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LUNDS UNIVERSITET
Medicinska fakulteten

SWEAH
SWEDISH NATIONAL GRADUATE SCHOOL ON AGEING AND HEALTH

Annual Report 2025

Swedish National Graduate School on Ageing and Health

Doctoral students and mentors attend a writing retreat during the doctoral student days in Lund, April 2025.
Photo: Lill Eriksson

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Annual Report 2025

Summary

During 2025, the Swedish National Graduate School on Ageing and Health (SWEAH) included 13 partner universities, each of which contributed funding and commitment to the graduate school's activities in accordance with the current collaborative agreement. The year was largely characterised by preparations for and implementation of the external evaluation of SWEAH that began in 2025, and by planning for the continuation of the graduate school's activities, which the evaluators strongly recommended. The Board has decided to allow more partners to join ahead of the new funding agreement planned for the period 2027–2031.

Up to and including 31 December 2025, 149 doctoral students from a wide range of disciplines had been affiliated with the graduate school for between two and four years since it was established in 2014, 88 of whom have defended their doctoral theses. During the year, SWEAH continued to arrange interdisciplinary courses focusing on ageing and health, with five of the partner universities providing courses during different semesters in different years. This meant that during 2025 two courses were offered within the SWEAH Core Curriculum. Karolinska Institutet held the "Societal and life-course perspectives on inequalities in ageing" course for the second time, while the University of Gothenburg arranged the "Gerontology – multidisciplinary and integrative perspectives on ageing" course for the fifth time. As in previous years, the graduate school has offered seminars and doctoral student days.

During the year, four alumni were appointed by SWEAH's management to roles within the graduate school, including assistant study coordinator, coordinator of external evaluation, member of the Pedagogical Working Group, assistant course leader and contributor to planning doctoral student activities.

SWEAH has continued to put a great deal of effort into supporting and maintaining a network to promote development and collaboration for affiliated doctoral students, as well as postdoctoral fellows, supervisors and other interested researchers at our partner universities. The most extensive collaboration project to date between SWEAH and a Swedish municipality – Härnösand – was also launched during the year.

Management

SWEAH's partner universities

As in previous years, the graduate school had 13 partner universities in 2025:

- 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. In 2025, the focus was primarily on the external evaluation of the graduate school's activities and the initiation of discussions regarding a renewed collaborative agreement for the period 2027–2031.

Board

The Board continued to be composed of a chairperson, a deputy chairperson and nine members. The chairperson, deputy chairperson and external members are appointed for a two- plus one-year term, while members representing the partner universities and alumni are appointed for a two-year term. Doctoral student representatives participate in the work of the Board until they defend their thesis or choose to step down.

Members of the SWEAH Board in 2025:

Ethel Forsberg	chairperson
Lars Liljedahl	deputy chairperson
Marianne Rundström	external member
Stig Ålund	external member
Marie Elf	partner representative, Dalarna University
Tove Harnett	partner representative, Lund University
Zarina Nahar Kabir	partner representative, Karolinska Institutet
Lisbeth Kristiansen	partner representative, Mid Sweden University
Mahwish Naseer	alumni representative, University of Gothenburg
Jerry Norlin	doctoral student representative, Dalarna University
Samantha Svärdh	doctoral student representative, Lund University

Members of the SWEAH Board, from left: Zarina Nahar Kabir, Stig Ålund, Mahwish Naseer, Jerry Norlin, Samantha Svärdh, Lars Liljedahl, Marianne Rundström, Ethel Forsberg and Lisbeth Kristiansen (Marie Elf and Tove Harnett are not pictured). Photo: Lill Eriksson

Professor Susanne Iwarsson, the graduate school's coordinator, has been rapporteur to the Board. Study coordinator Steven Schmidt and finance officer Åsa Olsson 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 the board meetings. The graduate school's communications officer has participated in the board meetings.

The Board met on three occasions during the year: twice digitally via Zoom and once in person in Sundsvall, where the majority of members attended. Key issues for the Board during the year have included planning for and carrying out a self-assessment and an external evaluation of the graduate school's activities to ensure its continued operation once the current agreement expires after 2026, deciding on and monitoring the budget, and recruiting new doctoral students.

To coincide with the board meeting in Sundsvall, a workshop was held at which the Board's members and the graduate school's management jointly analysed the results from the external evaluation and laid the groundwork for reviewing the graduate school's strategic plan.

The graduate school's management and administration

During 2025, the graduate school's management continued to consist of Professor Susanne Iwarsson, coordinator (30% of a full-time position), Associate Professor Steven Schmidt, study coordinator (40%), Stina Elfverson, research administrator (65%), and Lill Eriksson, communications officer (25%). Elfverson was on leave of absence from October 2024 until March 2025. Her work was partly covered by Eriksson, who increased her working hours during that time

and also worked 25% as acting research administrator. Research administrator Sigrid Svensson (Lund University) also assisted with a number of administrative tasks during this period.

SWEAH's management: research administrator Stina Elfverson, study coordinator Steven Schmidt, coordinator Susanne Iwarsson and research communicator Lill Eriksson. Photo: Samantha Svärdh

The Pedagogical Working Group

SWEAH's Pedagogical Working Group is responsible for pedagogical issues, quality enhancement and evaluation, and is chaired by study coordinator Steven Schmidt (convener). Members of the working group during 2025 included Dr Lena Dafgård (Dalarna University), an expert in teaching and learning in higher education, Professor Håkan Jönson (Lund University) and SWEAH alumna Ana Luiza Moraes (Blekinge Institute of Technology) 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 met digitally on four occasions during the year with those responsible for SWEAH's doctoral student activities and courses, in order to support the ongoing development of high-quality educational activities. A new co-opted member, Søren Smedegaard Bengtsen from Aarhus University in Denmark, is an expert in higher education pedagogy with a specialisation in educational research and has supported the development of pedagogical research based on SWEAH's operations.

During 2025, the Pedagogical Working Group continued to coordinate the range of courses offered by SWEAH to maintain and develop a consistent and high level of teaching in line with the graduate school's basic principles. A document of principles for implementing courses in the

SWEAH Core Curriculum has been drawn up as a guide for partner universities when arranging courses on behalf of SWEAH. The Pedagogical Working Group has also continued to advise management and the Board on activities such as doctoral student days, attendance at external conferences and other matters.

Doctoral students

Affiliation of doctoral students

A welcome meeting was arranged in Lund on 28 January for the eleven doctoral students joining the graduate school on 1 January 2025. All but one of them were able to attend. They had the opportunity to introduce themselves and their projects, and met with the graduate school's management who gave an introduction to SWEAH's operations. The meeting was also attended by several students who had already been active at SWEAH for a number of years, who shared their views on the graduate school's operations.

