



2026-09-18

To the Saco-S council at Linköpings universitet
Annual meeting 2026

PhD agreement/contract - for the death of a family member

I am 4th year phd student who is originally from the United States of America, and this year I experienced the sudden death of a close family member. My brother's wife passed away unexpectedly. In short, I was shocked by how my department and LiU handled the situation and the lack of support PhDs receive in such a situation due to our current contract.

Once I informed my department, I was recommended by HR to take vacation days to grieve and support my brother and his family. Second, when I asked what I should do if I use all my vacation days for grieving and have no more left to actually take a vacation from work during the summer/winter, HR did not have an answer. Third, I was given the minimum number of "death of family member days" by my HR - 3 days (1 day to travel there, one day for the funeral, and 1 day to travel back).

For a university that recognises that mental health in PhDs is a critical issue and for a university that wants international students, I found this experience and the condition unacceptable. Taking vacation days to grieve as a PhD student (who has a limited contract) does not help manage stress. Second, since my family does not live in Sweden, it requires more than 3 days to travel and visit my family.

I propose that Saco-S advocate for better conditions for PhD students when they experience death in the family. For example, providing specific days for grieving. Or making it easier for PhDs to pause their contract when they experience a stressful or traumatic event. So they can take unpaid time off.

I also propose that they advocate for more accommodating support for international employees. While they want to provide equal service to all employees/PhD students, this actually does not account for unequal circumstances.

Gavin

Union membership

gavin.nilsson.lewis@liu.se

Written proposals must be handed in no later than November 6 th to saco-s@liu.se
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