Established by the SWEAH Board, 22 March 2024

LUNDS UNIVERSITET
Medicinska fakulteten

SWEAH
SWEDISH NATIONAL GRADUATE SCHOOL ON AGEING AND HEALTH

Annual Report 2023

Swedish National Graduate School on Ageing and Health

Photo: Lill Eriksson

SWEAH
10 years
2014-2024

www.sweah.lu.se

Table of Contents

page

Summary 3

Management
- **SWEAH partner universities** 4
- **The Board** 5
- **The graduate school's management and administration** 6
- **Pedagogical Working Group** 6

Doctoral students
- **Affiliation of doctoral students** 7
- **What does being a PhD student in SWEAH involve?** 8
- **PhD student days** 10
  - **Umeå, 17–18 April**
  - **Online, 11 December**
- **SWEAH Core Curriculum** 11
  - **Gerontology: From Multidisciplinary to Integrative Perspectives on Aging, University of Gothenburg**
  - **Societal and Life-Course Perspectives on Inequalities in Ageing, Karolinska Institutet**
- **Travel grants for research visits abroad** 12
- **Mid-way reviews and defences of doctoral theses 2023** 13

Alumni and postdoctoral fellows
- **Engagement from SWEAH alumni** 16
- **SAIN alumni network** 17
- **Postdoctoral course From Junior to Senior Researcher in Research on Ageing and Health, Lund University** 19

SWEAH's conference in Norrköping 21–22 November 19

Outreach activities
- **Press activities** 21
- **Greater focus on social media** 21
- **Digital newsletter** 22
- **Media profile** 22
- **Participation in Almedalen Week and the GSA Annual Scientific Meeting in Florida** 22
- **PhD students and popular science** 24
- **Research grants, prizes and awards** 25

Follow-up
- **Activity reports 2023** 26
- **Finances** 28

Annual Report 2023

Summary

During 2023, the Swedish National Graduate School on Ageing and Health (SWEAH) included 13 partner universities, each of whom contributed funding and commitment to ensure that the graduate school's activities were conducted in a manner that aroused interest, attracted new doctoral students and supervisors and engaged its alumni.

Up to and including 31 December 2023, 138 doctoral students from a wide range of disciplines had been affiliated to the graduate school for between two and four years since it was established in 2014, 68 of whom have defended their doctoral theses. As in previous years, SWEAH has arranged interdisciplinary courses focused on ageing and health, with five of the partner universities providing courses. This meant that during the year two courses were offered within the SWEAH Core Curriculum. The course *Gerontology: Multidisciplinary and Integrative Perspectives on Aging* was given for the fourth time by the University of Gothenburg, while Karolinska Institutet gave the course *Societal and Life-Course Perspectives on Inequalities in Aging* for the first time.

Graduate school seminars and PhD student days were also arranged. The high point of the year was SWEAH's own conference held in Norrköping in November, at which 80 delegates from 12 of our 13 partner universities gave and attended presentations, symposia and poster exhibitions while forming new bonds.

In terms of postdocs, SWEAH's management engaged the services of six alumni for assignments at the graduate school in roles such as assistant study coordinator and assistant course leader.

SWEAH puts a great deal of effort into supporting and maintaining a network to promote development and collaboration for affiliated doctoral students as well as postdocs, supervisors and other interested researchers at our partner universities.

Management

SWEAH partner universities

In the latter part of 2022, the management of Mid Sweden University submitted a request to affiliate to the graduate school from 2023, which was subsequently granted by the board of SWEAH.

In an article on the SWEAH website, Judit Staller, a doctoral student at the Department of Health Sciences at Mid Sweden University, describes her first year at the graduate school. Her subject areas are dementia care, patient-centred care and life stories.

"It is important that this region, in the heart of Sweden, can benefit from collaboration between new researchers working in the field of ageing and health

"SWEAH helps to increase knowledge and expertise within research. It helped me position myself within this extensive field of research and made me surer of my goals and challenges. I am very grateful to be a part of this extended 'research family'."

Judit Staller

SWEAH now has 13 partner universities:

- Blekinge Institute of Technology
- University of Gothenburg
- Dalarna University
- Jönköping University
- Kristianstad University
- Karolinska Institutet
- Linköping University
- Linnaeus University
- Luleå University of Technology
- Lund University (coordinator)
- Mid Sweden University
- Umeå University
- Örebro University

Each partner university has appointed one representative at management level and one at research level. These two groups of representatives are invited to attend a meeting with SWEAH management once each semester.

Board

The composition of the board is unchanged since 2022, with a chairperson, deputy chairperson and nine members. The chairperson, deputy chairperson and external members are elected for a three-year term, while members representing partner universities and alumni are elected for a two-year term. Doctoral student representatives participate in the work of the board until they defend their thesis.

Ethel Forsberg	chairperson
Søren S.E. Bengtsen	deputy chairperson
Marianne Rundström	external member
Lars Liljedahl	external member
Maria Haak/Anna-Karin Edberg	partner representative, Kristianstad University
Pär Bjälkebring	partner representative, University of Gothenburg
Andreas Motel-Klingebiel	partner representative, Linköping University
Peter Anderberg	partner representative, Blekinge Institute of Technology
Frida Andréasson	alumni representative
Isabelle von Saenger	PhD student representative
Erika Olofsson	PhD student representative

Professor Susanne Iwarsson, the graduate school's coordinator, has been rapporteur to the board. The study coordinator and finance officer from the Department of Health Sciences, the host department at Lund University, have been co-opted to some or all of the board's meetings. SWEAH's research administrator has acted as secretary at board meetings.

Ethel Forsberg
Chairperson

Søren Smedegaard Bengtsen
Deputy chairperson

Marianne Rundström
External member

Lars Liljedahl
External member

Peter Anderberg
Partner representantative
Blekinge Institute of Technology

Pär Bjälkebring
Partner representantative
University of Gothenburg

Maria Haak
Partner representantative
Kristianstad University

Anna-Karin Edberg
Partner representantative
Kristianstad University

Photo: Anders Andersson

Andreas Motel Klingebiel
Partner representantatuve
Linköping university

Frida Andréasson
Alumni representantative

Erika Olofsson
PhD student representantive

Isabelle von Saenger
PhD student representantive

The board met three times during the year, twice digitally over Zoom and once in person in Norrköping, where the majority of members attended in person. Important issues addressed by the board during the year included securing the continuity of cofinancing from partner institutions, as not all have committed for the same period of time; deciding and following up the budget to ensure that courses and activities for doctoral students are always prioritised and recruiting new doctoral students.

The graduate school's management and administration

During 2023, the graduate school's management consisted of: Professor Susanne Iwarsson, coordinator (30% of an FTE); Cecilia Pettersson, associate professor, study coordinator (40%); Stina Elfverson, research administrator (65%); and Maria Löfstedt/Lill Eriksson, communications officer (25%). Cecilia Pettersson left the post of study coordinator at the end of the year to return to Kristianstad University full-time and associate professor Steven Schmidt was recruited to take over the role from January 2024.