New SWEAH doctoral students in 2025

Landry Botokou	Linköping University
Farzana Rahman	Karolinska Institutet
Franziska Steffens	Karolinska Institutet
Julia Hallin	Umeå University
Stina Larsson	Linköping University
Helena Bjurbäck	Linköping University
Monika Larsson	Lund University
Anna Bergman	Kristianstad University
Mattias Antar	Linköping University
Martin Nilsson	Karolinska Institutet
Ana Sabsil López Rocha	Karolinska Institutet

As in previous years, a call for applications from doctoral students was announced in May, with a deadline of 30 September. This was the thirteenth round since the graduate school was established in 2014. Once again, SWEAH's management invited applicants to attend a digital information meeting to spread the message about the opportunity to apply to join SWEAH and to give doctoral students the chance to ask questions. By the deadline, 17 applications had been received from students enrolled at nine of SWEAH's partner universities. Six experts in two groups were recruited from senior researchers within SWEAH to assess and rank the applicants based on the assessment criteria previously established by the Board. At the board meeting on 26 November, the Board decided to admit 15 doctoral students from 1 January 2026. The graduate school now has a total of 64 doctoral students, a record number for SWEAH. This bodes very well for discussions with the partner universities regarding a new co-funding agreement for 2027.

In order to join SWEAH, applicants must be a doctoral student working on a thesis project of relevance to ageing and health at one of SWEAH's partner universities. Applicants must also complete an application procedure that is carried out each year. The deadline for applications is 30 September, for admission on 1 January the following year. To be eligible, doctoral students must have completed no more than half of their third-cycle studies. Applicants are required to give their reasons for wanting to join SWEAH, and their supervisor must certify that the doctoral student meets the conditions for committing and contributing to the interdisciplinary learning environment. Applications are then reviewed by senior researchers involved with SWEAH, who assess the scientific quality, the relevance to ageing and health, the interdisciplinary potential of

each doctoral project, the applicant's qualifications and motivations, and the potential to expand SWEAH's knowledge base and disciplinary breadth.

The aim is that SWEAH should always have around 50 active doctoral students. The number of new doctoral students affiliated each year depends partly on how many are already affiliated with the graduate school. The number of affiliated doctoral students decreases over the course of the year as they defend their theses. At the beginning of the year, 59 doctoral students were affiliated with the graduate school. Ten of them defended their theses during 2025 (see page 14), and 49 doctoral students were therefore affiliated at the end of the year (Table 1, page 9). An additional thesis was defended by former SWEAH doctoral student Julie Johannesson, who completed her doctoral studies with a licentiate degree in 2018.

At the start of the year, newly affiliated doctoral students and SWEAH's management met in Lund for the first time. Photo: Lill Eriksson

What does being a doctoral student in SWEAH involve?
Doctoral students affiliated with 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 with SWEAH (see page 12 for more about courses), as determined by the affiliation agreement. They also agree to participate actively in and contribute to doctoral student days, which are arranged once per semester on various in-depth themes of relevance to research within the field of ageing and health. Affiliation with SWEAH brings access to a wide and active network, providing contacts that can lead to collaboration within doctoral students' own research fields or interdisciplinarily.

Thanks to SWEAH's 13 partner universities, doctoral students gain an excellent overview of current research within the field of ageing and health in Sweden. They get to know not only each other, but also alumni and senior researchers with whom they can develop contacts and collaboration, either immediately or later on in their careers. SWEAH's website, newsletter, social media channels and mailings give affiliated doctoral students information about upcoming courses

and activities, both within the graduate school and at all the partner universities. SWEAH is also an important communication channel for doctoral students' own research findings.

Table 1. Doctoral students affiliated with the Swedish National Graduate School on Ageing and Health (SWEAH), 31 December 2025 (N=49).

Round/ year	Name	Research subject	Higher education institution
7/2020	Jacques Shebehe	Medicine	Örebro University
8/2021	Emma Carlsson	Public health; sociology	Karolinska Institutet
8/2021	Åsa Olsson	Health sciences	Karolinska Institutet
9/2022	Daniella Dinse	Health sciences	Kristianstad University
9/2022	Elin Mauritzson	Nursing science	Dalarna University
9/2022	Erika Olofsson	Nursing science	Umeå University
9/2022	Nicholas Levak	Clinical gerontology	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	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 Strålman	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	Physiotherapy	Karolinska Institutet
10/2023	Samantha Svärdh	Medical and health sciences	Lund University
11/2024	Alexandra Björk	Occupational therapy	Örebro University
11/2024	Annika Heuer	Ageing and social change	Linköping University
11/2024	Benjamin Kröger	Geriatric epidemiology and sport science	Karolinska Institutet
11/2024	Christina Casselgren	Medical science	Linköping University
11/2024	Elida Floberg	Social work	Linköping University
11/2024	Johannes Malm	Health and nursing science	Jönköping University
11/2024	Karin Högstedt	Occupational therapy	Karolinska Institutet
11/2024	Katja Anióse	Hearing rehabilitation	Linköping University
11/2024	Klara Le	Social work	Örebro University
11/2024	Linnea Körlof	Occupational therapy	Luleå University of Technology
11/2024	Madelene Törnblom	Health and nursing science	Kristianstad University
11/2024	Milos Milanovic	Demographics and sociology	Linköping University

11/2024	Pernilla Alencar Siljehag	Socio-gerontology	Karolinska Institutet
11/2024	Sakura Sakakibara	Medical epidemiology	Karolinska Institutet
11/2024	Sandra Lukic	Health sciences, care sciences	Lund University
11/2024	Sarah Nauman Ghazi	Applied health technology	Blekinge Institute of Technology
11/2024	Yuge Zhang	Epidemiology	Karolinska Institutet
12/2025	Landry Botokou	Ageing and social change	Linköping University
12/2025	Farzana Rahman	Public health	Karolinska Institutet
12/2025	Franziska Steffens	Geriatric epidemiology	Karolinska Institutet
12/2025	Julia Hallin	Occupational therapy	Umeå University
12/2025	Stina Larsson	Behavioural science, disability research	Linköping University
12/2025	Helena Bjurbäck	Social sciences	Linköping University
12/2025	Monika Larsson	Social work	Lund University
12/2025	Anna Bergman	Nursing science	Kristianstad University
12/2025	Mattias Antar	Ageing and social change	Linköping University
12/2025	Martin Nilsson	Neuroscience	Karolinska Institutet
12/2025	Ana Sabsil López Rocha	Medicine, geriatrics, gerontology and dementia	Karolinska Institutet

Doctoral student days

SWEAH arranged two doctoral student meetings during the year, held in Lund during the spring and in Falun during the autumn.

Lund, 8–10 April

The spring's doctoral student days were a dedicated writing retreat, focusing on how to write the best introductory chapter and a scientific article. Following the first day's workshop on writing an introduction to a manuscript or an introductory chapter, the doctoral students set to work on their own writing. The doctoral student days were arranged in conjunction with SWEAH's external evaluation, which enabled the evaluators to meet the doctoral students and to attend the teaching sessions.

Doctoral students Ana Sabsil López Rocha (Karolinska Institutet) and William Son Galanza (Lund University) also had the opportunity to talk about their scholarship trips to Finland and Italy respectively. SWEAH's doctoral student group at Lund University organised evening activities for the doctoral students and their mentors. A total of 24 doctoral students took part, representing nine of the 13 partner universities.
Link to a news article about the doctoral student days in Lund.

