

Dokt

PLUME

Lund University Mentorship programme
for Engineering PhD students



PLUME is a mentorship programme for PhD students at LTH that will take place for the fourth time during 2014. The students who participate in the programme will be given mentors who are graduated PhDs with some years of work experience in either industry or academia.



Most of the research in Sweden is carried out by PhD students. It can seem like a paradox - to perform the work of established researchers as a student. But that is how it is! The advantage of this education is that everything is done “for real” from the start. On the other hand, it raises heavy demands on the PhD student. A professional mentorship is a very good way to support PhD students.

It would help the students to get perspective both on themselves and their situation. To receive good advice and reflections from someone who has experienced similar projects is worth gold. At the same time the PhD student gets an outside perspective both on the research process and project work in

general. Meanwhile, I think that a mentor in return can become more up to date with what is happening in the academic research.

A mentor with experience from the industry can give insights into the difference between development (R&D) in the industry and research at the university. At LTH there is often time to go to the bottom with a problem. That is even the main challenge. In the industry there is often a tight timetable and problems are sometimes solved by circumvention. Both ways are equally good when applied in the right circumstance. A mentor with experience as an academic senior researcher can give insights into research traditions and researcher networks. This is important to succeed with grant applications.

A mentor to a PhD student at LTH will have a very special and important role. We, in the leadership of LTH, will try to support and encourage the mentors' work as much as possible.

Anders Axelsson
Dean LTH

PHD STUDENTS

As a PhD student, it is easy to put a lot of focus on your research project and what you are doing at the moment. Participating in the mentor programme is a good way to get a broader perspective, not only on your current situation as a PhD student, but also on your future career.

In the meetings with your mentor you will hear about the experiences of someone who has been a PhD student like yourself, but who is now finished and has progressed further in his or her career. By relating what you hear to your own situation you can become more prepared for the transition to work after your dissertation. You can also discuss career opportunities, get help finding out what you want to do and what your goals should be. In the common meetings you will be able to meet other PhD students as well as other mentors. You will have the opportunity to interact with them and build a network of PhDs, which can be very valuable

for you in the future. Each meeting will also have a theme that will be a base for discussions and also covered by invited speakers.

Who can participate? The only requirement is that you will not finish your PhD studies during the programme, and that you are willing to commit the time and energy that is required to participate in the programme.

If you are interested in participating, you can register yourself first with a pre-application form before March which will facilitate us to find a suitable mentor for you in our web page dokt.tlth.se/mentoring/plume.

However, you have to apply separately to participate in the program. More information on this will come out in our webpage.

“Har fått större självinsikt, har utökat mitt nätverk och har lärt mig om arbetsmarknadsfrågor för forskare i vid mening.”

“I first thought I would get out more of our discussions if we would come from a bit more similar fields, but I was wrong.”

“Mina möten med min mentor har bidragit till att jag nu har en tydligare bild av vad jag har för olika möjliga karriärvägar. Jag har börjat dra i lite trådar, och gjort planer för livet efter examen. Jag har nu även mer struktur på det som ska göras fram till examen.”

Comments from PhD students attending PLUME previous years.

MENTORS

As a mentor, you contribute to the personal development of a PhD student as well as to the LTH community. By sharing your experiences and knowledge you can help to clarify the connection between PhD studies and life afterwards.

You may also develop yourself, for example by getting practical experience of coaching your student. Moreover, you may enjoy the discussions with your student, who can provide a new perspective on the matters you discuss. The relationship between mentor and student is one where both parts can learn about themselves and each other.

As a mentor you will not only meet your own student, but also participate in the common meetings. There, you will have the opportunity to network and interact with the other mentors and students. Each meeting will also have an interesting theme that we will learn more about through discussions and from invited speakers.

Who can be a mentor? The only formal requirement is that you should have been a PhD student and that you are willing to

commit the time and energy required to participate in the programme. In addition, a mentor should:

- Have experience of work after dissertation
- Be interested in the personal development of his/her student
- Be willing to share personal experiences of work and life

Being a mentor is an honorary task. Thus, no financial compensation is given. The idea is that the programme itself will be rewarding enough.

Interested mentors can register at dokt.tlth.se/mentoring/plume where you will be asked a few questions about yourself in order to match mentors and students. The registration form is open already in our website. Please register before the end of May.

"I gain a lot of energy by sharing knowledge on how it is in industry. I believe it is important to build bridges between academia and industry through research, master thesis, cases in courses and now also through mentorship. I see the PLUME as a win-win activity."

"... very interesting to get to know a person in a situation you recognize but 20 years later."

Comments from mentors attending PLUME previous years.

PLUME

In PLUME, participating students are matched with mentors who are graduated PhDs with some years of work experience. The mentors will come both from the university and from external employers, reflecting the job market as well as the interests of the students.

This project is administered by PhD students with support from LTH.

The main purpose of PLUME is to provide a great opportunity for personal development, both for the students and the men-

tors. Specifically, the programme is aiming at letting the participants:

- Share experiences of work, research and life
- Discuss and learn about important issues, such as leadership, career paths and the job market of a PhD
- Build a network of students and alumni
- More clearly see the connection between PhD studies and work afterwards

THE PROGRAMME

This year's programme will start in August 2014 and end in May 2015. During this time there will be individual meetings between students and mentors, as well as common meetings with all participants in the programme.

Each student will be assigned one mentor and each mentor will be assigned one PhD student. The mentor and the student will meet individually during the whole programme. How to meet and how often is decided by each mentor and student. However, we recommend having one hour-long

meeting each month in order to build a worthwhile relationship. We will provide a list of suggested meeting forms and discussion items.

There will be four common meetings with all participants, two in the spring and two in the autumn. Each meeting will have a specific theme, such as leadership, networking or mentorship, that will be explored by a speaker, in discussions or through other activities. There will also be opportunities to mingle. These meetings will take place in the evening and dinner will be provided.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The program will be open for applicants between the end of March and the end of May. The application is done through a web form that can be found on the PLUME homepage: dok.tlth.se/mentoring/plume.

After the application deadline, about 30

students will be chosen and matched with a mentor. The matching will be based on the information provided through the application form. Note that we will do our best to meet all the wishes of the applicants, but no guarantees can be made.

CONTACT

The organizers of PLUME 2014 are Venkatachalam Narayanan, PhD student in Applied Microbiology, Nora Weber, PhD student in Applied Microbiology, Sebastian pashaei, PhD student in Engineering Logistics and Kerstin Johnsson, PhD student in Mathematics. You can contact them through dokt-plume@tlth.se if you have any questions, ideas, mentor recommendations or anything else.

Also, you can take a look at our webpage: at dokt.tlth.se/mentoring/plume for deadlines, testimonies from earlier participants and more information.



PLUME is an acronym for Lund University Mentorship programme for Engineering PhD students. By using a convenient mathematical trick we managed to move the P from the end to the start. Moreover, the word plume is supposed to associate to feather pens, a symbol for knowledge.



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