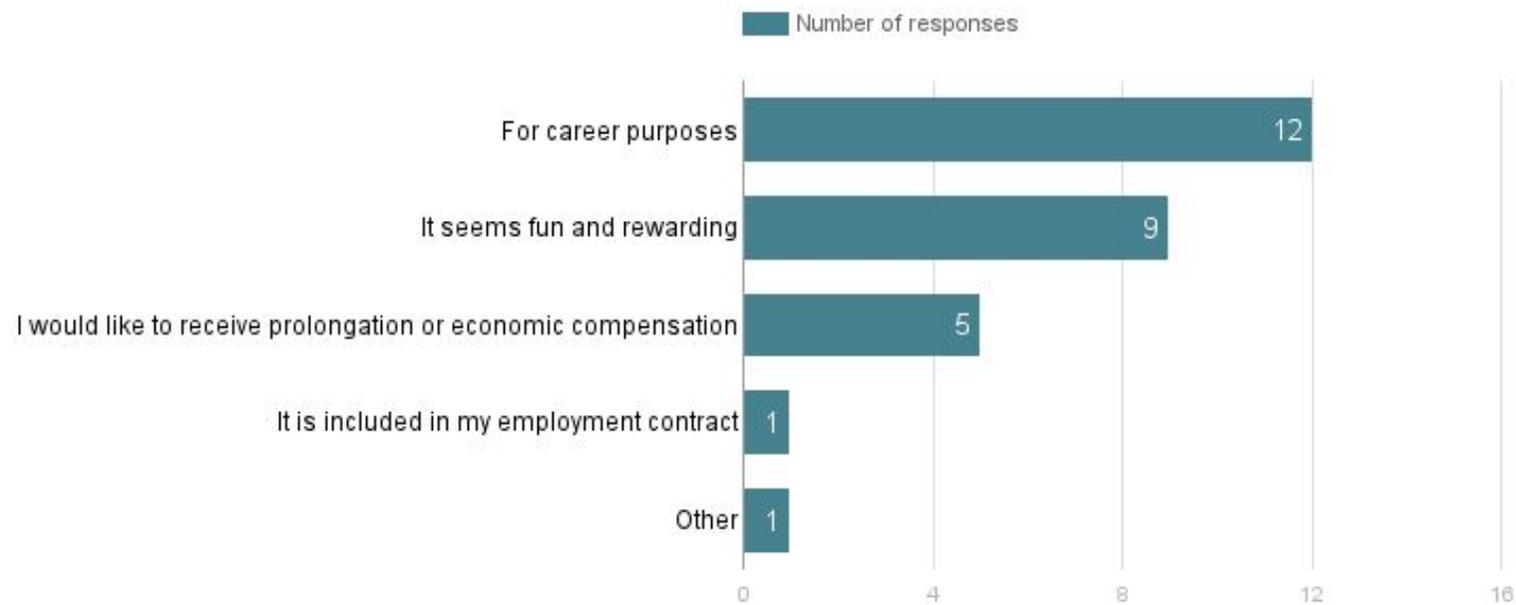
Question: Have you ever said no to teaching?