Falun, 4–5 November

The autumn's doctoral student days were held at Dalarna University's campus in Falun, and featured lectures, workshops, discussions and networking on the theme of future career paths. The doctoral students also attended a voice workshop and visited Falun Mine. A total of 20 doctoral students took part, representing nine of the 13 partner universities.
Link to a news article about the doctoral student days in Falun.

Visit to Falun Mine during the autumn's doctoral student days. Photo: Stina Elfverson

During the autumn's doctoral student days in Falun, attendees had the opportunity to think about their future careers. Photo: Stina Elfverson

Impact workshops

As part of the focus on collaborative research launched by SWEAH in 2024, the graduate school arranged two online workshops in autumn 2025 for doctoral students wanting to learn more about collaborating with various stakeholders. Ahead of the workshops, a preparatory video was produced in-house, and was published on SWEAH's website and via social media. All of SWEAH's doctoral students were invited to these workshops, and around ten of them took part. SWEAH's impact officer, researcher with collaborative assignment Oskar Jonsson, led a one-hour workshop on

16 September focusing on theory and methodology for collaboration, and a one-hour workshop with a more practical focus on 15 October. The subsequent evaluation showed that doctoral students would like more time to learn about research collaboration, with a greater focus on practical application. Link to a news article about doctoral students and the collaborative initiative.

SWEAH Core Curriculum

The SWEAH Core Curriculum provides the foundation for interdisciplinary approaches in research on ageing and health. The course offering has been gradually expanded, and from 2022 onwards it consists of five courses worth three 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 being offered in turn during autumn semesters:

- *Theories of ageing* (Lund University)
- *Gerontology – multidisciplinary and integrative perspectives on ageing* (University of Gothenburg)
- *Societal communication and impact of research on ageing and health* (Örebro University)
- *Societal and life-course perspectives on inequalities in ageing* (Karolinska Institutet)
- *Ageing and social change* (Linköping University)

The courses are open to all doctoral students within ageing and health in Sweden and internationally, with priority given to doctoral students affiliated with SWEAH. Two of the courses were offered during 2025:

Gerontology – multidisciplinary and integrative perspectives on ageing, University of Gothenburg
The course took place during the spring semester, and included two days of lectures and seminars in Gothenburg on 3–4 April. A total of 22 doctoral students took part, 16 of whom were affiliated with SWEAH.
Link to a news article about the gerontology course.

Societal and life-course perspectives on inequalities in ageing, Karolinska Institutet
The course was held during the autumn semester, with an introductory session and lectures taking place in Stockholm on 30 September–1 October. A total of nine SWEAH doctoral students from five of SWEAH's partner universities took part.

As part of the gerontology course in Gothenburg, the customary social event was organised for doctoral students and course leaders in the evening.
Photo: Pär Bjälkebring

"SWEAH's gerontology course in Gothenburg was a great help with my doctoral thesis. It gave me more insight into ageing and health from a variety of different disciplines."

SWEAH doctoral student, 2025

Travel grants for research visits abroad

Twice a year, doctoral students affiliated with SWEAH are usually offered the opportunity to apply for travel grants to carry out 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. Doctoral students can only receive a grant twice during their affiliation period. In 2025, funding for grants was only available in the spring. Three doctoral students were awarded travel grants from SWEAH in the spring call for applications:

- Pernilla A Siljehag (Karolinska Institutet), research visit to the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation in Brazil, October to December 2025, SEK 25,000 (link to a news article about the visit).

- Glenn Möllergren (Lund University), research visit to the Department of Social Work, Journalism, Public Relations and Sociology at Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu in Romania, September to November 2025, SEK 15,000 (link to news articles before (in English) and after (in Swedish) travelling).

- Ana Sabsil López Rocha (Karolinska Institutet), research visit to the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, Department of Public Health, the Lifestyles and Living Environments Unit in Finland, September 2025, SEK 10,000 (link to a news article about the visit).

Doctoral student Ana Sabsil López Rocha (Karolinska Institutet) travelled to Helsinki in September to meet researchers in her field. Photo: Private

SWEAH doctoral student Glenn Möllergren interviewed older Romanians in rural areas about home care during a two-month research visit. Photo: Private

Mid-way reviews and defences of doctoral theses 2025

Mid-way reviews

A total of 14 doctoral students carried out their mid-way reviews during 2025: Pernilla Alencar Siljehag (Karolinska Institutet), Helén Dellkvist (Blekinge Institute of Technology), Karin Högstedt (Karolinska Institutet), Jeanne Højgaard-Bøytler (Lund University), Stina Larsson (Linköping University), Klara Le (Örebro University), Sandra Lukic (Lund University), Johannes Malm (Jönköping University), Rosalind Pfaff (Karolinska Institutet), Farzana Rahman (Karolinska Institutet), Judit Staller (Mid Sweden University), Madelene Törnblom (Kristianstad University), Karolina Thörnqvist (University of Gothenburg) and Yuge Zhang (Karolinska Institutet).

Madelene Törnblom (Kristianstad University, centre) carried out her mid-way review in September. The reviewers were Anna-Karin Welmer from Karolinska Institutet and Maya Kylén from Kristianstad University. Her thesis relates to fall risk screening for older people using a wearable sensor. Photo: Private

In mid-June, SWEAH doctoral student Jeanne Højgaard-Bøytler (Lund University) carried out her mid-way review: Specialized care for older adults ageing with substance use and complex needs – On harm reduction strategies in Sweden and Denmark.
Photo: Private

SWEAH doctoral student Stina Larsson (Linköping University and the Swedish National Road and Transport Research Institute) carried out her mid-way (or, rather, 60%) review in December. Her research project studies older people as pedestrians and public transport users.
Photo: Private

Defences of doctoral theses

During 2025, eleven doctoral students successfully defended their theses and thereby completed their time at SWEAH. (See links to each thesis below.) SWEAH acknowledges all thesis defences with a bouquet of flowers, an entry on the website's calendar, a post on SWEAH's social media channels, and sometimes also a news article that is published on the graduate school's or the home university's website.

