



Interest Organisation for PhDs, Postdocs & Temporary Research
Employees at UiA

Annual Report

UiAdoc Board (2021-2022)

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1 Executive Summary

UiAdoc is an interest organisation for PhD research fellows and postdoctoral research fellows, and temporary research employees at the University of Agder (UiA). UiAdoc works to promote the interests of PhDs and postdocs at UiA by serving as a network for its members and representing them on issues of mutual concern. UiAdoc consists of a board elected by PhDs and postdocs at the university and meets approximately once a month. UiAdoc is a non-profit, independent organisation and is not affiliated with any trade union or political entity. The organisation has been registered on the Register of Legal Entities (Enhetsregisteret) of the Brønnøysund Register Centre (Brønnøysundregistrene) since 1st October 2019.

For the period 2021-2022, the board consisted of six members across four faculties 2.1. UiAdoc held twelve board meetings and two quarterly meetings with the central administration at UiA. We prioritise quality researcher education in supervision and training, consistent research funding, various career development opportunities, and a rewarding work environment. Preserving and improving these things helps both the temporary scientific employees and UiA's ability to compete in the national academic field. UiAdoc works with other groups in the field to keep improving and developing doctoral education, such as the Stipendiatororganisasjonene i Norge (SiN) and the Akademiet for Yngre Forskere (AYF). We work in various ways to achieve this through formal representation in external bodies, consultation statements, working groups, and participation in various discussion forums, refer section 4 for more details. UiAdoc also participated in the SiN AGM, where the AGM unanimously agreed to two changes to the statutes proposed by UiAdoc. The working group on the COVID pandemic published a newsletter in late 2021 about the actions taken by UiAdoc on negotiating potential contract extensions for the researchers due to the pandemic. The skills and academic development group worked together with the PhD program administration committee in designing new courses for doctoral training.

UiAdoc receives funding from the faculties at the University of Agder. In 2021, the amount of subsidy received was NOK 172,000. The funds are spent on the operation of the organisation, including costs in connection with representations, board meetings, workshops, and the UiAdoc Annual General Assembly (AGA). A majority of funds are spent on social engagement activities for the members. Due to the worldwide pandemic and subsequent lockdown, the planned expenses related to these activities were drastically reduced. Thus, a significant part of the budget for 2021 will be moved to the next board term.

2 Third UiAdoc Board (2021-2022)

2.1 Board Composition and Term

The UiAdoc Annual General Assembly (AGA) convened on April 14th, 2021, with a quorum of 16% of its total membership present to elect representatives to the board. The following candidates were elected to serve on the third UiAdoc board at the AGA.

- Henrik Siepelmeyer (Handelshøyskolen) – President
- Gulshan Noorsumar (Tekreal) – Communications and Marketing/Vice President
- Saishashank Balaji (Tekreal)– Treasurer
- Mareike Brehmer (HumPed)- Secretary
- Juan Diego Cardenas-Cartagena (Tekreal)- Academic and skills Coordinator
- Saga Pardede (Helse- og Idrettsvitenskap) - Events and Activities Coordinator

The board also has a liaison officer from the Universitetsstyret (University Board) who serves as an ex-officio member on the board. The board took charge effective immediately on the day of the AGA. The term lasts until the day of the following UiAdoc AGA (30th of March 2022). Five members of the third board were elected for a period of one year, while the treasurer was elected for a period of two years (2021–2023)¹.

2.2 Gender Balance & Diversity

Of the six elected board members, two were female, and four were male. Female participation in the board was 33%. This is a decrease from recent years, where female participation was 50% (in the board period 2019-2020) and 50% (in the board period 2020-2021).

¹The Treasurer, Saishashank Balaji, has decided to step down from his post. Thus, this position will be open for election for the remainder of the term.

2.3 Working Environment

All but one board meeting, apart from the AGA, were held digitally via Zoom. In addition to the AGA, board members have met locally for work meetings, social engagements, and participation in conferences, which are described in more detail in section 4.

3 Membership

3.1 Members Reached

UiAdoc membership is free and is given to all PhDs and postdocs if they are employed at UiA. In 2021, there were 388 PhDs and 45 postdocs employed at various faculties of UiA. Table 1 below presents an overview of our members. The board has organised 15+ social engagement events and academic workshops benefiting about 450 members during its term, which are described in more detail in section 4.6.