DOCTORAL STUDENTS WHO DON'T TEACH BUT WANT TO

12 responses, multiple responses allowed

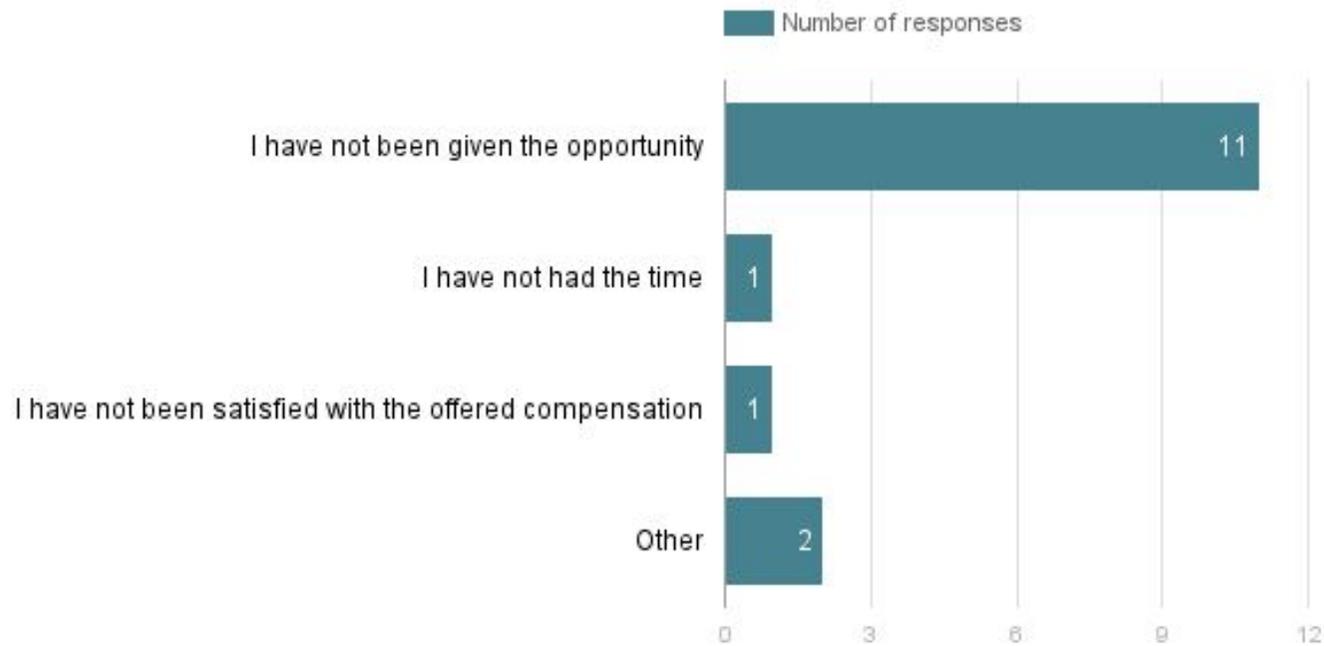
Question: Why are you interested in teaching?



DOCTORAL STUDENTS WHO DON'T TEACH BUT WANT TO

12 responses, multiple responses allowed

Question: Why haven't you been teaching during your PhD?



DOCTORAL STUDENTS WHO DON'T TEACH BUT WANT TO

7 responses

Question: In your opinion, what could be done to enable you to start teaching?

The teachers in my area should also see us PhD students as a resource and give us the opportunity to teach at least some lessons. They should consider the importance of teaching experience for our future career.

The departments should take into consideration that the teaching experience is very influential for our future career. Perhaps they can arrange a structure that at least all the PhD students can have the opportunity to teach.

There could be some language courses that are not necessarily in Swedish

Clear communication as to what would be required, both from me as well as from the situation.

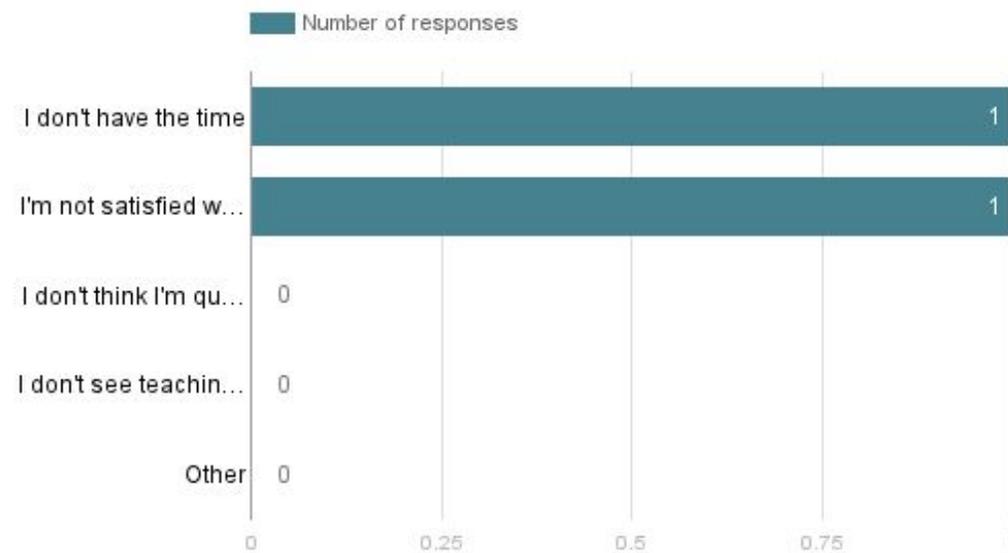
More opportunities!