Sharon Kagwa (Karolinska Institutet, centre) defended her thesis on how relatives of people with dementia can get support. Photo: Private

During the autumn, Giorgi Beridze (Karolinska Institutet, right) defended his thesis on older people's multimorbidity and kidney health. Photo: Amaia Calderon Larrañaga

From left: Professor Birgitta Olofsson (Umeå University, examiner), Associate Professor Åsa Audulv (Umeå University, main supervisor), Professor Tanya Packer (Dalhousie University, co-author), doctoral student Ingrid Olsson (Umeå University), Associate Professor Sabine Björk (Umeå University, co-supervisor), Professor Marie Elf (Dalarna University, opponent) and Professor Ulf Isaksson (Umeå University, co-supervisor). Photo: Private

Defences of doctoral theses and links to theses 2025

Anchored or adrift? Social connection, health, and loneliness in later life
Erika Augustsson, Karolinska Institutet

Technologies Supporting Engagement in Everyday Activities in Later Life
William Son Galanza, Lund University

Frailty and nutrition in the context of ageing: Exploring dietary habits among community-dwelling older adults
Julie Johannesson, University of Gothenburg

"Let's chat": Use of mHealth in supporting family caregivers to persons with dementia
Aber Sharon Kagwa, Karolinska Institutet

How difficult can it be? Developing a self-management instrument and describing self-management difficulties of older adults living with long-term health conditions
Ingrid Olsson, Umeå University

Multimorbidity and kidney health in old age: Methodological considerations and longitudinal associations
Giorgi Beridze, Karolinska Institutet

Taking older persons seriously: Exploring personcentred and participatory approaches for fair responsibility in health and social care
Roar Hermansen Østby, University of Gothenburg

Care and financial support in ageing families: The changing shape of inequality
Isabelle Von Saenger, Karolinska Institutet

Investigating the interplay between frailty and healthcare utilization in older adults
Clare Tazzeo, Karolinska Institutet

Beyond the Years: How Sensory and Cognitive Functions in Old-Age Shape Disability, and Perspectives on Successful Aging
Andreea Badache, Örebro University

Housing policies to promote the health of a population ageing in place: Comparisons using simulation modelling
Christina Löfvendahl, Lund University

Scientific articles about SWEAH

Two original scientific articles with direct links to the graduate school's operations –Ageing in a transforming world: Insights for future research and policy from the 27th Nordic Congress of Gerontology and Well prepared yet uncertain: Experiences of the early career transition after affiliation with an interdisciplinary graduate school, 2025 – were published during the year. Authored by SWEAH alumni and senior researchers affiliated with the graduate school, these articles are concrete examples of scientific collaboration within SWEAH, in addition to the work carried out as part of the doctoral students' thesis projects.

Alumni and postdoctoral fellows

Engagement from SWEAH alumni

As part of the graduate school's programme to support the career development of SWEAH-affiliated doctoral students after thesis defence, four alumni were offered hourly paid duties during 2025 following an internal announcement. The purpose of doing so is to give SWEAH's graduates opportunities to acquire further qualifications through involvement in the management of a national graduate school, which is part of SWEAH's long-term objective to contribute towards training future research leaders. Alumni collaborate with each other and are guided in their duties by members of the graduate school's management. SWEAH also benefits greatly from the engagement of alumni in the continuous development of the organisation, in accordance with the basic principle that doctoral students and junior researchers should have a significant influence.

Alumni with assignments at SWEAH in 2025:

• Assistant study coordinator, coordinator/preparation for the evaluation of SWEAH, member of SWEAH's Pedagogical Working Group: Ana Luiza Dallora Moraes, Blekinge Institute of Technology
• Responsible for doctoral student activities: Manzur Kader, Dalarna University

• Assistant course leader: Mahwish Naseer, University of Gothenburg and Abigail Dove, Karolinska Institutet
• Members of the SWEAH Board: Mahwish Naseer, University of Gothenburg

SAIN alumni network

The SAIN network was established in 2022 by four alumni: Charlotta Nilsen, Catharina Melander, Caroline Hasselgren Bune and Malin Ericsson. During 2023–2025, the network was funded by the Kamprad Family Foundation and led by a Steering Group consisting of Robin Jonsson (Karlstad University), Caroline Hasselgren Bune (University of Gothenburg), Malin Ericsson (Karolinska Institutet) and Charlotta Nilsen (Jönköping University). Charlotta Nilsen was the network's coordinator during 2022–2025. Caroline Hasselgren Bune was the Steering Group's convener. Jönköping University was the coordinating university during this period. SAIN had a total of 52 members during the year.

During 2022–2025, SAIN had a senior advisory group consisting of internationally renowned senior researchers within the field:
• 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, UK
• Professor Lena Dahlberg, Dalarna University and Karolinska Institutet

SAIN carried out the following activities during 2025:

• Several online member meetings.

• A writing workshop in Stockholm on 9–11 April, together with the ERA network (Emerging Researchers in Ageing, UK), including three-minute 'pitches' of participants' research, networking activities, writing sessions, brainstorming sessions for joint applications, social activities and a presentation from a guest speaker, Dr Brian Beach (University College London), on the ELSA study and opportunities to use the data.

• A collaboration meeting/conference on 1 October on the subject of dignity, ageing, participation and inclusion, at which SWEAH researchers and alumni gave presentations. The meeting was arranged in collaboration with the City of Gothenburg, the Swedish Gerontological Society and Jönköping University. Find out more about the conference and watch the presentations (in Swedish) at www.goteborg.se/medaldernsratt.

• Member meeting in Stockholm on 2 December at Karolinska Institutet. This included a presentation from the steering group and a summary of the 2022–2025 financial years. The senior advisory group participated online, and one of their representatives attended in person. SAIN's members held joint discussions on the subject of "Job insecurity and psychological well-being in academia as a junior researcher – what role can SAIN have in providing peer support?".

• Two SAIN webinars: 25 February with Sonja Bjelobaba, Uppsala University, with the title "Ethical aspects of using GenAI in research", and 20 November with James Lees, Karlstad University, with the title "Understanding impact".

• Members have had the opportunity to organise their own smaller writing workshops. Nine members did so during the year, in Skellefteå (March), Stockholm (May and October), Norrtälje (June and August), Gothenburg (September), Lund (September), Kristianstad (September) and Varberg (November).

• Eleven steering group meetings, of which nine took place online via Zoom and two took place in person: one in Gothenburg in February, and one in Stockholm in April.

SAIN's collaboration meeting in Gothenburg, on the subject of dignity, ageing, participation and inclusion. Photo: Robin Jonsson

Writing days and networking event with SAIN and the British network Emerging Researchers in Ageing (ERA), part of the British Society of Gerontology. Photo: Charlotta Nilsen

The magazine Äldre i Centrum included an article about SAIN's alumni activities in December 2025. The City of Gothenburg's public portal Vårt Göteborg also reported on SAIN's collaboration meeting on 1 October.

Outreach activities

Conferences and outreach activities with SWEAH's involvement

Most of SWEAH's doctoral students took part in one or more scientific conferences during the year, usually together with their supervisors.

Pernilla Alencar Siljehag (Karolinska Institutet) attended the Sixth SNAC National Retreat at Blekinge Institute of Technology in Karlskrona, where she addressed newcomers to the field of elderly care at an event organised by Stockholm Gerontology Research Center. Siljehag also gave a talk at the R&D Welfare Conference in Stockholm under the heading "The experience of applying for home care for the first time: Living in a shrinking living space".

Madelene Törnblom (Kristianstad University) gave a poster presentation on "Fall risk screening using a wearable sensor – simple, fun, but also a cause for concern" at the Research Platform Health in Collaboration's 2025 conference: Health Throughout Life, in Kristianstad. Törnblom also gave a talk on "Wearable sensors for fall risk screening in everyday life: The experiences of older people" at Fysiala, the digital forum for physiotherapists in Sweden.

