

New PhD student at KI?
Got questions?

PhD Information Booklet

By the Doctoral Students' Association
(DSA)

Everything you need to know, from
starting to defending, in a single
document

Table of Contents

Sections with important details are marked with 

A. DOCTORAL EDUCATION	02
A.1 General information	02
A.2 To-do list for the start of your PhD	03
A.3 Before finishing your 1st year	03
A.4 Before half-time	03
 A.5 Individual Study Plan (ISP)	04
A.6 Booking half-time	05
A.7 Setting up the Electronic Notebook (ELN)	05
A.8 Doctoral courses	06
A.9 Credits	06
A.10 Selecting a mentor	07
A.11 Your supervision	08
 A.12 Where to go for help and support	08
A.13 KI core facilities	13
A.14 Student representation	13
A.15 Reporting activity and registration	14
A.16 Presentations and templates	14
A.17 Research ethics and integrity	15
A.18 Doctoral programmes	16
A.19 Finishing the PhD: the Defence	16
A.20 If you don't finish in 4 years	17

B. ADMINISTRATION	18
B.1 Primula	18
B.2 KI card	18
B.3 KI profile, RIMS and email signature	18
⚠ B.4 A-kassa and Trade Unions	19
B.5 Salary	21
B.6 Reimbursements and Health Benefits	21
B.7 Traveling as a PhD student	22
B.8 Research grants	23
B.9 Travel grants	23
B.10 Research Implementation Beyond Academia	23
B.11 Reporting Misconduct and Lab Safety issues	24
B.12 KI Pendelbussen	24
B.13 Secondary occupations	25
B.14 Vacation and public holidays	25
⚠ B.15 Parental leave and leave of absence	25
B.16 IT related issues	26
B.17 Printing	27
B.18 Generative AI tools	27
B.19 Career support	27
Illustration of the most relevant webpages to your PhD	29

⚠ C. LIVING IN SWEDEN	30
C.1 Administrative tasks for newcomers to Sweden	30
⚠ C.2 Accommodation	31
C.3 Public Transportation	32
C.4 Learning Swedish	32
C.5 Healthcare	33
C.6 Brought a partner to Sweden?	33
⚠ C.7 Within the last year of finishing your PhD	34
List of Authors	

This handout is designed to help doctoral students at KI with common educational and administrative tasks. It has been written by the [*Doctoral Students' Association*](#) (DSA) in collaboration with KI. The latest version can be found on our website <https://www.phdsa.se/phd-information-booklet/>.

DSA is an active and dynamic group of doctoral students that represents all doctoral students at KI. We work to advance the interests of doctoral students at KI and make the PhD journey an enjoyable experience. DSA is a section of [*Medicinska Föreningen*](#) (MF), which is the student union for all students in KI.

If something in this document is unclear you can always contact us at:

- dsa@medicinskaforeningen.se, and/or
- dsaeduc@medicinskaforeningen.se.

DISCLAIMER

Be aware that some information may differ between departments or become outdated. Please consult the official KI websites and documentation if in doubt, and let us know to adjust the handbook accordingly.

A.

DOCTORAL EDUCATION

A.1 General information

We strongly recommend reading the KI webpage for [doctoral education](#). Here you can find the general [syllabus for doctoral education](#), the [introduction to doctoral education at KI](#) and the [steering documents](#) that govern doctoral education. Below you can see the workflow for PhD education at KI (**Figure 1**).

Figure 1.