SWEAH's new study coordinator, Associate Professor Steven Schmidt, who was recruited in December 2023, research administrator Stina Elfverson, SWEAH coordinator Professor Susanne Iwarsson, and Lill Eriksson, who took over as communications officer from Maria Löfstedt in September 2023. Photo: Sarah Nauman Ghazi

Pedagogical Working Group

SWEAH's Pedagogical Working Group is responsible for pedagogical issues, quality enhancement and evaluation. It is chaired and convened by the study coordinator. Members of the working group during 2023 included Dr Lena Dafgård, Dalarna University, an expert in teaching and learning in higher education, Professor Håkan Jönson, School of Social Work, Lund, and postdoctoral fellow Annikki Arola, Umeå University, in the capacity of assistant study coordinator, as well as doctoral student representatives on the board of SWEAH. SWEAH's administrator is the working group's permanent secretary. The group has met digitally on six occasions during 2023, regularly inviting representatives of the partner institutions that offer courses to attend.

During 2023, the Pedagogical Working Group continued to coordinate the range of courses offered by SWEAH to ensure a consistent and high level of teaching in line with the graduate school's principles. A document of principles for implementing courses in the SWEAH Core Curriculum has been drawn up as a guide for partner institutions when arranging courses on behalf of SWEAH. The Pedagogical Working Group has continued to advise management and the board on activities such as PhD student days, the SWEAH Conference, attendance at external conferences, and other matters.

PhD students

Affiliation of PhD students

An annual application process is held for PhD students wishing to affiliate to SWEAH. The deadline for applications is 30 September, for admission on 1 January the following year. The assessment criteria are that the applicant must be a doctoral student in the field of ageing and health at one of SWEAH's partner institutions who has completed no more than half of their third-cycle programme. Applicants are also required to describe their motivation for joining SWEAH and their supervisor must certify that the PhD student has the prerequisites for committing and contributing to the interdisciplinary learning environment. Applications from qualified applicants are reviewed by senior researchers involved with SWEAH, who assess the scientific quality and interdisciplinary potential of each doctoral degree project, the applicants' qualifications and motivation, as well as the potential to expand SWEAH's knowledge base and disciplinary breadth.

SWEAH's target is to have approximately 50 active PhD students. In part, the number of new PhD students admitted depends on how many are already affiliated to the graduate school. The number decreases gradually over the course of the year as students defend their theses.

At the start of the year, 49 PhD students were affiliated to the graduate school, eight of whom defended their thesis during 2023 (see page 15). Three students ended their affiliation to SWEAH at their own request before defending their theses. So, at the end of the year 40 PhD students were affiliated (Table 1).

A welcome meeting was arranged in Lund on 26 January for the 18 PhD students entering the graduate school on 1 January 2023, 16 of whom were able to attend to introduce themselves, present their projects, and receive an introduction to SWEAH. The meeting was also attended by some students already active at SWEAH for a number of years, who offered their views on the graduate school's operations.

On 26 January 2023, 16 newly affiliated PhD students met for the first time. (Samantha Svärdh and Karolina Thörnqvist are not in the photograph). Photo: Maria Löfstedt

New SWEAH PhD students 2023

David Dahlgren	Lund University
Helén Dellkvist	Blekinge Institute of Technology
Jeanne Højgaard-Bøytler	Lund University
Lena Johansson	Örebro University
Aber Sharon Kagwa	Karolinska Institutet
Anna-Carin Karlsson	Kristianstad U
Mariam Kirvalidze	Karolinska Institutet
Fanny Kårelind	Jönköping University
Giulia Lorenzon	Karolinska Institutet
Glenn Möllergren	Lund University
Jerry Norlin	Dalarna University
Rosalind Pfaff	Karolinska Institutet
Johanna Rosberg Pettersson	Dalarna University
Nazib M Seidu	University of Gothenburg
William Son Galanza	Lund University
Judit Staller	Mid Sweden University
Samantha Svärdh	Lund University
Karolina Thörnqvist	University of Gothenburg

As in previous years, a call for applications from PhD students was announced during the year, with the deadline for applications on 30 September. This was the eleventh round since the graduate school was established. For the first time, the SWEAH management invited potential applicants to attend a digital information meeting to spread the message about the opportunity to apply to join SWEAH and to ask questions. By the deadline for applications, 21 applications had been received from students enrolled at 10 of SWEAH's partner universities. Six experts in two groups were recruited from senior researchers within SWEAH to assess and rank applicants based on the assessment criteria previously established by the board. On 23 November, the board decided to admit 18 doctoral students from 1 January 2024, one of whom subsequently declined the offer.

What does being a PhD student in SWEAH involve?

PhD students affiliated to SWEAH have priority when registering for courses in the SWEAH Core Curriculum. Each affiliated student must take at least two such courses during their period of affiliation to SWEAH (see page 11 for more about courses), as regulated in the affiliation agreement. Doctoral students also agree to participate actively in and contribute to PhD student days, which are arranged once each semester on various special themes in the field of ageing and health. Affiliation to SWEAH grants access to a large and active network that PhD students value from day one, providing useful contacts that may lead to collaboration within one's own research field or interdisciplinarily.

Thanks to SWEAH's 13 partner universities, PhD students are afforded a good overview of current research in the field of ageing and health being conducted in Sweden. Not only do they get to know one another, but also alumni and senior researchers with whom they can develop contacts and collaboration, if not immediately then later in their careers. Many affiliated students testify to the support they have received when, for example, attending their first major conference and encountering many renowned researchers and differing opinions among their fellow delegates.

SWEAH's website, newsletter, social media accounts and mailshots offer affiliated PhD students tips on upcoming courses and activities, not only within the graduate school but also at all of the partner universities. SWEAH is also an important channel of communication for their own research results.

Table 1. PhD students affiliated to the Swedish National Graduate School on Ageing and Health (SWEAH), December 2023 (N = 40).