Nazib M Seidu (University of Gothenburg) gave a presentation at the International Centenarian Consortium (ICC) in Boston, USA: "The association between parental longevity and brain MRI measures in a population of 70-year-olds followed over six years: Findings from the Gothenburg H70-Study".

Stina Larsson (Linköping University) attended the Young Researcher Seminar in Bergisch Gladbach, Germany, where she gave a talk titled "I thought it was a logo". Larsson also attended VIII International Conference on Traffic and Transportation Psychology (ICTTP8), with a poster presentation, "Behavioral Impact of External HMIs on Older Pedestrians", in Curitiba, Brazil. In addition, Larsson gave a poster presentation, "Virtual Reality as a tool for road safety evaluations for elderly pedestrians", at Road Safety on 5 Continents (RS5C), in Leeds, UK.

Daniella Dinse (Kristianstad University) gave a poster presentation, "Prevalence and diversity of physical activity offered for community-dwelling older persons via meeting places in Swedish municipalities", at the 14th Nordic Public Health Conference, Gothenburg.

Klara Le (Örebro University) attended the conference Sexuality and Social Work in Slovenia, and gave a talk titled "The geography of fear".

Landry Botokou (Linköping University) gave an oral presentation at the International Sociology Association 5th Forum of Sociology in Rabat, Morocco, titled "Exploring the Effect of Unemployment on the Future Perspective of the European Aging Workforce".

Glenn Möllergren (Lund University) attended several conferences during the year:
ECSWR, Munich, presentation: "The unrecognized partners in home care provision: How older adults engage in unintended co-production"
NaPSa, Gävle, workshop: "Who has the responsibility? On the division of roles in local Swedish care for the elderly" and the presentations "The invisible co-producers in home care: Older people's involvement in involuntary co-production" and "Balancing past and present: Using life stories in dementia care"
RSA Annual Conference Navigating Regional Transformation, Porto, presentation: "Navigating a Disparate Support System: Older Adults as the Bricoleurs of the Welfare State"
5th ISA Forum of Sociology, Rabat, presentation: "Reimagining Men in Eldercare: Shifting Roles of Male Staff in Home Care"
5th ISA Forum of Sociology, Rabat, presentation: "The Unrecognized Partners in Home Care Provision: How Older Adults Engage in Unintended Co-Production"
Un secol de sociologie în România: Metamorfoze 2025, Bucharest, presentation: "Health and Everyday Life in Old Age: Agency Manifestations Across Diverging Welfare Regimes"

Milos Milovanovic (Linköping University) gave presentations titled "Application of machine learning techniques to predict turnout rates in Sweden from demographic data" at Zurich Population Research Conference, Zurich University, and "The years left abroad: The impact of emigration on longevity in the Republic of Serbia" at the 36th REVES Conference, at Tampere University in Finland.

Yuge Zhang (Karolinska Institutet) gave a presentation titled "Does exceptional longevity reflect exceptional health resilience? A nationwide life course comparison of disease accumulation and distribution across the lifespan in centenarians and non-centenarians from the same birth cohorts in Sweden" at the 21st EuGMS Congress in Iceland.

Anna-Carin Karlsson (Kristianstad University) attended the ICN Congress in Helsinki and gave a talk titled "Ethical challenges in residential care during the pandemic – Registered nurses' and first-line managers' experience".

Monika Larsson (Lund University) attended the workshop "Who has the responsibility? On the division of roles in local Swedish care for the elderly" at the NaPSa conference at the University of Gävle.

Helena Bjurbäck (Linköping University) attended a two-day conference arranged by the Nordic Welfare Centre, WHO and the Centre for an Age-friendly Norway in Copenhagen, where she presented her doctoral project as part of the programme.

David Dahlgren (Lund University) attended the Malmö Real Estate Conference 2025 and gave a presentation: "Ageing in place or moving on? Exploring older homeowners' housing situation in the context of housing market dynamics and policy incentives".

Anna Bergman (Kristianstad University) presented a poster at the Hälsa i Samverkan conference which was arranged by her home university.

Sakura Sakakibara (Karolinska Institutet) attended the EuGMS Congress in Iceland and gave a talk titled "Trajectory of cardiometabolic disease-related hospitalizations before and after dementia diagnosis". She also gave the same talk in Stockholm at the 3rd Swedish Meeting for Alzheimer Research.

Sarah Nauman Ghazi (Blekinge Institute of Technology) presented "Wired and not tired? Internet use and sleep in older adults" at ITAP: 11th International Conference on Human Aspects of IT for the Aged Population in Gothenburg.

Nicholas Levak (Karolinska Institutet) attended the 3rd Swedish Meeting for Alzheimer Research in Stockholm, and gave a presentation titled "Latest research on medical nutrition interventions in early AD".

Jeanne Højgaard-Bøytler (Lund University) gave a presentation titled "Some may never stop drinking and using, but one becomes a person – A triangulated homecare for older adults ageing with harmful substance use and complex needs" at NaPSa (National Paper Conference in Social Work) at University of Gävle and the 5th ISA Forum of Sociology in Morocco.

Prioritised communication

The focus in 2025 was on the doctoral students' theses and activities, the evaluation of SWEAH's operations, and an advertising campaign seeking additional partners ahead of the new co-funding agreement in 2027. During the autumn, a communication initiative was also launched targeting doctoral students, led by SWEAH's researcher with collaborative assignment. (Find out more under Impact workshops on page 11.)

Throughout the year, SWEAH's communications officer has endeavoured to work in line with the graduate school's strategic plan and communication plan to disseminate news, research findings and marketing in an effective manner. As this role remains limited to 25% of a full-time position, strict priorities must constantly be set.

A focus on collaboration

The graduate school's Board decided ahead of 2024 to allocate resources to strengthen the conditions for translating research findings from SWEAH into practice, with utilisation and impact as the long-term objectives. Assistant researcher Oskar Jonsson from Lund University was the only applicant for the role, which he assumed on 1 January 2024. The resources allocated for 2024 corresponded to 20% of a full-time position, but due to Jonsson having many overlapping assignments, most of the work was instead carried out in 2025.

During the year, Jonsson has reviewed theses and been responsible for two workshops for the doctoral students. The first of these assignments involved analysing content relating to collaboration with the local community and societal impact in 77 theses submitted by doctoral students affiliated with SWEAH. The majority of these theses did not describe any collaboration. Ten theses described a certain degree of collaboration, such as initiation, planning and implementation in dialogue with collaborative partners, the use of advisory groups, and participatory and co-creation approaches. The second of these assignments involved two online workshops, which were attended by a total of eleven SWEAH-affiliated doctoral students. Jonsson's impression following these workshops is that today's doctoral students include collaborative partners as stakeholders to a greater extent and in various ways. Based on the lessons learnt from this assignment, he recommends that future doctoral courses within the broad field of collaboration should include a history of different research traditions, specialisations and theories, as well as a critical review of the ideals of collaboration. In terms of practical guidance, he proposes methods for use in specific studies, as well as the skills and competencies required to lead collaborative processes. It may also be beneficial to incorporate the perspectives and experiences of collaborative partners.