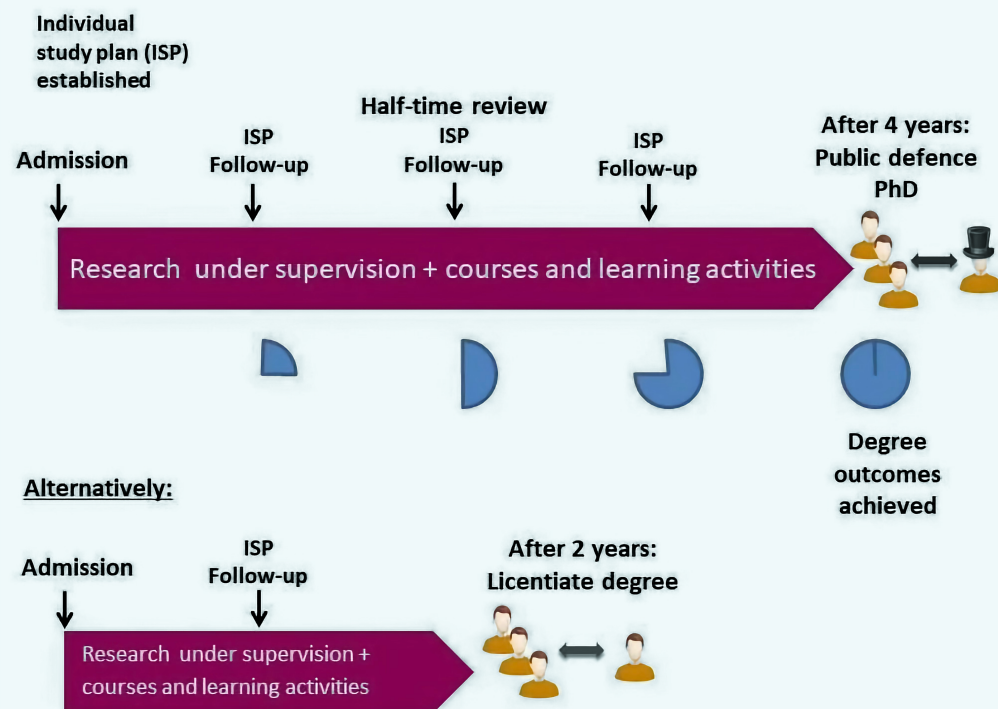


Illustration representing the main milestones of the 4 years of PhD at KI. ISP: Individual Study Plan (more info [below](#)). Ref: <https://education.ki.se/about-doctoral-education-at-ki>.

A.2 To-do list for the start of your PhD

Set-up at KI:

- a) Get access to all the buildings you need: main office/lab building, KI gym, common spaces (lunchroom, meeting rooms) (more information under [KI card](#)).
- b) Get your KI email up and running.
- c) Get into writing your Individual Study Plan ([ISP](#)) more info in the [next section](#)). Your main supervisor needs to open one for you. If you have any issues with this, we advise that you contact the educational administrator at your department and your main supervisor.
- d) Register for the [compulsory introduction course](#). Try to take it as soon as possible. Preferably in the first few months.

A.3 Before finishing your 1st year

- a) Choose a mentor and tick the box in your ISP (you can find more info [below](#))
- b) Do your 1st annual ISP update.

A.4 Before half-time

- a) By your half-time application, you must have completed several compulsory PhD courses, for example in ethics and statistics. Depending on your project, you may also need to complete courses in laboratory safety and/or quality assurance in clinical research before your half-time. Register for these courses well in advance as they are often fully booked. You can find more information about compulsory courses [here](#).
- b) Before the half-time you need to have acquired at least 10 credits (see the [credits section](#) below).
- c) **MTC department only:** Complete the [book exam](#).

A.5 Individual Study Plan (ISP)

The [Individual Study Plan](#) summarises your PhD. It includes more general information about supervision, employment, time plan, your project, ethical permits, how you will achieve your [learning outcomes](#), and which educational activities you will take during your PhD.



Important

Departmental duties (such as being the responsible person for an equipment, teaching within a course, or any other activities that are not your PhD studies) **can** be offered by the Department but it is up to the PhD student to **accept** or **decline** them. If you plan to accept and do it, **make an agreement of prolongation of the corresponding time before starting**. You can have a maximum of 20% departmental duties during your 4 years of PhD studies. If your request to be paid is denied, then you can contact the local SACO-S (see [section](#) below) OR OFR/S representatives.

Within the first 3 months of registration, you'll complete an ISP seminar. This is a public presentation to your department introducing yourself, your topic and project plan to a PhD education committee. This is to ensure that your project plan is feasible, sound, and that you have all the support needed. It is not an examination, and you are not expected to know everything.

Then, there are [annual follow-ups](#) to track your progress and evaluate potential changes in your research plan, which are done together with your supervisor. [Here](#), you can find a checklist for the annual follow-up meeting which will help you to get a more meaningful follow-up. After the second year, a more extensive half-time review is held (see next [section](#)). These formal reviews are an opportunity to discuss any concerns or ideas with your supervisor(s). If any changes are agreed, your PI needs to open a new version of the ISP and together you need to do the changes and agree on them. Once you have made the changes, you send it to your PI for approval then to the department PhD study director to approve it. The status needs to be "Established" for it to be completed.