Round/ Year	Name	Research subject	Higher education institution
7/2020	Andreea Badache	Disability studies	Örebro University
7/2020	Jacques Shebehe	Medicine	Örebro University
7/2020	Marcus Falk Johansson	Nursing science	Dalarna University
8/2021	Afsaneh Taei	Occupational therapy	Lund University
8/2021	Christina Heller	Health sciences; gerontology	Lund University
8/2021	Emma Carlsson	Public health, sociology	Karolinska Institutet
8/2021	Emma Simonsson	Sports medicine	Umeå University
8/2021	Erik Eriksson	Health sciences; gerontology	Lund University
8/2021	Guo Yanfei	Geriatric epidemiology	University of Gothenburg
8/2021	Ingrid Olsson	Health sciences	Umeå University
8/2021	Isabelle Von Saenger	Sociology	Karolinska Institutet
8/2021	Peggy Ler	Health sciences	Karolinska Institutet
8/2021	Åsa Olsson	Health sciences	Karolinska Institutet
9/2022	Abigail Dove	Medical epidemiology	Karolinska Institutet
9/2022	Agata Yadav	Health sciences; gerontology	Lund University
9/2022	Clare Tazzeo	Epidemiology	Karolinska Institutet
9/2022	Giorgi Beridze	Geriatric epidemiology	Karolinska Institutet
9/2022	Daniella Dinse	Health sciences	Kristianstad University
9/2022	Elin Mauritzson	Nursing science	Dalarna University
9/2022	Erika Augustsson	Socio-gerontology	Karolinska Institutet
9/2022	Erika Olofsson	Nursing science	Umeå University
9/2022	Nicholas Levak	Clinical gerontology	Karolinska Institutet
9/2022	Roar Hermansen Östby	Working life science	University of Gothenburg
10/2023	Aber Sharon Kagwa	Care sciences	Karolinska Institutet
10/2023	Anna-Carin Karlsson	Health sciences	Kristianstad University
10/2023	David Dahlgren	Health sciences; gerontology	Lund University
10/2023	Fanny Kårelind	Nursing science	Jönköping University
10/2023	Giulia Lorenzon	Clinical gerontology	Karolinska Institutet
10/2023	Glenn Möllergren	Social work	Lund University
10/2023	Helén Dellkvist	Applied health technology	Blekinge Institute of Technology
10/2023	Jeanne Højgaard-Bøytler	Social work	Lund University
10/2023	Jerry Norlin	Nursing science	Dalarna University
10/2023	Judit Staller	Care sciences	Mid Sweden University
10/2023	Karolina Thörnqvist	Care sciences	University of Gothenburg
10/2023	Lena Johansson	Occupational therapy	Örebro University
10/2023	Mariam Kirvalidze	Geriatric epidemiology	Karolinska Institutet
10/2023	Nazib M Seidu	Neuropsychiatric epidemiology	University of Gothenburg
10/2023	Rosalind Pfaff	Physiotherapist	Karolinska Institutet
10/2023	Samantha Svärdh	Medical and health sciences	Lund University
10/2023	William Son Galanza	Medical science; gerontology	Lund University

PhD student days

As in previous years, SWEAH arranged two doctoral days at which doctoral students could meet, one in Umeå during the spring and one digitally in December 2023.

Umeå, 17–18 April

The theme of the first SWEAH PhD student day held in Umeå was "Networking to facilitate research: Highpoints and pitfalls". Twenty delegates attended representing 8 of SWEAH's 13 partner universities.

Day one included a workshop to introduce the PhD students and their research. Ingrid Olsson and Roar Hermansen Øsby described their study visits to higher education institutions in Halifax, Canada, and Melbourne, Australia, respectively, which were funded by travel grants. On day two, researchers from Umeå University lectured on topics including:

- studies of memory and brain functions;
- meaningful activities in Arctic environments;
- alcohol use and vulnerability to cyberthreats;
- perceived discrimination on the grounds of age; and
- the use of VR glasses to assist older adults to take their medication.

Umeå workshop for SWEAH doctoral students. Photo: Claes Björnberg

Juan Carlos wearing VR glasses that can assist older adults to take their medication. Photo: Claes Björnberg

Online, 11 December

In mid-December, Lund University arranged a webinar for SWEAH PhD students and alumni. The graduate school's strategic plan was presented, with the emphasis on relevant goals for students and alumni, who discussed the plan after brainstorming in groups. In a lecture titled "AI: A tool for PhD students or No Go?", researcher Lena Dafgård gave PhD students some advice on what they should consider before using artificial intelligence (AI) in their research.

"New perspectives of networking. Nice to meet more of the SWEAH affiliated PhD-students. I appreciated also all the senior researchers contribution to the topic."

Participant response, Umeå, April 2023

SWEAH Core Curriculum

The SWEAH Core Curriculum provides the foundation for an interdisciplinary approach to ageing and health. From 2022 onwards, it consists of five courses for 3 credits each, arranged by five partner universities. One course is offered each semester, with two courses on theories of ageing alternating every other spring semester and the other three courses offered in turn during autumn semesters:

- *Theories of Ageing* (Lund University)
- *Gerontology: From Multidisciplinary to Integrative Perspectives on Ageing and Capability* (University of Gothenburg)
- *Societal Communication and Impact of Research on Ageing and Health* (Örebro University).
- *Societal and Life-Course Perspectives on Inequalities in Aging* (Karolinska Institutet).
- *Ageing and Social Change* (Linköping University).

The courses are open to all doctoral students in Sweden and abroad, with priority given to PhD students affiliated to SWEAH. Two of the courses were offered during 2023:

Gerontology: From Multidisciplinary to Integrative Perspectives on Ageing and Capability (University of Gothenburg)

The fourth instance of this popular course on ageing theory was held at the University of Gothenburg in spring semester 2023. 19 participants. Course leader Pär Bjälkebring, assistant course leader Linn Zulka.

Societal and Life-Course Perspectives on Inequalities in Aging (Karolinska Institutet)

The completely new course *Societal and Life-Course Perspectives on Inequalities in Aging* was held at Karolinska Institutet during the autumn semester. Financed by SWEAH, the course involved two workshops in Stockholm with 14 participants, of which all but one were affiliated to SWEAH.

"While things look good generally, there are larger differences between social classes in Sweden than in some other countries. Those who are worse off financially have worse health. In Italy, for example, one does not see such significant gaps in health later in life," says doctoral student Samantha Svärdh of Lund University and SWEAH, one of the course participants.

Photo: Private

From left to right: course leader Neda Agahi, SWEAH alumna and assistant course leader Malin Ericsson, with PhD students Giulia Lorenzon, Guo Yanfei, Jeanne Højgaard-Bøytler, Nicholas Levak, Samantha Svärdh, Erika Augustsson, David Dahlgren, Judit Staller, Emma Carlsson, Ingrid Olsson, Jonathan Mak, Roar Hermansen Østby. Not in the photo: Daniella Dinse, Lena Johansson and Linn Hedberg. Photo: David Dahlgren

Travel grants for research visits abroad

Twice a year, PhD students affiliated with SWEAH are offered the opportunity to apply for travel grants to conduct research abroad. The visit must have clear relevance to research into ageing and health. The maximum grant is SEK 30,000 for a trip in Europe and SEK 50,000 for the rest of the world. PhD students are only permitted to receive a grant twice during their affiliation period. During spring 2023, two PhD students applied successfully for travel grants from SWEAH:

Peggy Ler, a PhD student at Karolinska Institutet, was awarded SEK 50,000 to visit the University of Minnesota and attend a seminar at the Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California in the United States.

"Seen here with Professor Deborah Finkel, my co-supervisor, and Professor Margaret Gatz, one of the IGEMS consortium's PI's" (Peggy is on the right).