for some reason I totally ignore I do not get to teach.

DOCTORAL STUDENTS WHO DON'T TEACH AND DON'T WANT TO

1 response, multiple responses allowed

Question: Why are you not interested in teaching?



CONCLUDING REMARKS FROM ALL RESPONDENTS

11 responses

Question: Is there anything else you would like to add in relation to the topic doctoral students and teaching?

It would be extremely difficult for us to find an academic job after our PhD if we don't have any teaching experiences at the academic level. I think the department is responsible to help us with that.

The system at the moment is not fair, some PhD students receive a lot of teaching while some not at all. Of course different subjects have different situations but when we apply for the job, teaching experience is required or at least a merit.

I think in the beginning of each doctoral project the PhD-student should be asked if he or she would like to teach, and if so, given the opportunity.

It's unhealthy to educate PhD-students without giving them the chance to gain teaching experience, because many of the jobs we will end up in require not only teaching but also teaching experience.

I personally find teaching very rewarding, but it does take a lot of time and focus away from your research courses and the research project.

I'm afraid that not being given the opportunity to teach during the PhD years makes it that much harder for us on the job market after. After all, a PhD is the start of a career as a university teacher most of all - in practice even more than in principle.

CONCLUDING REMARKS FROM ALL RESPONDENTS

11 responses

Question: Is there anything else you would like to add in relation to the topic doctoral students and teaching?

Since teaching is one optional and plausible strand after disputation, and since this is so complex, I think quite some teaching experience ought to be offered doctoral students (of course under decent agreements).

I just recently became aware of the opportunity to take a course in pedagogy as part of my PhD, and I would have wished to have known about this earlier and also been able to teach earlier.

Jag har undervisat innan jag började forskarutbildningen och behöver således inte meritiera mig på området under tiden. Jag erbjuds undervisning på 20% mot doktorandlön.

SUMMARY OF SURVEY

Of the 35 respondents 63% had some form of teaching responsibility. Of those respondents hired 2014 and onwards 51% had some form of teaching responsibility. When asked why they teach, the respondents faced a five choice multiple answer question where 57% answered that *It's fun and rewarding*, 54% for *career purposes* and 17% for *prolongation*. One respondent had employment as a part of her/his contract and two had *other* motivations to teaching. Of the respondents 36% had at some point said no to teaching and 91% of the respondents answered that they would like to continue to teach.

When asked about assignment of teaching hours, or in other words how they got their teaching hours allocated, the respondents faced a four choice multiple answer question. Of the respondents 40% was personally asked to engage in teaching, 17% had volunteered or showed interest in teaching, 14% had answered an open call about teaching and 5% had been assigned hours in other fashion. Out of all respondents 50% had requested more teaching hours, 100% had received prolongation and 59% was satisfied with the amount of prolongation.

SUMMARY OF SURVEY

Of the 35 respondents 37% had not had some form of teaching responsibility. Of those respondents hired 2014 and onwards 49% had not had some form of teaching responsibility. When asked why haven't taught, 92% answered that they hadn't been given the opportunity, and 92% of the respondents who hadn't taught was interested in teaching in the future and 15% of them had said no to teaching.

