



# Quick survey about the administrative support at SCI

Results and comments

## Summary

In late October 2019, a quick survey was sent to the school's faculty to identify problem areas and capture improvement potential within the administrative support. The survey was sent to approximately 300 people and was answered by 88. A compilation of the replies will be found in a separate document.

The school's EKO, INFRA, HR and UA managers as well as administrative group managers have read, discussed and analyzed the comments.

In our opinion, the answers indicate that the administrative support within the SCI school is adequate and, in most parts, working well. Some areas need improvement while others receive top marks.

The perception of what works and not depends on which department you work in.

## Disclaimer

This document is a translation of the Swedish original and is provided for informational purposes only. In the event of any discrepancy between the original and the translation, the original takes precedence.

## Positive

Overall, the administrative support works well. Response and service from the administrative staff receive mainly positive comments.

In general, the proximity to the administration is appreciated. In addition to the general service, the department administration also has qualified co-workers in finance, HR and educational administrative issues.

Both individual administrators and specific admin groups get credit for good work. Specialist competence and high-volume administration has been coordinated at the school level with good results. E.g. program administration and exam coordination are highlighted as well functioning and solution-oriented service areas.

## Negative

Some areas that work poorly are:

- The digital systems work poorly, they are often changed or replaced completely. Systems mentioned are e.g. KTH-res, eISP and Canvas.
- It is unclear whom to approach with different questions.
- High staff turnover within the administration.
- Lack of understanding of the business.
- Too much bureaucracy, rules and “red tape”.
- Generally increased administrative burden.

The digital systems are managed by GVS/KTH. The SCI administration has very limited possibilities to affect these. However, errors, deficiencies and requests for improvement are continuously communicated to the respective system owners.

To reduce ambiguities about who to turn to, a couple of steps will be taken:

- Introduction of standardized functional email addresses for all departments e.g. *hr@math.kth.se*, *hr@physics.kth.se*, etc. Several administrators will monitor incoming email, thus minimizing the effects of absence due to sickness, parental leave etc.
- The administrative processes will also be better described and explained on the school's internal web pages.

The survey also show that there is some uncertainty about when to turn to the department, school or central administration. We hope to rectify this by improving communication and collaboration between different administrative groups and functions within the school.

The perceived staff turnover largely depends on parental leave. The work must then be re-distributed and, sometimes, temporary substitutes must be hired. Actual staff turnover, i.e. that employees leave the administration, is about 10%, which is lower than KTH average.

However, we are aware that changing staff at key positions can cause loss of continuity. We work continuously with improving routines and processes to reduce these effects. The introduction of functional email addresses will also reduce the dependency on individuals.

Lack of understanding of the business is something the administration and faculty must work together to address. Most administrators would like to learn more about the business, we just have to find ways to arrange it.

Regarding bureaucracy, KTH as an authority is governed by several different laws. Administrators shall be well informed and knowledgeable about the regulations that apply to their administrative area. They also have a responsibility to inform the faculty about these regulations and strive for compliance.

Of course, all practice of bureaucracy must be handled with respect and sensitivity, when regulatory compliance has to be addressed — it should not be perceived as unnecessary red tape. The importance of correct communication will be discussed in all administrative groups during the spring of 2020.

The problem areas above have been highlighted in several responses, which is why we have commented on them here. However, all responses will be taken into consideration.

## **Conclusion and comments**

The conclusion is that the organization of the administration within the SCI School is appropriate and that the administrative support works well. There are a number of areas that need improvement and much depends on communication and clarity towards the faculty.

We will continue to strive for the department administration to cover all administrative areas and avoid centralization as long as redundancy, competence and quality can be maintained within the groups.

It is important to continuously monitor the requirements, needs and wishes for administrative support, as well as defining and communicating which support is actually covered. This to avoid unrealistic expectations that result in unnecessary frustration.

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