Many of the researchers who are active within SWEAH are involved in research that includes collaboration with the wider community. The first example of collaboration – which, at the initiative of deputy chairperson Lars Liljedahl and coordinator Susanne Iwarsson, involves doctoral students, alumni and senior researchers within SWEAH – is an initiative being carried out in Härnösand Municipality. "A healthier Härnösand" focuses on improving the health and quality of life of older people through preventive measures and rehabilitation, including via a dedicated assessment and support team. The initiative has been made possible thanks to funding from the Outcomes Fund, which means that the municipality will receive a grant of up to SEK 50 million over the course of five years. Susanne Iwarsson is the scientific lead for a Forte-funded research project aimed at evaluating the initiative during its first three years. News article about the Härnösand project (in Swedish).

During the year, Iwarsson has also served on the Outcomes Fund jury for the Briljanterna 2025 awards, which aims to select, recognise and promote 20 measurably effective social and health initiatives that have the potential to transform Sweden.

Media profile

SWEAH's operations and research findings are regularly highlighted in various media channels, both directly and indirectly. Doctoral students, supervisors, representatives from partner universities and SWEAH's management take part in interviews and write opinion pieces. A few examples (primarily in Swedish):

Who decides what Betty should eat?
Chapter in an anthology on care for the elderly, Tankesmedjan Synaps, 5 December 2025
"Research into ageing needs to be equipped for the future"
Äldre i Centrum, 1 December 2025
"All older people should have the right to support for independence"
Dagens Samhälle, 25 November 2025
Härnösand focuses on the health of older people – with the help of local residents
P4 Västernorrland, 28 September 2025
"Why should elderly care in particular have to put up with poorer language skills?"
DN Debatt, 15 September 2025
Men in home care: "Start with what older people themselves want"
Senioren, 25 August 2025
Research: The Swedish Building Act is unclear regarding accessibility in the home
Äldre i Centrum, 19 August 2025

My life with home care
Forte Nyheter, 12 August 2025
Researcher: The government must stop misusing elderly care
Senioren, 12 August 2025
"Elderly care is not an arena for political posturing on migration"
DN Debatt, 11 August 2025
Researcher: Sorrow and stress when older people are limited to microwave meals
Sydsvenskan, 5 August 2025
Full speed ahead!
Portrait of Susanne Iwarsson's career, Arbetsterapeuten issue 3, 2025
"When I become someone else"
Äldre i Centrum, 3 June 2025
Is it time to move home?
Tidningen Senioren, April 2025
Stig Ålund cycles for research
PRO Pensionären, 21 May 2025
Researcher: "Social relationships and physical activity are the key to healthy ageing"
Barometern, 19 May 2025
The Housing Barrier Part 2: The struggle for home modifications
New York Amsterdam News, 8 May 2025
"Renovating for life. Not just a matter for property owners."
Sydsvenskan, 5 May 2025
Oskar Jonsson is interviewed live about his tandem tour
Sveriges Radio, P4 Malmöhus, 28 April 2025 and P4 Blekinge, 20 May 2025
Researchers in Lund monitor elderly people using AI: "Should make ageing easier"
SVT Nyheter, 4 April 2025
Gamlebo – a place for older people with substance abuse problems
Äldre i Centrum, 18 March 2025
Researchers monitor a unique initiative for older people in Härnösand
Äldre i Centrum, 12 March 2025
Different templates result in different life stories
Äldre i Centrum, 11 March 2025
Susanne Iwarsson wins major gerontology prize
Senioren, 10 March 2025
Ill health as a social problem – Social workers' work on health and ill health
Studentlitteratur, March 2025
Research collaboration – a radical change?
Vetenskap & Allmänhet, 15 January 2025
Social work with older people – recognising both challenges and opportunities
Liber, January 2025

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The Housing Barrier, Part 2: The struggle for home modifications

SWEAH's coordinator Susanne Iwarsson is interviewed by a newspaper in New York, USA about the solutions in Europe.

Fler skulle jobba längre om alkoholsjukligheten minskade

Många avslutar sitt arbete i förtid på grund av alkoholrelaterade sjukdomar. Fler skulle kunna fortsätta jobba om alkoholkonsumtionen minskade.

Av: **EVA EKEROTH** 15 april 2025 kl 11:37

Emma Carlsson. Foto: Pressbild, Maxime Agnelli. Montage.

Emma Carlsson är doktorand i folkhälsovetenskap på Stockholms universitet och Karolinska Institutet. Hon forskar om ojämlikhet i

Emma Carlsson, a SWEAH doctoral student at Karolinska Institutet, is interviewed in Accent magazine about her doctoral project.

Doctoral students and popular science

In addition to the abovementioned scientific conferences, SWEAH's doctoral students have also presented their research in a popular science format on numerous occasions during the year. For example:

Pernilla Alencar Siljehag (Karolinska Institutet) gave a public talk at Tomelilla Library as part of Lund University's popular science roadshow, and also addressed junior and senior research teams, the Ana Nery Nursing Institute at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, doctoral and postdoctoral groups at ELSA-Brasil, the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, Brazil, and researchers at the Department of Public Health, Federal University of Salvador de Bahia, Brazil.

Daniella Dinse (Kristianstad University) took part in the Health in Collaboration research platform's conference in Kristianstad, which focused on the theme "Health throughout life", giving her poster presentation "A sense of belonging in a safe and motivating environment at meeting places – Older people's experiences of group exercise". SWEAH doctoral student Anna-Carin Karlsson (Kristianstad University) also attended the same conference.

Julia Hallin (Umeå University) gave a talk at the Research Days in November at her home university, titled "Feasibility of the HIFE+cog exercise programme for older people with risk of falls".

Karin Högstedt (Karolinska Institutet) presented her research project to the exchange programme for interdisciplinary students from Tokyo Metropolitan University.

Mariam Kirvalidze (Karolinska Institutet) spoke at the ASC-ISAR seminar on a nationwide survey of informal carers, held at Linköping University. She also attended a meeting with the Swedish National Pensioners' Organisation to discuss the results of person-centred integrated care initiatives in Sweden, alongside a similar event hosted by the Swedish Association of Registered Dietitians.

Klara Le (Örebro University) gave a talk to Gothenburg's local pensioners' association at an event organised by the City of Stockholm.

Jerry Norlin (Dalarna University) gave a presentation at Researchers and Practitioners, an event arranged by Region Gävleborg's R&D Welfare network as part of the Nordic Welfare Centre's webinar "Loneliness among older adults", and presented his doctoral project to the Association of Directors of Social Welfare Services of Sweden (Region Gävle Dala).

Glenn Möllergren (Lund University) gave talks at two of the stops on his tandem tour, in Mönsterås and Kalmar. He also gave a presentation during Tankesmedjan Synaps' book launch in Stockholm.