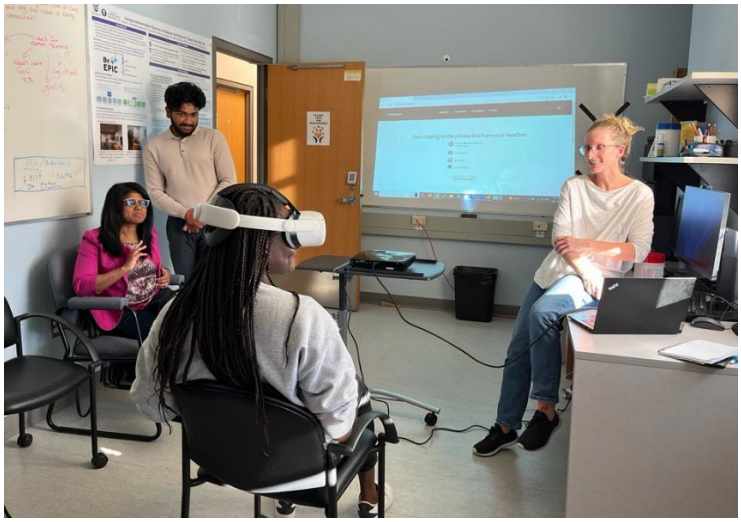
"I also visited the Leonard Davis School of Gerontology to meet Professor Eileen Crimmins, who is conducting research in the Health and Retirement Study, and Research Assistant Professor T. Em Arpawong".

Photo: Private

Aber Sharon Kagwa, a PhD student at Karolinska Institutet, was awarded SEK 29,050 to attend CAG2023, the 52nd Annual Scientific and Educational Meeting of the Canadian Association on Gerontology, in Toronto, Canada, in late October, where she gave a lecture on the first study in her doctoral thesis.

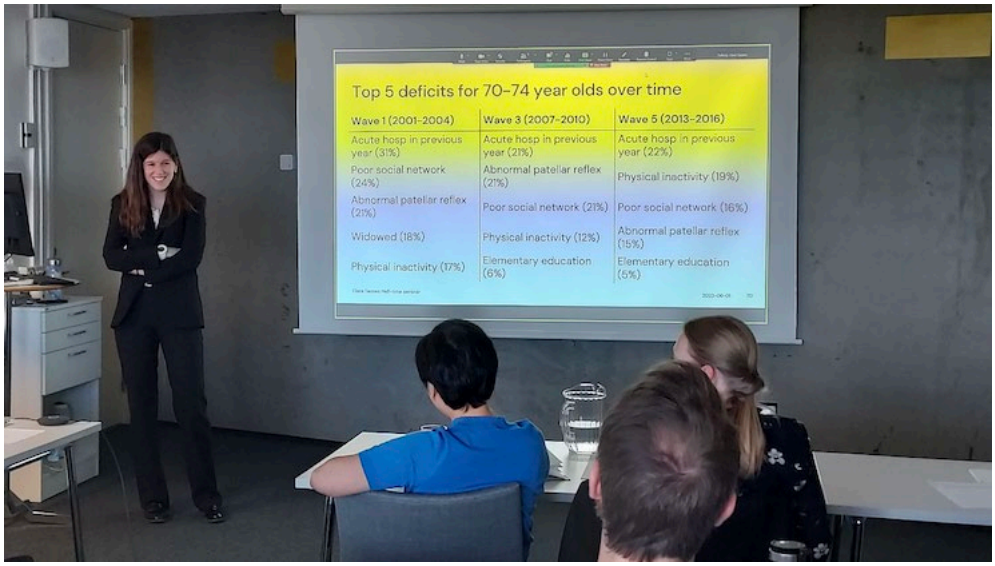
"This is me during a visit to the BeEPIC programme at CARE Lab at Western University, with my host Dr. Marie Savundranayagam and her research team. I was given a demonstration of BeEPIC-VR, an innovative, evidence-informed and theoretically-grounded person-centred communication intervention for frontline care providers who work with people with dementia."

Photo: Private



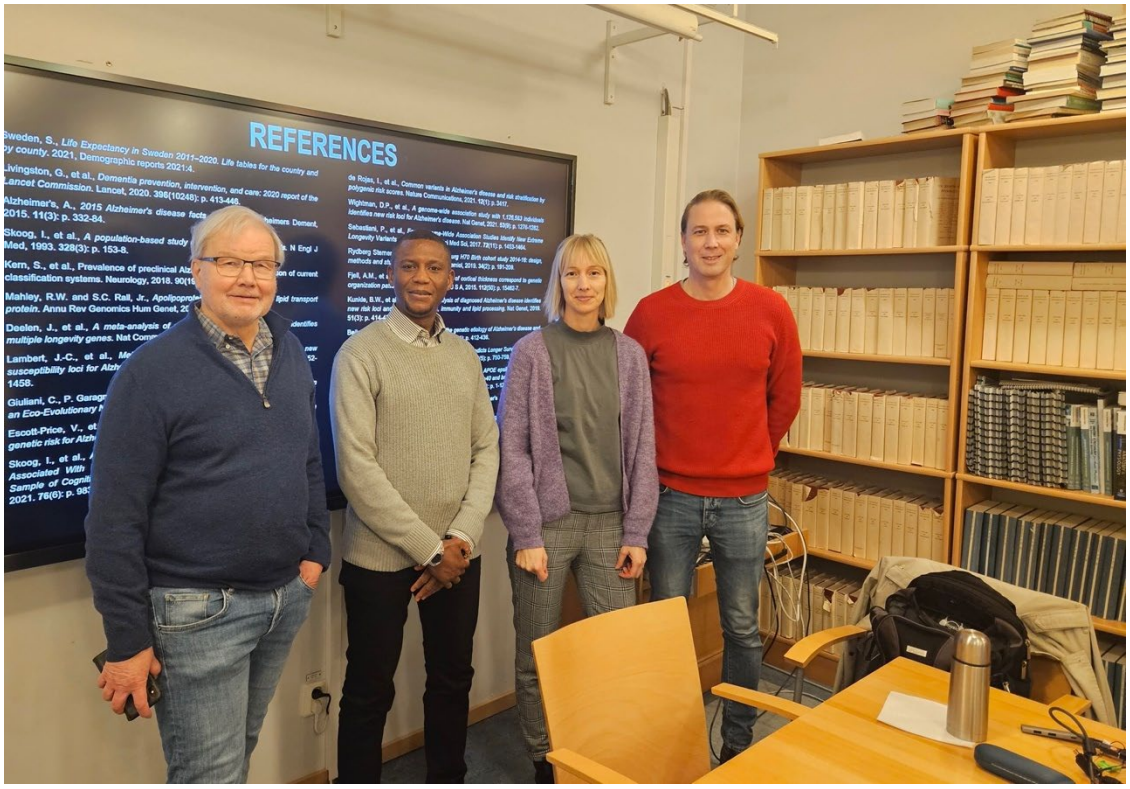
Mid-way reviews and defences of doctoral theses 2023

On 1 June 2023, Clare Tazzeo of Karolinska Institutet held a mid-way review *Understanding frailty in older adults to promote longer and healthier lives*.