Faculty	PhDs	postdocs	Sum
Handelshøyskolen	48	3	51
Helse-og idrettsvitenskap	58	11	69
Humaniora og pedagogikk	64	4	68
Kunstfag	35	-	35
Samfunns-vitenskap	48	6	54
Teknologi og realfag	135	23	158
UiA	388	47	435 ²

Table 1: Overview of Members.

²Numbers as of May 2021, reported by the HR department.

4 Activities

4.1 Board Meetings

UiAdoc has held twelve regular board meetings³, averaging one every month from April 2021 until February 2022. Due to the pandemic, all but one of the meetings were held digitally.

Date	Type	Attendance	Notes
19.04.2021	Board Meeting	6/6	Digital
20.05.2021	Board Meeting	6/6	Digital
17.06.2021	Board Meeting	6/6	Digital
July	Board Meeting		Summer Break
09.08.2021	Board Meeting	6/6	Digital
25.08.2021	Board Meeting	6/6	Digital
29.09.2021	Board Meeting	6/6	In-Person
22.10.2021	Extra-Ordinary Board Meeting	6/6	Digital
27.10.2021	Board Meeting	6/6	Hybrid
November	Board Meeting		Cancelled
07.12.2021	Board Meeting	6/6	Digital
28.01.2022	Board Meeting	6/6	Digital
09.02.2022	Board Meeting	5/6	Digital
17.02.2022	Board Meeting	6/6	Digital

4.2 Cooperation with the University

The board addresses the needs and views of PhD's and postdocs by acting as their voice within UiA management. To this end, the board has been proactive in arranging regular meetings with the university administration to address important policy decisions affecting all researchers. The pandemic has impacted the frequency of these meetings during this term; the board looks forward to more active cooperation with the university in the future.

³The minutes of the meetings are published on [UiAdoc](#) website.

Date	Type	Notes
23.06.2021	Meeting with Central Admin at UiA	Øyvind Nystøl & Malin Stine Hauge
17.02.2022	Meeting with Central Admin at UiA	Øyvind Nystøl

4.3 Representation in National Bodies

UiAdoc has been a member of Stipendiatororganisasjonene i Norge (SiN) since 2020. SiN is an important body for all PhDs and postdocs in Norway, as it serves as an umbrella organisation for the individual PhD and postdoc organisations of each university (such as UiAdoc). Delegates from UiAdoc regularly participated in quarterly meetings of SiN for consultations, feedback, and opinions on SiN's ongoing policy and action. This year's annual general meeting (AGM) was held on November 27th at UiB and was attended by our members for formal delegate duties (voting on a new board, discussing & adopting a budget, changes to the statutes, etc.). At this year's meeting, the discussion centered about several improvements and clarifications of the statutes (two changes proposed by UiAdoc were unanimously accepted by the AGM), and important topics affecting all membership organizations, such as the internationalization of PhD programs and the current debate in the media about this topic.

Date	Type	Notes
27.05.2021	Quarterly Meeting	Digital
31.08.2021	Quarterly Meeting	Digital
27.11.2021	Annual Meeting	University of Bergen

4.4 Outreach & Consultations

In addition to formal representation and writing reports and articles, UiAdoc strives to disseminate information and advocate for PhDs and postdocs by maintaining an active presence in the public arena. To achieve this, UiAdoc attends conferences on higher education policy and research politics, gives invited presentations and opinions at committees within the institution, and publishes content on our website.

Date	Type	Links
07.10.2021	News Article	Forskerforum.no
12.10.2021	News Article	Khrono.no

4.5 Working Groups

During the board periods of 2020–2021 and 2021–2022, UiAdoc established working groups to work on topics relevant to the conditions of PhDs and postdocs at UiA.

- Effects of COVID-19 Pandemic
- Skills and Academic Development
- Mental Health and Well-being
- Social Engagement

While not all working groups retained an equal level of activity throughout 2022, two of them were especially relevant during this board period as they related to ongoing public debate and policy development concerning the academic structure (Academic Development) and the effects of the pandemic on young researchers (Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic).

4.5.1 Effects of COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on PhD and postdoctoral research fellows at UiA was a focus topic for one of UiAdoc’s working groups. Continuing the work of the previous board and building on university-wide and faculty-specific surveys assessing the situation of PhDs and postdocs and their need for additional support by UiA, UiAdoc collaborated closely with the PhD representatives at all departments and the representative for temporary employees in the Universitetsstyret to develop solutions and suggestions for further action.