It is vital that you update your ISP every year or when there are significant changes to your PhD, like changes in project plans, project exclusion or inclusion, change of courses and possibly changing of supervisor(s). The ISP stands as the formal contract between you and your supervisor on your respective responsibilities. Failure to update and follow the ISP can lead to you being laid off. Although quite rare, it can happen.

A.6 Booking half-time

The [half-time review](#) is a formal check conducted after 2 years of full-time PhD studies, or the equivalent for part time students. It consists of a written report of your PhD progress so far and a literature review, then an oral presentation to your half-time committee. **We recommend having the half-time as close to two years into the PhD as possible and preferably no longer than 2.5 years after registration for full-time students.**

This is to make sure your projects are progressing well and to get feedback from researchers outside your supervisory team. **It is not an examination.** Publications or how much data you have are not important and **not** a reason to delay your half-time. A blog on this topic from a fellow PhD student can be found [here](#).

A.7 Setting up the Electronic Notebook (ELN)

[ELN](#) is the Electronic Notebook platform for documenting research plans, results and decisions taken at meetings. This ensures proper documentation of your research and is signed by your supervisor. This ensures research transparency and can act as evidence in case of data fabrication or authorship dispute. It is compulsory to use ELN for all KI researchers.

MEB department only: The Department of Medical Epidemiology and Biostatistics (MEB) uses the [data management system](#) provided by the department instead of ELN. Once a year MEB offers a short data management course, which is

compulsory for all PhD students of the department; other questions are handled by the Data Management Group (email: dmg@meb.ki.se).

A.8 Doctoral courses

[Doctoral courses](#) are a great opportunity to get formal training and earn [credits](#). You can apply for all KI courses, including compulsory and general science courses, in the [course catalogue](#), which is published around April 15th and October 15th. Applications are open for a month. After the application deadline has passed, [open vacancies](#) are updated.

The student interface [Ladok](#) allows you to register for courses (one week before they start), see which courses you are registered on, check courses you have already completed, and download various certificates. It allows you to have a count on how many credits you have passed under “My education”.

For some research areas at KI, there are [doctoral programmes](#). The doctoral programmes list courses that may be of interest to PhD students in the specific research area. The programmes may also include other activities such as journal clubs, seminar series and retreats. For clinically active doctoral students, there are also [clinical research schools](#) that provide support and include several PhD courses.

A.9 Credits

During your PhD you will participate in doctoral courses, seminars, conferences, and other activities. Each of these activities are worth credits. You need to have at least 30 credits (according to your syllabus) to be allowed to defend your thesis.

If you have already covered a similar topic during your Master’s programme at KI or from previous professional experience/courses prior the start of your PhD, you have the option to apply for a [credit transfer](#). The credits can be transferred if the doctoral study director at your department considers that the knowledge

acquired previously is equal to a doctoral level. We recommend you to take advantage of the resources available at KI and attend the PhD courses offered here.

It is mandatory to [record credit bearing activities](#) with form 16 (see all forms [here](#)) and submit to your educational administrator annually (every semester is recommended). [Credit bearing activities](#) include teaching in your own research field (undergrad students, Master students), participation in workshops, retreats, seminar series, journal clubs, supervising students, presenting, and participating in national or international conferences or meetings and much more. Be sure to include as much evidence as possible when filling in the forms. See the “assessment of credit bearing activities” document [here](#) for more information.

Do not let “credit-collecting” get in the way of finding learning opportunities. Even if you do not get formal credits from all activities you participate in, they can contribute to your learning, and should be mentioned in the ISP as activities for reaching the learning outcomes.

A.10 Selecting a mentor

It is mandatory to have a [mentor](#). This is to ensure there is someone impartial you can turn to for research, personal or career advice. This can be anyone (non-family member) you trust, preferably with a PhD. They don’t need to be in academia, they can also be self-employed, in industry or any other field. Once you have found a mentor and agreed on this relationship, you can tick off this box in the ISP. You don’t have to name them in the ISP, just notify that you have one.