Ana Sabsil López Rocha (Karolinska Institutet) spoke during a seminar series for doctoral and postdoctoral students.

Samantha Svärdh (Lund University) presented her research to the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions and the National Association for Pensioner Fellowship.

Madelene Törnblom (Kristianstad University) presented the project "PreSens for Physiotherapists in Older Persons' Health" at a webinar arranged by the Swedish Association of Physiotherapists' Health of the Elderly section.

Glenn Möllergren took part in Oskar Jonsson's tandem tour. Photo: Pelle Josefsson

Research grants, prizes and awards

Several SWEAH-affiliated doctoral students, alumni, supervisors and other senior researchers received research grants and awards during the year. The following is a selection:

Pernilla Alencar Siljehag (doctoral student at Karolinska Institutet) was awarded travel scholarships of SEK 17,000 from her home university and SEK 8,500 from the Swedish Society for Medical Research, for a research visit to Brazil.
Giorgi Beridze (doctoral student at Karolinska Institutet) was awarded scholarships of SEK 200,000 from the Martin Rind Foundation and SEK 10,000 from the Sigurd and Elsa Golje Foundation.
Elida Floberg (doctoral student at Linköping University) was awarded a continuation grant of just over SEK 107,000 from Futurum for part of her doctoral project, "REACT dementia". Futurum also awarded Floberg just over SEK 154,000 for her research project "Experiences of abuse: Two qualitative studies among vulnerable individuals with mild to moderately severe cognitive impairment and their relatives".
Julia Hallin (doctoral student at Umeå University) was awarded SEK 64,000 from the Erik and Anne-Marie Detlof Foundation.
Jeanne Højgaard-Bøytler (doctoral student at Lund University) was awarded a grant of SEK 17,000 from the Helge Ax:son Johnson Foundation for a week-long writing retreat.
Milos Milovanovic (doctoral student at Linköping University) received a scholarship of approximately EUR 1,000 (for travel, accommodation and registration fees) from the University of Zurich's Population Research Center to attend their annual conference.
Glenn Möllergren (doctoral student at Lund University) received a travel scholarship of SEK 25,000 from the Helge Ax:son Johnson Foundation for a research visit to Romania.
Judit Staller (doctoral student at Mid Sweden University) is part of the HUMAN project in Härnösand, which has received SEK 800,000 from the EU. This is an EU co-funded project within the Interreg Europe programme.
Franziska Steffens (doctoral student at Karolinska Institutet) was awarded a total of SEK 20,000 in scholarships from the Ragnhild and Einar Lundström Memorial Foundation, of which SEK 10,000 was for attending the 2026 IAGG conference and SEK 10,000 was for a statistics course.
Wenqian Xu (SWEAH alumnus from Lund University) was awarded a grant of SEK 15.3 million at the end of the year from NordForsk, as the principal applicant for the AMICA project. Together with researchers from Estonia, Finland, Norway and Sweden, he will investigate the introduction of AI in home care and the risks associated with its implementation.

SWEAH's coordinator Susanne Iwarsson was awarded the Grand Gerontology Prize 2025 by the Swedish Gerontological Society.

Iwarsson was also awarded an honorary doctorate, alongside President Alexander Stubb, by the Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences at Finland's University of Jyväskylä. She will be awarded her degree at a ceremony in Jyväskylä in May 2026.

Photo: Maya Kylén

Follow-up

The evaluation surveys distributed by the graduate school's management after each completed course and activity provide an important basis for ongoing follow-up and continued development at SWEAH. Affiliated doctoral students are also asked to submit a written individual report each year on their learning activities within the field of ageing and health, not only at SWEAH but also more generally as part of their third-cycle studies at their higher education institution.

Activity reports 2025

Doctoral students affiliated with SWEAH during 2025 have submitted written activity reports via the digital Sunet Survey system. These reports are highly consistent with previous years, and demonstrate good attendance, good rates of study and progress, and a high degree of appreciation for SWEAH's activities. The activity reports show that most doctoral students are making the anticipated good progress in their third-cycle studies. Sixteen doctoral students plan to defend their theses next year. None have withdrawn early.

Of the 49 doctoral students who had not yet defended their theses at the end of 2025, 41 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 eight doctoral students have until their thesis defence to meet the requirements. Thirteen doctoral students have also taken part in other courses on ageing and health. A total of 20 doctoral students took part in the doctoral student days arranged by SWEAH at Dalarna University in Falun, and 24 in Lund. Nine doctoral students participated in SWEAH's impact workshops online. Nine of the 49 doctoral students reported that they had participated in some other activity organised by SWEAH, primarily Zoom cafés.

As in previous years, the doctoral students highlight in their activity reports that they particularly appreciate the opportunities for national networking, as well as SWEAH's courses and activities. They also emphasise financial support, the involvement of other doctoral students, contact with senior researchers from different universities, and the importance of being able to teach on the graduate school's courses. They mention that contacts made within SWEAH have given them access to research that they would otherwise have been unaware of, and that they have already begun collaborating with doctoral students or researchers at other universities, both within Sweden and abroad.

Last year's writing retreat was praised by several doctoral students, who would like to see more of this sort of activity in the future. As in previous years, the SWEAH Core Curriculum courses have received positive feedback, with last year's edition of the gerontology course in Gothenburg in particular having contributed to a deeper understanding of the research field of ageing and health.

Some doctoral students commented on how SWEAH's activities could be further developed, for example by creating even more structured opportunities to encourage their networking and by bringing doctoral students together even more closely for joint publications. They also voiced a desire for a clear international profile to facilitate international collaboration. As a first step, an information pack aimed at an international audience is proposed, including a clear explanation of how postgraduate education in Sweden is organised and what role SWEAH plays. In terms of communication, there is also a desire for more advance notice so that the doctoral students receive earlier information about courses than is currently the case, enabling them to plan their studies alongside other commitments. There were also calls for more effective methodology courses, writing tools and mentoring programmes. In addition, the doctoral students would like more opportunities to discuss potential collaborative projects and practical applications. SWEAH should create the right conditions for long-term engagement.

The following quotations exemplify the content of the individual reports:

"The gerontology course enabled me to place my research within a broader societal context, and gave me the tools to articulate and describe its significance more clearly from an ageing perspective. SWEAH has also facilitated valuable networking opportunities."

"Through SWEAH's activities, I have received valuable guidance and advice from senior researchers, which has helped me to broaden and deepen my understanding of ageing and health from an interdisciplinary perspective. SWEAH has also facilitated new research contacts and collaborations, including establishing collaborations with other doctoral students. These interactions have contributed towards exchanges of knowledge, critical reflection and developing new ideas that are relevant to my research. SWEAH is an important platform for networking, collegial support and academic development within the field of ageing and health."

"I found out about a course on ageing and social change offered by Linköping University via an email from SWEAH. This was extremely useful, because I needed a course on the subject for my thesis and I hadn't been able to find one myself."

"SWEAH has supported my research networking, and I have been in contact with people I met through SWEAH, mainly for support with writing my thesis. I've also joined SAIN, and I look forward to continuing to work with other SWEAH alumni in the future."