A significant achievement of these efforts was an official [Letter of Request](#) signed by PhD representatives from all faculties and the UiAdoc board for a general blanket extension of working contracts for all UiAdoc members. This effort was even featured by the two academic newspapers, *Forskerforum* and *Khrono*, and led to discussions of the situation of PhDs and postdocs during the pandemic in the [Universitetsstyret](#)⁴. Even though the universitetsstyret

⁴Refer to decision case (Vedtakssaker) no 138/21.

did not follow UiAdoc's proposals, we were able to have another meeting with the university leadership (Sunniva Whittaker & Seunn Smith-Tønnessen) to advocate for our members' interests. While not leading to general contract extensions directly, the universitetsstyret acknowledged that contract extension requests by UiAdoc and the university leadership has taken measures to prepare financially for the budgetary impacts. Also, these efforts put the needs of our members on the universitetsstyret's agenda and strengthened UiAdoc's reputation as an essential representative body for PhDs and postdocs at UiA.

Another effort to streamline and simplify the extension application process was started by collecting and anonymously sharing feedback from PhDs and postdocs who applied for COVID-based extensions. However, the lack of response from UiAdoc members (we simply did not receive enough feedback to compile a helpful list) has not led to concrete outcomes yet. We recommend the next board revive this initiative and collect additional feedback from PhDs and postdocs now that more of them have been granted extensions.

Date	Type	Notes
22.06.2021	Meeting with all institute representatives	Phd-representanter ved uia
08.09.2021	Letter to University Board	Letter formally requesting contract extensions for all PhDs and postdocs at UiA
23.09.2021	Meeting with Union Reps	Forskerforbundet ved UiA
07.10.2021	Meeting with University Rector(s)	Lederskapet ved UiA
13.10.2021	Discussion of UiAdoc's extension request in University Board meeting	University Board

4.5.2 Skills and Academic Development

The working group on skills and academic development was meant to build a bridge between the PhD program administration and the researchers. On behalf of the larger research community, the board expressed its views and ideas during these discussions, ensuring that researchers have the ability to influence decisions that affect their research training. The working group supported the PhD program administration in designing a new course⁵ for doctoral researchers. The members of the board met with the administrators and the professors to develop this introductory course for new PhDs. We promoted Norwegian language

⁵This is an ongoing discussion, the course is still in drafting stage.

Date	Type	Notes
11.02.2022	Ph.D. program administration	Development of introduction course
27.04.2022	Ph.D. program administration	Development of introduction course

training among the community to improve the social and cultural integration of our international colleagues. To this end, the board negotiated subsidy agreements⁶ with two language schools that offer Kompetanse Norge-certified courses. Discounts on short- and long-term courses were included in the contract for (post-)doctoral colleagues and their families. Details of the arrangements are mentioned below.

- NoTe Norwegian Teaching AS: Discount of 300 kr on the 6-months course of Min Vei.
- Lingu AS: 15% discount on the Fast Track program.

We encourage the new board to continue the dialogue with the PhD program administration to improve doctoral training. We also recommend supporting and promoting UiA's initiative on career day for doctoral researchers during the next academic year.

4.6 Social Engagement & Academic Activities

The purpose of social engagement and activities is to further the cultural, educational, social, and recreational needs of PhDs and postdocs and the campus community through providing opportunities that are incorporated into their working and studying lives. As a result, a work-life balance is maintained while keeping local and international communities connected through more inclusive participation. During the year 2021, this was especially important as many PhDs and postdocs were not able to be social or travel to visit family members due to the COVID-19 condition. Thus, by being able to maintain events, e.g., outdoor activities and online events, this helped to sustain the spirit of the community, despite some of the cancellations of our huge events, e.g., the winter gala and ski trip. We hope the new board will continue to commit and plan events in the new term where the pandemic will hopefully be less of a hindrance. Furthermore, we hope the new board will plan activities that allow all members to participate.

⁶The agreements were negotiated for the calendar year 2021; hence, they are to be renewed.