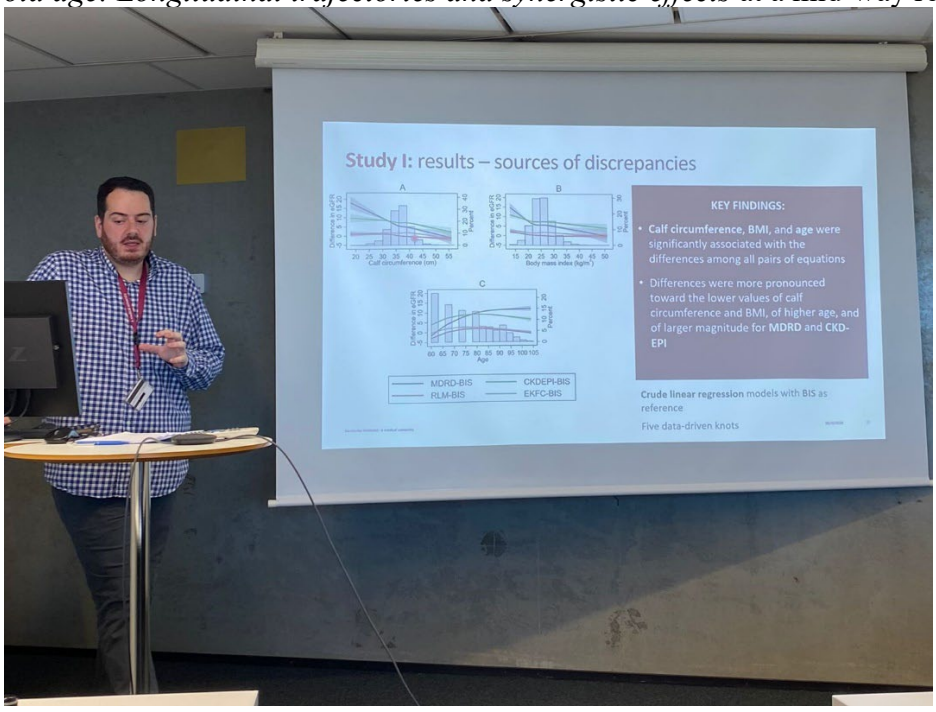
Clare Tazzeo. Photo: Private

Nazib M Seidu of the University of Gothenburg presented *Genetic factors and neurobiological markers in relation to ageing, with a specific focus on longevity and dementia* at a mid-way review on 14 December 2023.



Nazib M Seidu and his supervisors Anna Zettergren (UGOT), Eric Westman (KI) and Ingmar Skoog (UGOT). Photo: Private

Giorgi Beridze of Karolinska Institutet presented his work on *Multimorbidity and kidney function in old age: Longitudinal trajectories and synergistic effects* at a mid-way review on 9 October 2023.



Giorgi Beridze. Photo: Mariam Kirvalidze

Defences of doctoral theses

During 2023, we congratulated eight PhD students who completed their time at SWEAH by successfully defending their theses (see links to each thesis below). SWEAH acknowledges all defences with a bouquet and a post on the graduate school's Facebook page, calendar and, usually, an interview on the website. A few quotes:

"I've often thought to myself: 'this readmission was avoidable if we had only gone through the drug list thoroughly or had better informed the patient about their medication'".

Read the complete interview in Vetenskap & Hälsa

Maria Glans, a clinical pharmacist at Central Hospital Kristianstad, defended her doctoral thesis in May 2023 after researching hospital readmission among older adults.

Jonathan Mak (middle) defended his thesis on genetics and biomarkers of frailty at Karolinska Institutet on 16 November 2023. Read an interview here. Photo: Private

"I'm extremely grateful to all of my supervisors and collaborators for their guidance, feedback and willingness to share their expertise with me over recent years. Learning from other leading researchers in the field of ageing through SWEAH also increased my knowledge and brought home the importance of interdisciplinary work."

In early December 2023, Amelie Lindh Mazya defended her thesis *Assessment of frailty in old people with multimorbidity* at Karolinska Institutet.

Photo: Private

Links to doctoral theses defended in 2023

Assessment of frailty in old people with multimorbidity
Amelie Lindh Mazya, Karolinska Institutet

Genetics and biomarkers of frailty: Towards individualized management of the frailty syndrome
Jonathan Mak, Karolinska Institutet

Cardiovascular health, orthostatic hypotension, and cognitive aging
Xin Xia, Karolinska Institutet

Dementia and learning the use of tablet computers in joint activities
Elias Ingebrand, Linköping University

Readmission to hospital within 30 days of discharge - in older adults
Maria Glans, Lund University

In Research on Ageing and Health, Lund University
Joakim Frögren, Lund University

Alcohol and aging: A multimethod study on heterogeneity and multidimensionality
Wossenseged Birhane Jemberie, Umeå University

Older and feeling unsafe? Unravelling the role of perceived unsafety in the well-being of older adults residing in senior apartments
Nadezhda Golovchanova, Örebro University

Alumni and postdoctoral fellows

Engagement from SWEAH alumni

As part of the graduate school's programme to support postdoctoral career development, six postdocs were offered hourly paid duties with SWEAH during 2023. The purpose of doing so is to provide graduates of SWEAH with opportunities to acquire further qualifications by teaching in the third cycle, which is part of SWEAH's long-term objective to train future research leaders. Alumni collaborate with one another and are guided in their duties by members of the graduate school's management. SWEAH also benefits greatly from the engagement of postdocs in the continuous development of the organisation.

Postdocs with assignments at SWEAH in 2023:

- Annikki Arola, Umeå University, assistant study coordinator, 80 hours over the course of the year.
- Christine Etzerodt Laustsen, Kristianstad University, PhD student activities coordinator and member of the pedagogical group, 90 hours over the course of the year.
- Mahwish Naseer, University of Gothenburg, convenor of the planning group for the SWEAH Conference, 90 hours over the course of the year.
- Linn Zulka, University of Gothenburg, assistant course leader, 40 hours during the course.
- Malin Ericsson, Karolinska Institutet, assistant course leader, 40 hours during the course.
- Frida Andréasson, Linköping University, member of the board of SWEAH.

SAIN alumni network

SAIN had 47 members during 2023. The network is coordinated by Jönköping University. In 2023, the SAIN Steering Group consisted of:

- Charlotta Nilsen, (coordinator of SAIN and convenor of the Steering Group), Jönköping University, Stockholm University and Karolinska Institutet.
- Malin Ericsson, Karolinska Institutet
- Catharina Melander, Luleå University of Technology.
- Caroline Hasselgren, University of Gothenburg.
- Robin Jonsson, University of Gothenburg

Like last year, the SAIN Reference Group consisted of:

- Professor Merril Silverstein, Syracuse University, USA
- Professor Susanne Iwarsson, Lund University, SWEAH coordinator
- Professor Liat Ayalon, Bar-Ilan University, Israel
- Professor Deborah Finkel, Jönköping University, Indiana University Southeast and University of Southern California, USA
- Professor Emeritus Boo Johansson, University of Gothenburg
- Professor Nancy Pedersen, Karolinska Institutet
- Associate Professor Martin Hyde, Swansea University, United Kingdom
- Professor Lena Dahlberg, Dalarna University and Karolinska Institutet

Over the course of the year, the SAIN network arranged an alumni meeting and writing workshop in Jönköping from 8–10 May. A total of 16 participants took part, hearing presentations by, among others, Professor Susanne Iwarsson ("Leading yourself and others – challenges, opportunities and strategies") and Professor Deborah Finkel ("Interdisciplinary and collaborative grant applications"). August-prize nominated author and journalist Magnus Linton lectured on popular science writing.

