

Letter from DSA

## **Employment Conditions and Salaries for doctoral students at Karolinska Institutet**

The Doctoral Students' Association (DSA) represents the doctoral students at Karolinska Institutet (KI) in their role as students in doctoral education. However, doctoral students are also in most cases employees at KI, either full or part-time. The current collective agreement at KI concerning salaries for doctoral students was negotiated in 2018 for the period 2018/2019 and a new revision is now needed for the period 2020/2021. For doctoral students with external stipend financing there is another collective agreement that regulates these stipends to correspond with the levels of doctoral employment.

The DSA has conducted research on employment conditions and salaries for doctoral students at KI and has discovered some points that leave room for improvement. Below, specific goals are listed that, when implemented, will lead to improved conditions for all doctoral students at KI:

**1. Every doctoral student should be employed from day one:**

All doctoral students should have the same conditions and rights, social benefits including unemployment reimbursement, paid parental-, sick leave and vacation reimbursement, as well as pension fund, from day one of their doctoral studies at KI. At present, scholarship holders from foreign entities can be held on a stipend for up to one year until being employed by KI or even holding stipend for the rest of four-year's doctoral study period. This creates a second or third class among doctoral students. The DSA encourages KI to completely remove this possibility of a one-year stipend and suggests that every doctoral student admitted to KI is employed by KI from the first day of their contract.

**2. Provide same benefits to all doctoral students:**

Receiving doctoral education at KI should imply the same treatment for each and every student. It is unacceptable that some doctoral students are treated in a different way than others. Therefore, if the aforementioned point is unnegotiable by KI the DSA suggests that current stipend holders should nonetheless receive the same benefits as doctoral students admitted in KI. Meaning that even though on a stipend, KI should offer these doctoral students the possibility to receive health promotion benefit, pay into their pension, have paid sick/parental leave and holidays, just like all doctoral students employed by KI have.

**3. Monitor the implementation of the rules and enforce accountability:**

Even though KI has worked a lot on improving conditions for doctoral students, rather often cases come up where group leaders and the corresponding department seem to find a way to circumvent the common rules suggested by central KI. This should not be accepted and there should be clear rules determined by central KI that are mandatory for everyone to follow. As an example, since doctoral students at KI can only be on a stipend for up to one year there must not be a single student being on a stipend more than one year at KI (except for specific conditions stated by central KI). The implementation of the rules has to be surveilled by a designated body at KI and group leaders and departments that do not follow the rules should be fined in an appropriate way. Only full transparency can lead to equal treatment of all doctoral students at KI.

**4. Improve KI working conditions to top competitive level:**

Salary is an important factor for quality assurance and recruitment of top doctoral students to KI. KI is one of the best medical universities in the world, however, even when comparing salaries of doctoral students at KI with other universities in Sweden, KI is not offering competitive salaries. The median salary for a doctoral position in Sweden in 2018 was 28900SEK according to SACOs evaluation. Several Swedish universities providing doctoral education in medical sciences offer higher salaries than KI. Taking into consideration that these universities are located in cities where living costs are considerably lower than Stockholm area and that the maximum difference in income tax in whole Sweden is only 5%, the DSA considers that the salary ladder for doctoral students at KI is not justified and should be increased. The DSA suggests an increase of the extent that leaves us with a salary level higher or at least the same as Göteborg Sahlgrenska Akademin offers their doctoral students in the program of Medical Basic Science (for details see table below).

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**Appendix: Lowest level salaries for doctoral students with full employment at Swedish universities**

**PhD Salaries at Swedish Universities**

	Salary at admission	2 <sup>nd</sup> year (alt. 30%)	3 <sup>rd</sup> year (alt. 50%)	4 <sup>th</sup> year (alt. 80%)	Year of contract	Complete Salary (4 years)
Borås Högskola	25200	26300	28300	29400	2016	1310400
Gävle Högskola	25700	26200	27200	28700	2017	1293600
Göteborg - Sahlgrenska Akademin	28800	28800	33100	36900	2019	1531200
Halmstad Högskola	26500	27500	29000	30500	2018	1362000
<b>Karolinska Institutet</b>	<b>26800</b>	<b>27300</b>	<b>28300</b>	<b>28800</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>1334400</b>
Linne Uni	27000	27000	29100	30700	2018	1365600
Skövde Uni	27400	28600	30850	33150	2018	1440000
Stockholm Uni	26500	26500	28400	29900	2019	1335600
Umeå	27200	28300	30600	31600	2018	1412400
Uppsala Uni	26700	27500	29500	32200	2019	1390800

Sources: Official policy documents at the universities' websites (see end of the document). Lowest salary levels (years or approximate equivalent accumulated credits). The salary levels and forms of finance can vary within universities as well.

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### **Sources:**

Borås: Lönestege för doktorander. Valid from 2016

<https://sulf.se/app/uploads/2016/10/hogskolan-i-boras-doktorandstege.pdf>

Gävle: Lönestege för doktorander. Valid from 2017

<https://www.hig.se/download/18.3dcee60414d4bd75ac9d7fe6/1433321081347/Doktorandstege.pdf>

Halmstad Högskola: Lönestege för doktorander. Valid from 2018

<http://dokumentarkiv.hh.se/api/showDocument/AC567EFB-9CBA-437F-BF56-2A8908B78D24>

Karolinska Institutet: Lönestege för doktorander. Valid from 2018

[https://medarbetare.ki.se/sites/default/files/migrate/snabbguide\\_doktorander\\_190306.pdf](https://medarbetare.ki.se/sites/default/files/migrate/snabbguide_doktorander_190306.pdf)

Linne University: Lönestege för doktorander. Valid from 2019

<https://medarbetare.lnu.se/globalassets/dokument---gemensamma/personalavdelningen/lokalt-kollektivavtal-gallande-lon-for-doktorander-och-amanuenser-2019.pdf>

Median salary for PhD students in Sweden 2018 (SACO)

<https://www.saco.se/studieval/yrken-a-o/lararforskare-vid-universitet-och-hogskola/>

Sahlgrenska Akademin (Gothenburg): Lönestege för doktorander. Valid from 2019

[https://medarbetarportalen.gu.se/digitalAssets/1716/1716817\\_doktorandstegar-avtal.pdf](https://medarbetarportalen.gu.se/digitalAssets/1716/1716817_doktorandstegar-avtal.pdf)

Skövde Uni: Lönestege för doktorander. Valid from 2018

<https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/sulf.se/app/uploads/2018/05/doktorandstege-skovde-2018-02-20.pdf>

Stockholm University: Lönestege för doktorander. Valid from 2019

<https://www.su.se/medarbetare/r%C3%A5d-st%C3%B6d/hr-guiden/under-anst%C3%A4llningen/l%C3%B6nebildning/l%C3%B6nestege-f%C3%B6r-doktorander-fr-o-m-2018-10-01-och-2019-10-01-1.414271>

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Umeå: Lönestege för doktorander. Valid from 2018

<https://www.aurora.umu.se/globalassets/dokument/universitetsforvaltningen/personalenheten/regler-och-riktlinjer/lon-och-ersattning/doktorandavtal-2018-10.pdf>

Uppsala: Lönestege för doktorander. Valid from 2018

<http://www.saco.fackorg.uu.se/verksamhet/doktorandfragor/doktorandstege/>