	Event	Venue	Participants
Late Spring'21			
	Panel Discussion	Online	15
	Board Game Night	Global Lounge	10
Summer'21			
	Intro Day 1	Global Lounge	10
	Sørlending for en dag	Odderøya museumshavn	25
	Båttur til Ytre Maløya	Torskeholmen Grimstad	5
	Chess Tournament 1	Global Lounge (KRS & GRM)	20
	Meet & Greet 1	Global Lounge (KRS & GRM)	15
Fall'21			
	Climbing Park	Hoyt & Lavt	25
	Forskningsdagene	Teateret	100
	Meet & Greet 2	Global Lounge (KRS & GRM)	20
	Open Science Seminar	Grimstad Campus	10
	Chess Tournament 2	Global Lounge (KRS & GRM)	25
	Intro Day 2	Global Lounge (KRS & GRM)	30
Winter'21			
	Photograph Contest	Online	8
	Climbing	Sørlandet Klatresenter	10
	Academic Workshop	Grimstad Campus	7
	X-mas Giveaway	Global Lounge (KRS & GRM)	50+
Early Spring'22			
	Games Night	Global Lounge (KRS & GRM)	30+
	Annual General Assembly 2022	Grimstad Campus	80

Table 2: Overview of Events in 2021.

5 Financial Statement 2021-2022

This statement shows the financial situation of UiAdoc from April 2021 to February 2022. Below are the results of the operation of UiAdoc with incomes and expenses in table 3, and its assets in table 4. Notes are provided in section 5.3.

5.1 Income and Expenses

Note	Year	2021-2022
	Capital (Kapital ved inngang)	7.00
Revenue (Inntekter)		
1	University Funding (Universitetsfinansiering)	172,000.00
2	Activity Fees (Aktivitetsavgift)	2080.00
a	Total Income (Sum inntekt)	174,087.00
Expenditure (Utgifter)		
3	<i>Social Engagements (Sosiale engasjementer)</i>	
4	Summer Events (Sommerarrangementer)	8974.00
5	Fall Events (Høstarrangementer)	19181.08
6	Winter Events (Vinterarrangementer)	18824.54
b	Sum Social Engagements (Sum Sosiale engasjementer)	46979.64
Operating Fees (Driftsgebyrer)		
	Banking services (Banktjenester)	1778.75
	Website (Nettside)	4340.35
	SiN Membership Fee (SiN medlemsavgift)	2000.00
	Accounting Software (Regnskapsprogramvare)	1485.00
	Board Meetings (Styremøter)	5413.63
	SiN Conference (SiN Konferanse)	5718.00
	Reimbursement Claims (Refusjonskrav)	2159.62
c	Sum Operating Fees (Sum driftskostnader)	22895.35
d	Total Expenditure (Sum utgifter) (b+c)	69874.99
Annual Result (Årsresultat) (a-d)		104,212.01

Table 3: Overview of Fiscal 2021-2022.

5.2 Assets

The remaining assets as of February 28th, 2022, are shown in the table 4 below. The remaining balance is subject to change as expenses for the month of March 2022 are not included in this financial statement. After the AGA'22, the new board will get a revised financial statement from the treasurer that comprises of the expenditures occurred till March 31st, 2022.

Note	Eiendeler	2021-2022
	Bank Balance (Banksaldo)	104,212.01
7	Total Assets (Sum Eiendeler)	104,212.01

Table 4: Overview of Remaining Assets.

5.3 Notes

Notes to Financial Year 2021-2022/Noter til regnskapsåret 2021-2022

1. The UiAdoc board (2020–2021) negotiated the funding with the central administration at UiA. According to the number of PhDs and postdocs in their units, the faculties contributed on a pro-rata basis.
2. Proceeds from members who attended social engagement events.
3. Includes only expenses of activities till 28th of February 2022.
4. Includes expenses for 5 events, refer table 2.
5. Includes expenses for 6 events, refer table 2.
6. Includes expenses for 4 events, refer table 2.
7. Balance as of 28th of February 2022.

6 Board's Proposal to General Assembly 2022

6.1 Strategy for a Broader Dialogue

The current UiAdoc board has two proposals to improve the dialogue with our members and the overall effectiveness of its operations. Details can be found in the proposed amendments to the statute⁷ to be discussed at AGA'22.

PhD Representative Forum: We recommend introducing a PhD Representative Forum consisting of elected PhD representatives from all institutes and faculties at UiA. The forum shall serve as a platform for institutionalized exchange between the board and the elected PhD representatives to “*keep a finger on the pulse*” and ensure proper representation of all members' needs by the board. The forum will meet once a semester upon invitation by the board. The elections for the institute and faculty representatives are in line with the rules & formalities at UiA's faculties and departments and are not set by UiAdoc.