The network has had several online members' meetings during 2023. In one SAIN webinar, Martin Hyde spoke on the subject "What are editors looking for? Insights into publishing in gerontology journals".

Members have also had the opportunity to attend smaller writing seminars held around the country.

Nilla Andersson, Annikki Arola and Emilia Viklund met in Umeå on 26 and 27 October to start work on a joint grant application. Photo: Private

SAIN members at a writing workshop in Jönköping, May 2023.

A strategic plan, including an activity plan and communications plan, was prepared by the SAIN Steering Group. The Steering Group also created a graphic profile for SAIN and distributed five newsletters to members. SAIN also created social media accounts on Facebook and X.

One SAIN project was funded by Forte and the Swedish Research Council (main applicant Charlotta Nilsen, co-applicants including Caroline Hasselgren, Martin Hyde and Deborah Finkel).

Members of SAIN have been invited to lecture on courses arranged by fellow members, including Hanna Mac Innes, who lectured on a course at the invitation of Malin Ericsson at Karolinska Institutet. During the year, a collaboration was also entered into between SAIN and the Swedish Gerontology Society (SGS), National Network for Elderly Research in Social Sciences and the British Society of Gerontology (BSG). Together with the SGS and BSG, SAIN will arrange a panel discussion on 11 June 2024 as a preconference event for junior researchers attending the Nordic Congress of Gerontology in Stockholm. On the same day at the Nordic Congress of Gerontology, SAIN will also arrange a cooperation meeting with the SGS and National Network for Elderly Research in Social Sciences.

The postdoc course *From Junior to Senior Researcher in Research on Ageing and Health*, Lund University

This course is a further development of the course first offered in 2016 and then again in 2019. The current iteration started in September 2023 with a two-day workshop held at Lund University attended by twelve participants, six of whom were SWEAH alumni and five postdocs from the United Kingdom. The course was led and examined by Professor Susanne Iwarsson. Lecturers included Professor Judith Phillips from the University of Stirling in Scotland. The course will continue and end in spring 2024.

Activities during the workshop in the newly opened Forum Medicum at Lund University. Photo: Stina Elfverson

SWEAH's conference in Norrköping 21–22 November

The scientific conference on ageing and health arranged in Norrköping from 21–22 November 2023 by SWEAH in collaboration with all 13 partner universities proved to be an exciting and rewarding event. Norrköping's local newspaper *Folkbladet* interviewed Professor Susanne Iwarsson at the conference.

The conference attracted 80 delegates for a programme including presentations by two keynote speakers, a series of other presentations, poster exhibitions, workshops, a reception and a joint dinner.

Lars Liljedahl, director of Härnösand Municipality and external member of the SWEAH board comments on his participation in the conference: *"The value for me personally is in improving my knowledge of where the frontier of research on ageing and health currently is, so that I can reach well-informed decisions about our strategic direction, interconnections and priorities in our own municipality. I am aware of the benefits and, if time permits, my responsibility to contribute my own experience of work on the ground in municipalities as a SWEAH board member, thus helping SWEAH to develop optimally as an organisation."*

Among other things, the following articles were published on the SWEAH website prior to, during and after the conference:

- Voices from the SWEAH Conference 2023
- They created this year's SWEAH Conference: "A chance you must take"
- Stina's tips in preparation for the conference

The event was also the main story in SWEAH's December 2023 newsletter.

Workshop during SWEAH's conference in Norrköping. Photo: Photo: Lill Eriksson

Outreach activities

Press activities

Prior to the SWEAH Conference in November 2023, our new communications officer conducted an extensive information campaign, including articles about the conference on the website and updates on the social media platforms Facebook and LinkedIn before, during and after the event. She also dealt with the local, national and trade press in conjunction with sending out invitations to journalists. This resulted in articles published both online and in newspapers, including a feature interview in Norrköping's local newspaper *Folkbladet* and an opinion piece in *Dagens Samhälle* by SWEAH's coordinator Professor Susanne Iwarsson, chair of the board Ethel Forsberg and Lars Liljedahl, director of Härnösand Municipality and external member of the SWEAH board.

Debatt

"Forskning om åldrande tas sällan till vara"

Beslutsfattare, vård och socialtjänst bör ta hjälp av forskningsresultat om ett åldrandevänligt samhälle, skriver debattörer från Nationella forskarskolan om åldrande och hälsa (Sweah).

Publicerad: 30 november 2023, 05:20

Det här är opinionsmaterial

Åsikterna som uttrycks här står skribenten/skribenterna för.

Folkbladet

Vinterkyla och tomten på plats – på julmarknaden

Hittades död för en månad sedan – är inte identifierad

Professorn: Ställ om för ett hållbart åldrande

Kvinna funnen död i lägenhet – en häktad

Lokalt stöd för Åkesson

Beställ Folkbladet till din skolklass

NYHETER

Skickade tolv bilder på sin penis till exsambon

"Samhället behöver ställa om för hållbart åldrande"

"There's more talk than action."

SWEAH's management in the newspaper *Dagens Samhälle* in November 2023

Greater focus on social media

In autumn 2023, SWEAH decided to close its account on X, formally Twitter, due to the controversial developments taking place there. As a consequence, SWEAH has intensified the presence on remaining social media platforms, Facebook and LinkedIn, resulting in a 55 per cent increase in visitors to our Facebook page compared to 2022. By the end of 2023, SWEAH had 300 followers, 76 per cent of whom were women. SWEAH had 140 followers on LinkedIn, a quarter of whom lived in the Stockholm region. Most of these, 80 per cent, work in research and education, while 7 per cent work in the media.

SWEAH on LinkedIn.

Digital newsletter

SWEAH's newsletter covers current activities at the graduate school, recent articles from the website, upcoming defences of doctoral theses and other matters of interest. As in the previous year, the newsletter was published three times during 2023. You can visit the archive here.

Media profile

SWEAH also contributed a paid spread in the year's final issue of *Äldre i Centrum*, Sweden's only popular science journal dedicated to older adults and ageing, to announce upcoming courses and programmes and highlight the work of researchers and affiliated PhD students:

Helén Dellkvist, a PhD student at Blekinge Institute of Technology, on her passion for life stories.

An interview with Nicholas Levak, a PhD student at Karolinska Institutet.

An interview with Maria Glans of Lund University published in *Vetenskap & Hälsa*, a popular science journal dedicated to medicine and health, on reducing readmissions to hospitals with clearer information on drugs.

