There has been growing debates on the latest round of negotiations affecting PhD candidates’ salaries, which has led to some inequalities between new-hires and staff already in post. To help you navigate the debate and understand how these negotiations may affect you, DION has been getting inputs from different actors.

**Article in Khrono**

DION was interviewed for [this article by Matt Arnesen](#) [in Norwegian] about inequal wages for PhD candidates. You can find a short English summary below [English summary by Lisa Tietze, DION board member]

"Khrono reports about the current situation in which senior PhD candidates can find themselves earning less than newly employed PhD candidates. In the last two years the salary negotiations have seen an increase in PhD salary. This however mainly applies for new PhD candidates. Since 1st of May 2019, PhD candidates that are unorganized or part of a union in LO Stat, Unio and YS Stat earn 479.600 NOK because they were raised into a new payment framen. A PhD candidate who started a year before that will earn around 8.000 NOK less a year, also from 1st of May 2019, despite being 1 year the senior candidate. The situation is similar for people organized in a union that belongs to Akademikerne. At DION we ask ourselves why the unions, who are leading those negotiations seemingly find future members of their union more important than their current members.

Both Tekna and Forskerforbundet got to say something about the situation as well. Both say that they are aware of the situation and point out that this should be solved locally by the universities. As a good example of that, the university of Bergen appears in the text. UiB took it into their own hands to raise PhD candidates wages into the new pay frame of PhD candidates, who had been employed within the last 12 month before 1st of May 2019."
If you are unhappy with the situation you have the possibility to contact your local union and/or sign the petition that was started by, Sinziana Rasca a PhD candidate at Adger University. You can find the petition here.

DION has also reached out to unions present at NTNU for a statement about the negotiations and how their members might be affected:

**Akademikerne alliance (including Tekna and Samfunnsviterne)**

“The Akademikerne alliance is negotiating for our partner unions. We are happy that the minimum wage for PhD-students was raised by 30,000 kroner during the salary negotiations in Oslo in 2019, and we support that all the PhD candidates still receive the 3% yearly increase in their salaries. To reduce the unfairness towards the PhD-students that “signed their contract a few months too soon”, we are now in the local negotiations at NTNU trying to raise everyone towards the new minimum wage of 479,600 kroner by the end of 2019. In addition, we intend to give all PhD-students a raise from May 2019 (about 1.55%).

This also has implications for Post-Docs at NTNU, since the fourth year PhD salary is now almost the same as the minimum starting wage for Postdocs, but this “unfairness” will not be too obvious until one or two years later.”

**Forskerforbundet**

“With regard to this years pay negotiations, they are still ongoing and therefore not possible to give information from. The negotiations are confidential, and it is not allowed to leak information from these.

In general we can however say something about how Forskerforbundet (National Association of Researchers) work with negotiations.

Forskerforbundet have over the course of many years worked to raise the pay for Phds and have in the past been important in the process of pushing the employer to make better wage conditions for Phds. In the recent years however,
the Phd. wages have again started to fall substantially behind, and Forskerforbundet (nationally) wanted to change the starting salary for the Phds. so that new Phds. would not be in the same situation as those hired before them. This is the same type of process that has also been done for other groups in the past, so this is not an unusual occurrence. We are very happy with the fact that new Phds now have a much higher starting salary than previously, although we do understand that the Phds hired before this came into effect find this unfair.

It was not possible to change the pay for all Phds. on the national level, but we are of course on the local level looking into how we can address this in this years negotiations.

One of the problems we do see however, is that a lot of Phds. are not members of any union. Unions work for their members, not for those who are not. Union members pay membership fees in order for us to be able to work for them, and among the things we then do is pay negotiations for our members.

I am sorry I cannot give you any details into what we are currently negotiating for, the details of the result will be available at the beginning of November."

This post will be regularly updated with new information and resources as they become available.