When asked about why they would like to teach, all of the respondents who hadn't taught answered that it would be good for career purposes, while 75% of them because it would be fun and rewarding and 40% because it would provide prolongation. One of the respondents had teaching included in her/his employment contract and one other respondent claimed other reasons.

It seems in general as those PhD students who haven't taught haven't done so voluntarily, in fact 11 out of 12 want the opportunity to teach in the future.

3.

CONCLUDING REMARKS
AND SUGGESTIONS

- Humdok strongly supports the idea that teaching should be optional
- At the same time, this report shows that there is a broad call for more teaching opportunities among doctoral students. The report also indicates that teaching hours are currently allocated in non-transparent and unequal ways.
- We believe that doctoral students can contribute to teaching in many ways: by keeping education close to research, by stimulating and encouraging students to continue to higher studies, and by strengthening collaborations within the different departments, for example.
- To conclude, we would therefore like to make 4 suggestions that we believe would create better and more equal teaching opportunities for doctoral students.

SUGGESTION 1:

REVISE THE ORDER IN WHICH AVAILABLE TEACHING HOURS ARE DISTRIBUTED

Given that a surprisingly high number of the respondents (37%) stated that they have not been given any teaching opportunities during their studies so far, we believe that it is crucial to increase the amount of teaching hours that are offered to PhD candidates. At the same time, we know that teaching hours are frequently offered to external personnel—sometimes even before PhD students have been given the opportunity to announce their interest in teaching.

In order to support and integrate doctoral students in teaching (and make sure that the existing internal competences at the faculty are properly utilized), we suggest that available teaching hours should be offered according to the following order and routine:

1. Lecturers and permanent staff
2. Phd Candidates
3. External personnel (such as assistant teachers etc.)

SUGGESTION 2:

OPEN CALLS FOR AVAILABLE TEACHING HOURS SHOULD BE PRAXIS

Only 5 of the 22 respondents who teach and answered our survey reported that an open call for available teaching hours had preceded their last assignment of teaching hours. Relatedly, a majority of the respondents who teach (14/22 respondents), announced that they had last been personally asked to teach by someone at the department.

HumDok believes that this is indicative of a transparency problem with regards to the allocation of teaching hours at the faculty. Getting the opportunity to teach should be based on equal principles of meritocracy. Hence, HumDok suggests that open calls for available teaching hours should be praxis at the faculty.

In concrete terms, this could for example imply that an e-mail is sent out to all doctoral candidates before teaching hours are assigned. In this way, all PhD candidates would be given the same opportunity to show their interest in teaching, and argue for their competence to do so.

SUGGESTION 3:

OPEN UP FOR CROSS-DISCIPLINARY TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES

Many doctoral students have experience and backgrounds in other academic fields than the one they are currently assigned to. Against this background – and given that 90% of the respondents who teach, and 92% of the respondents who don't teach are interested in having future teaching responsibilities – we believe that there are good reasons to explore the possibility of cross-disciplinary teaching opportunities among doctoral students. This is especially a measure that would increase the chances for teaching among doctoral students who are part of smaller subjects with less teaching opportunities.

A concrete way of creating a foundation for cross-disciplinary teaching exchanges would be to conduct an inventory of the academic backgrounds and competences that doctoral students at the faculty have. The results of such an inventory could later be used as a competence database when teaching resources are needed.

SUGGESTION 4:
**GIVE CLEAR INFORMATION ABOUT
THE CURRENT RESTRICTIONS ON PHD
CANDIDATES AND TEACHING**

Last, and on behalf of the faculty's doctoral candidates, HumDok would like to ask responsible individuals at the faculty/institutions to clarify what the current rules say about restrictions with regards to doctoral students and teaching. After the recent downsizings at the faculty, many conflicting messages regarding our rights to teach have flourished. This causes unnecessary uncertainty and confusion, and a clarification regarding the current regulations would be highly appreciated.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

Send us an email or visit our webpage

humdok@umeastudentkar.se

www.humdok.com