An interview with Markus Falk Johansson of Dalarna University on the negative health effects of caring for a partner with dementia published in national newspaper *Expressen* on 27 December 2023.

An article by SWEAH's PhD student Glenn Möllergren and his colleague at Lund University's School of Social Work Elisabeth Carlstedt on the potential undesirable effects of the Swedish Association for Senior Citizens' new home care services index, published in the popular science journal *Äldre i Centrum* on 20 March 2023.

SWEAH coordinator Susanne Iwarsson and SWEAH's recently appointed (2024) study coordinator Steven Schmidt also contributed to the following news articles:

"Worldclass mobility research in the lab", *Äldre i Centrum*, 1 December 2023
"They are creating a better future for the elderly", *Senioren*, #8 2023, pages 22–25 and online, 8 December 2023
"Difficult choices when caring for elderly addicts", *Senioren*, 24 November 2023

Participation in Almedalen Week and the GSA Annual Scientific Meeting in Florida

At the invitation of Lund University, on 29 June 2023, Professor Susanne Iwarsson attended Almedalen Week on the island of Gotland, where she debated with Cecilia Winberg, chair of the Swedish Association of Physiotherapists (who has previously undertaken assignments on behalf of SWEAH), Lars Liljedahl and Artur Ringart (respectively current and former external members of the SWEAH board) on the topic of what makes a real difference to the health and welfare of older adults.

Video from Almedalen Week

Published on Facebook.

SWEAH coordinator Professor Susanne Iwarsson and external board member Lars Liljedahl, director of Härnösand Municipality, debated during Almedalen Week.
Photo: Tove Smeds

Most of SWEAH's partner universities were represented by PhD students and researchers at the annual conference of the Gerontological Society of America (GSA), which was held in Tampa, Florida, 8–12 November 2023, including doctoral students David Dahlgren and Erik Eriksson from Lund University, who exhibited posters and gave an oral presentation respectively.

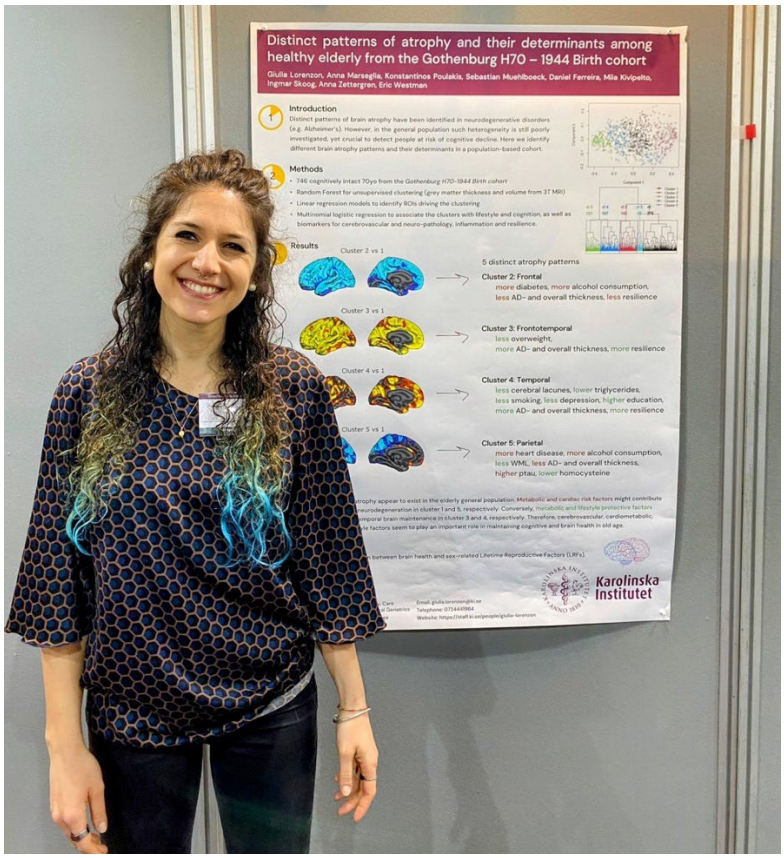
Some of the many SWEAH-affiliated researchers who attended the GSA 2023 Annual Scientific Meeting in the United States. Photo: Susanne Iwarsson

PhD students and popular science

SWEAH's PhD students have presented their research as **popular science** on many occasions during 2023:

- Emma Simonsson, a PhD student at Umeå University, published her first article on high-intensity training for older adults, which was the topic of an entire segment on Sveriges Radio's science channel, Vetenskapsradion, which included an interview with Emma's supervisor.

- Giulia Lorenzon of Karolinska Institutet was awarded second place for her presentation at the Researchers' Grand Prix in Stockholm on 29 September.



Giulia Lorenzon (seen here at the StratNeuro Retreat in Djurönäset, Gothenburg, 29–30 May 2023, where she exhibited posters.
Photo: Private

- Glenn Möllergren of Lund University's School of Social Work, presented his paper *The use of home care as a form of work* at 2023 Transforming Care Conference at the University of Sheffield in England.

- Lena Johansson of Örebro University participated in a seminar at the healthcare forum *Vårdarenan* in Stockholm on 18–19 April 2023 on continuing professional development in healthcare settings.

Lena Johansson Photo: Private

SWEAH affiliated PhD students have also participated in more traditional scientific conferences:

- In June, Jeanne Højgaard-Bøytler of the School of Social Work at Lund University gave the popular science presentation *Care As Harm Reduction? Providing Eldercare for People with Substance Misuse and Complex Needs* at the XX ISA World Congress of Sociology.

Jeanne Højgaard-Bøytler Photo: Carolina Nordlinder

Research grants, prizes and awards

Many SWEAH affiliates, including PhD students, supervisors and alumni, have been awarded research grants and prizes over the course of the year. See below for a selection:

Aber Sharon Kagwa, student at Karolinska Institutet, Rebecca Baxter, postdoc at Linnaeus University and Mahwish Naseer, postdoc at Karolinska Institutet, were awarded travel grants by Forte to attend the Summer Program in Aging (SPA 2023) on the theme *Longer-living older adults: Multidisciplinary approaches to a growing area of research on aging*. The programme was arranged by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) at the Nova Scotia Centre on Aging from 5–9 June 2023.

During the year, **Abigail Dove, PhD student at Karolinska Institutet**, was awarded the following research grants:

- SEK 10,000 from the Sigurd and Elsa Golje Memorial Foundation, which is administered by law firm Lindhés Advokatbyrå, for the project *Unravelling the Relationship Between Cardiometabolic Disease and Cognitive and Brain Aging*.
- SEK 50,000 from the Dementia Foundation for the project *Unravelling the Relationship Between Cardiometabolic Disease and Cognitive and Brain Aging*.
- SEK 100,000 from the Alzheimer's Foundation for the project *Pathways underlying the co-occurrence of cardiometabolic diseases and dementia: linking genetic/metabolic biomarkers to brain pathology and brain structure*.