"By interacting with other doctoral students within the field of ageing and health, whom I met through SWEAH, I was able to find out about different research perspectives and methods. This helped me to clarify my own focus and gain useful insights for my thesis."

"I have made new research contacts and learnt more about potential future career opportunities."

"The workshop days gave me new knowledge about the importance of research collaboration with non-academic actors."

"The grant for my research visit to Romania provided unrivalled opportunities for new learning, skills development and gathering new empirical data, as well as inspiration for postdoctoral projects and an expanded network. The writing retreat provided excellent tools for improved writing productivity."

External evaluation

The agreement between the partner universities governing cooperation and financing expires in December 2026. At the initiative of SWEAH's partner representatives at management level, the Vice-Chancellor of Lund University decided in 2024 that an external evaluation of SWEAH should be carried out in spring 2025. In addition to its annual co-financing for SWEAH, Lund University allocated SEK 120,000 to finance the evaluation. In autumn 2024, the graduate school's management – on behalf of the Board – produced a self-evaluation for the period 2022–2024, based on questions drawn up by Research Services at Lund University.

An external evaluation panel, consisting of Professor Kerstin Tham, former Vice-Chancellor of Malmö University, Professor Marja Jylhä from the Faculty of Social Sciences at Tampere University and Professor Clemens Tesch-Roemer from the German Centre of Gerontology in Berlin, was commissioned to evaluate the graduate school's activities. The evaluators came to Lund on 8–9 April 2025 in connection with the spring semester's doctoral student days, to meet and interview doctoral students, teachers, SWEAH's management, and the Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Lund University. During the spring and early summer, they also interviewed the chairperson and members of the Board, alumni, supervisors, and partner representatives at researcher and management level during various online meetings. The evaluators submitted a very positive final report before the June 2025 deadline, in which they unequivocally recommended that SWEAH's activities should continue. Some of the evaluators' comments from the evaluation report:

"… an outstanding example of a national graduate school with excellent results and exceptional management…"

"We recommend clarification of SWEAH missions (now 14) and goals (now 22)."

"Developing indicators of both scientific impact and societal impact of SWEAH over time would contribute to a clearer picture of the quality and outcomes."

"The impact of SWEAH would be stronger by increasing the number of participating PhD candidates."

"The partner universities should be committed to support the PhD candidates' participation in all available SWEAH activities."

"The internationalisation of SWEAH could be deepened […] We suggest considering the idea of inviting universities from Nordic countries as partner universities in SWEAH, to strengthen international collaboration."

"The new funding period and the apparent change of the director due to Susanne Iwarsson's upcoming retirement provide challenges but also opportunities for SWEAH."

"In sum, there is strong evidence to support and develop the activities of SWEAH."

SWEAH's management has since begun planning for the continuation of its operations following the expiry of the current co-funding agreement on 31 December 2026, by beginning negotiations with existing partner universities and by seeking additional partners ahead of the new contract period, which begins in 2027.

One important step in securing the leadership of SWEAH was the Vice-Chancellor of Lund University's decision in December to extend Susanne Iwarsson's appointment as coordinator until 31 December 2026, while at the same time gradually introducing a new coordinator as Iwarsson is due to retire in spring 2027. This decision means that Iwarsson's role as coordinator will be as 25% of a full-time position during the first half of the year and as 10% during the second half, with a focus on securing the new co-financing agreement for the period 2027–2031. The decision also involves senior lecturer and associate professor Jimmie Kristensson being appointed as assistant coordinator. In order to introduce him to the role of coordinator, Kristensson's role will be 5% of a full-time position during the first half of the year and 20% during the second, after which he will assume full operational management responsibility. The intention is that Kristensson will then be appointed as coordinator of SWEAH with effect from 1 January 2027.

Finances

The funds at SWEAH's disposal for 2025 amounted to SEK 3,415,000 in accordance with the collaborative agreement. There was also an opening balance of SEK 1,056,000 from previous years, plus a grant for the external evaluation. These funds have been used for SWEAH's operations in accordance with the budget. SWEAH's operations are carried out with a high degree of cost-effectiveness, resulting in a surplus for 2025 compared with both the budget and the forecast.

Table 2. National graduate school, comparison between budget and results up to and including 31 December 2025

Income	Budget 2025 (SEK thousand)	Follow-up full year 2025 (SEK thousand)
Income, cofinancing model SWEAH	3,415	3,415
Income Lund University, for external evaluation	109	109
Opening balance carried over from 2024/2025	1,056	1,056
Total income	**4,580**	**4,580**
Costs		
Coordinator 30%	482	466
Board fees	70	70
Study coordinator 40%	486	473
Impact officer 25%	245	164

Quality assurance and development 2% + fee-based contribution (58 recorded under 2026)[1]	50	0
Research administrator 65%	437	433
Postdoctoral assignments, hourly fees	210	210
Total management, administration and teaching costs	**1,980**	**1,816**
Communications officer 25%	223	220
Communication and marketing	10	26
Total communication costs	**233**	**246**
SWEAH course LU spring 24		34
SWEAH course GU spring 25	210	213
SWEAH course KI autumn 25	50	7
SWEAH courses 2025/2026 increase in hotel nights	40	40
Doctoral student activities (introduction, doctoral days)	120	143
Doctoral student activity, increase in hotel nights	40	40
SWEAH LU travel pot	25	12
International research exchange (22 recorded under 2026)[1]	50	23
Supervisor activity	15	0
Evaluation of SWEAH (30 recorded under 2026)[1]	120	177
Other operating costs (not associated with specific activities)[2]	50	100
Total operational costs	**720**	**789**
Indirect costs 23%	733	656
Rent	131	139
Total costs	**3,798**	**3,646**
Annual surplus/deficit	**-383**	**-231**
Opening balance + income - costs	**783**	**934**

1) A total of SEK 110,000 will be charged to 2026, meaning that the opening balance after adjustment for indirect costs will be SEK 799,000.
2) Higher cost than anticipated, mainly due to a two-day workshop in Sundsvall for the Board.

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 ageing and health, paying particular consideration to the complexity of ageing in the society of today and tomorrow.

The graduate school continuously develops and establishes a specific curriculum for affiliated doctoral students, as well as a range of open courses and other activities. By the end of 2025, 149 doctoral students had been affiliated with the graduate school, 88 of whom had defended their theses.

BLEKINGE TEKNISKA HÖGSKOLA · BTH ·

HÖGSKOLAN DALARNA

GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET

JÖNKÖPING UNIVERSITY

KAROLINSKA INSTITUTET ANNO 1810

Karolinska Institutet

HKR Högskolan Kristianstad

LINKÖPINGS UNIVERSITET

LULEÅ TEKNISKA UNIVERSITET

Linnéuniversitetet Kalmar Växjö

Mittuniversitetet MID SWEDEN UNIVERSITY

ÖREBRO UNIVERSITET

UMEÅ UNIVERSITET

LUNDS UNIVERSITET

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