Advisory Board: We are also introducing an Advisory Board, consisting of at least two former members of the UiAdoc board, one former (Vice) President, and/or former Treasurer. The purpose of the Advisory Board is to support the board in critical decisions, offer the perspective of experienced colleagues in the case of difficult questions, and support formal processes with knowledge about university processes and formal obligations. Whenever the members of the UiAdoc board need support, they should be able to contact the Advisory Board. The Advisory Board will be elected during the AGA along with the new UiAdoc board. Membership in the Advisory Board will be voluntary, not be financially compensated, and have no voting rights on board decisions. The introduction of an Advisory Board has long been a goal of previous UiAdoc Boards and will finally be implemented in AGA '22.

6.2 Restructuring the Board Composition and Term

Board Composition and Term: As a measure to restructure the board composition for efficient operation and to address the needs of all members, we propose to reorganise and include three positions. Vice-President⁸, Event Coordinators for Kristiansand and Grimstad

⁷The proposed amendments can be found at [UiAdoc](#) website, refer to the file *Proposed: 16.03.2022*.

⁸In previous board terms, the Vice-President was chosen by the collegium of elected members and not by the AGA.

Campus. As part of the restructuring process, we propose changing the board period from July-June to the calendar year (January-December)⁹ to have better operational efficiency in terms of financial management, cooperation with UiA, and aligning closer to the SiN AGM. Thus, in light of these proposed changes, the fourth UiAdoc board (the board that will be elected on the day of AGA'22) will have its term of office only until December 31st, 2022.

6.3 Advocating for Board Compensation

The board members devote a significant amount of time and effort to making UiAdoc a functional doctoral interest organization that serves as a collective voice and advocates for the rights of PhDs and postdocs at UiA. In recognition of the board members' fixed-term employment and the fact that representation & organization can only be as good as the time available to the board members, we firmly believe that UiA must compensate the PhDs and postdocs who contribute to the daily operation of UiAdoc for their work commensurate with their contractual wages. All major universities in Norway view the work of such doctoral associations at their universities as an necessary part of "*employer-employee relations*" in academia and remunerate for their work. SiN also strongly supports the notion of compensation for board members for doctoral organisations in one of its [resolution](#).

The board expressed its view to the university leadership during one of the cooperation meeting. As a result of these discussions, the university management agreed to provide 30,000 NOK earmarked specifically for the compensation of board members. The UiAdoc board appreciates the support of the university in recognizing our efforts as a body representing all researchers. However, we would like to continue the dialogue with the administration to develop and implement a robust compensation strategy for the board commensurate with the value of the time devoted.

The board proposes the following compensation plan to AGA'22, wherein the Third Board (Apr'21-Mar'22) will be compensated a sum of 30,000 NOK¹⁰ to be split among six members for their time served on the board. The Fourth Board (Apr'22-Dec'22) will be compensated with a sum of 60,000 NOK.^{11 12}

⁹This change also addresses a contradiction of rules in the statutes, Viz. §1.1.6 with §3.1.1.

¹⁰The compensation of 30,000 NOK, does not come from the UiAdoc funds, it is part of the short-term negotiation with UiA and thus it is not subject to approval by AGA'22.

¹¹This includes 30,000 NOK from UiA earmarked towards compensation for the board term Apr'22-Dec'22, plus 30,000 NOK from the remaining balance of UiAdoc funds from 2021-2022, refer table 4.

¹²This is subject to approval by AGA'22 as a portion of compensation comes from UiAdoc's account.

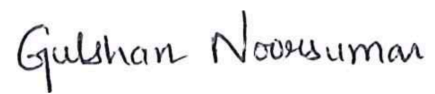
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Signatures

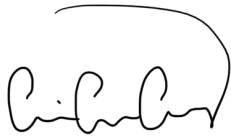
This annual report has been signed for approval by all active board members at the time of the UiAdoc Annual General Assembly on 30th March 2022.



Henrik Siepelmeyer
President



Gulshan Noorsumar
Communications/Vice
President



Saishashank Balaji
Treasurer



Mareike Brehmer
Secretary



Juan Diego
Cardenas Cartagena
Academic Coordinator



Saga Pardede
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