Lund University postdoc and **SWEAH alumnus Wenqian Xu's** research project *Ageing without Children*, was awarded an international postdoctoral grant of SEK 3.45 million for the period 2023–2025 by the Swedish Research Council.

Daniella Dinse, PhD student at Kristianstad University, was awarded SEK 25,000 from the Ragnhild and Einar Lundström Memorial Foundation, which is administered by law firm Lindhés Advokatbyrå, for her doctoral degree project *Person-centred Health-promoting Interventions for Seniors in Municipal Organisations*.

In 2024, **Ingrid Olsson, PhD student at Umeå University**, was awarded SEK 70,000 from the Erik och Anne Marie Detlof Foundation for the project *Healthy Aging Despite Long-term Illness: Measuring and Understanding Self-care Ability in People Over 70 – the SWE PRISM-CC Study*.

Giulia Lorenzon, PhD student at Karolinska Institutet, was awarded SEK 60,000 from the foundation Stiftelsen För Gamla Tjänarinnor for the research project *Differential Response to AChE-I in MRI Subtypes of MCI and AD*.

During 2023, **Emma Simonsson, PhD student at Umeå University**, was awarded three separate grants for the final sub-study based on the Umeå HIT Study, which is part of her doctoral thesis. The sub-study focuses on the effects of training on the brain's function and structure. The grants were for:

- SEK 70,000 from the Eric and Anne Marie Detlof Foundation;
- SEK 30,000 from the Borgerskapets i Umeå Research Foundation; and
- SEK 100,000 from the Dementia Foundation.

Follow-up

The course evaluations and surveys distributed by the graduate school's management after each completed course and activity provide an important foundation for following up and developing operations at SWEAH. Each affiliated PhD student is also required to submit a written annual report of their learning activities in the field of ageing and health, not only at SWEAH but also in their other third-cycle studies at the higher education institution to which they have been admitted.

Activity Report 2023

All 42 doctoral students affiliated to SWEAH during autumn semester 2023 have submitted a written activity report. These reports are very consistent with previous years and show good attendance, good rates of study and progress, as well as high appreciation for SWEAH's activities. Activity reports reveal that many doctoral students are making the anticipated good progress in their third-cycle studies. Eight PhD students plan to defend their theses in 2024.

Of the 40 PhD students who as of the end of 2023 were yet to defend their theses, 24 had completed course requirements within the SWEAH Core Curriculum. This means that the students had fulfilled the requirements for one or two courses (at least one being a theory course) during their affiliation, depending on how long they had been affiliated. The remaining 16 students have until their defence to complete course requirements. Eight students had also taken other courses in the specialisation ageing and health. The PhD student day arranged by SWEAH at Umeå University was attended by 18 PhD students, while 25 attended the SWEAH Conference in Norrköping.

As in previous years, the comments of PhD students on the benefits of affiliation to SWEAH are highly consistent. Many comments deal with the importance and value of feeling part of a national network of PhD students. In this regard, a couple of students specifically mention SWEAH's activities. They also appreciate one another's creative energy, certain financial support and contacts with senior researchers from different universities, and underline the importance of being able to teach on the graduate school's courses. Many mention that contacts made through SWEAH have granted access to research that they were otherwise unaware of, and that they have already begun collaborating with students or researchers at other universities. This year's courses on the SWEAH Core Curriculum received extremely positive comments, with several mentioning the in-depth insights into the subject provided by the course *Societal and Life-Course Perspectives on Inequalities in Ageing.* As SWEAH arranged its own conference during the year, this activity was mentioned by many of the students. Everyone who chose to comment on the conference expresses considerable appreciation and emphasised how valuable it was, both scientifically and in terms of networking and social contacts. While the reports contain no negative comments, one PhD student wrote that their only participation was in SWEAH's introductory meeting for new students, although they gave no reason for this.

The following quotes exemplify the content of the individual reports:

- "The course at KI was educational and I expanded my network, which can only benefit my future career in the field..."
- "The courses have broadened my perspective on my doctoral thesis project and helped me achieve my research goals..."
- "The opportunity to present at the conference and disseminate my research; to establish contacts; deepen my knowledge within my own field..."
- "The first chance to present my work as popular science..."
- "Thanks to SWEAH, I was better prepared for my mid-way review. I have also maintained contact with doctoral students I met through SWEAH activities, which improved my experience of being a doctoral student."
- "I was able to try being a moderator at the SWEAH Conference, which was educational..."

Finances

The funds at SWEAH's disposal for 2023 were largely used in accordance with the budget adopted by the board. Thanks to a grant from Forte for holding the 2023 SWEAH Conference, as well as income from course fees from external participants in the postdoctoral course, our accounts show a surplus of approximately SEK 600,000 for the year. This is in addition to the balance carried over from 2022, meaning an opening balance of approximately SEK 1.4 million for 2024. This surplus will benefit SWEAH's PhD students and alumni in the form of, among other things, additional activities and greater opportunities for travel and course grants.

Table 2. National graduate school, comparison between budget and results up to an including 31 December 2023

Income	**Budget 2023 (SEK thousand)**	**Follow-up 1/2023–12/2023**
Income, cofinancing model SWEAH	3,215	3,415
Opening balance carried over from 2022	797	797
SWEAH Conference grant, FORTE		300
Income from postdoc course		90
Total income	**4,012**	**4,602**
Costs		
Coordinator 30%	497	483
Research administrator 65%	453	421
Study coordinator 40%	398	362
Quality assurance and development 2%	30	30
Board fees	60	61
Postdoctoral assignments	160	124
Total management, administration and teaching costs	**1,599**	**1,481**
Communications officer 25%	201	171
Communication and marketing	55	28
Total communication costs	**256**	**199**
SWEAH course UoG spring 23	35	15
SWEAH course KI autumn 23	35	17
Doctoral student activities (introduction, seminars, doctoral days)	150	36
Other operating costs (not associated with specific activities)	120	40
SWEAH Conference	300	281
Conference participation	100	8
International research exchange	200	57
SWEAH LU travel pot	25	19
Postdoctoral network (SAIN)	100	30
Postdoctoral course	275	52
Total operational costs	**1,340**	**555**
Indirect costs 23%	719	514
Rent	65	65
Total costs	**3,979**	**2,814**
Annual surplus/deficit	**-764**	**601**
Opening balance + income – costs	**34**	**1,398**

SWEAH

SWEDISH NATIONAL GRADUATE SCHOOL ON AGEING AND HEALTH

From 2014 to 2021, the Swedish National Graduate School on Ageing and Health (SWEAH) was funded by the Swedish Research Council. Since 1 January 2022, SWEAH has been funded by a consortium of 13 Swedish higher education institutions. SWEAH's mission is to contribute knowledge about aging and health, with particular consideration for the complexity of aging in the society of today and tomorrow.

The graduate school continuously develops and establishes a core curriculum for affiliated doctoral students, as well as a range of open courses and other activities. By the end of 2023, 138 doctoral students had been affiliated to the graduate school, 68 of whom had defended their thesis.

An interdisciplinary and sustainable graduate school contributing to making Sweden and the world better for ageing.