The frequency of your meetings with your mentor depends on your needs and your mentor availability. It can fluctuate from once a year to four times per year, as a reference.

The role of the mentor is to support you in everything that doesn’t relate directly to your research or administration, but to your personal development, career path, career change, parental issues, institutional support tips, networking abilities, etc.

The DSA and KI careers service run a [mentorship platform](#) for you to find a mentor easily! This platform is a pool of alumni and current professors at KI that are potential mentors for you. You can filter the pool through education, work experience, department, type of support you need.

A.11 Your supervision

You are required to have a main/principal [supervisor](#) and at least one co-supervisor. You and your supervisors may agree on how often you meet and how involved they are in your project(s) to suit all of you. There is no universal solution for all PhD students, it depends on your needs and expectations from your supervisors. Make sure that you and your supervisors communicate frequently and agree on shared expectations of each other.

At the start of the PhD it is recommended that you talk through shared expectations of each other and how you will work and communicate together. [This form](#) can help structure this conversation. A healthy and honest working relationship with your supervisors is key to a successful PhD and this small exercise can prevent small misunderstandings from escalating.

If you want to add a co-supervisor then you can discuss this with your other supervisors and fill out form 15 (see [here](#)), if the head of department approves it you can update your ISP with the new supervisor.

A.12 Where to go for help and support

If you encounter difficulties with your work environment that hinder your work, learning or well-being, please follow these steps to seek resolution. Please note that as a doctoral student, you are protected under various laws and legal requirements. All deviations in the work environment must be registered in the [IA system](#), which is a web-based system for reporting accidents, work-related illness, issues in the work environment, discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Some examples to keep in mind when deciding whether you need to submit a deviation in the IA system include:

- you have been injured,
- **you have experienced discrimination, harassment, and/or victimisation from your supervisor or colleagues,**
- you feel that the university is lacking in its procedures regarding the work environment, safety and/or sustainable development.

The student and doctoral safety representatives (SSO) are student representatives from an undergraduate, postgraduate, or doctoral level, whose responsibility is to help you navigate the system. All cases handled by the SSOs are kept confidential under legal obligations, so do not hesitate to reach out if needed.

In case you are not familiar with the SSO of your department, do not hesitate to contact us at:

- dsa@medicinskaforeningen.se, and
- dsarepresent@medicinskaforeningen.se.

Follow the steps below to get started with solving an issue:

Step 1: Initial Contact

- Consult with your supervisor or study director of your department: We strongly recommend communicating with your supervisor clearly and discussing any challenges or concerns as soon as possible. There is also a [work environment dialogue](#) which you may have every year with your supervisor. If the supervisor is not able to help you, or they are the problem, then the next person you should contact is the study director at your department.
- Seek support from a SSO: If needed, an SSO can accompany you to meetings and provide guidance. It is the responsibility of the SSO to ensure and ascertain if the issue needs to be reported to the IA system. This can also be done by the student without the help of the SSO or



Important

done anonymously. Ensure to keep track of the IA system progress if it is reported.

- It is important to report cases of discrimination, harassment and victimisation to the IA system. Unfortunately, the reality is that not all PI's are capable of supervising others, so KI needs to know who these people are. If repeated reports about a PI have been made by several people, then this PI will not be allowed to supervise more students in the future.

Step 2: Escalation

- Contact the SSO again: If the issue persists, the SSO can intervene and contact your supervisor or study director directly without the student involvement post taking consent.
- At the same time contact [MF's' Ombudspersons](#), as they are independent experts, employed by the student union with the task of supporting doctoral students who need help during their time at KI. They also operate as representatives for doctoral students in conflict with the department.

Step 3: Further Escalation

- Involve the Main Student Safety Representative: If the problem remains unresolved, the Main SSO can escalate the issue to the Head of Department or equivalent. This again has to be followed as a progress in the IA system.

Step 4: Final Steps

- Contact the KI Work Environment Committee or KI President: For issues affecting a group of students or if the problem still persists, the Main SSO can contact the Safety Committee of KI and bring this as a point of concern. For individual issues, they can contact the KI President directly.

- File a 6:6a Request: As a last resort, the Main SSO can file a formal complaint with the Swedish Work Environment Authority and make a legal request for intervention.



Important

Keep in mind to always request a written receipt or a record of any discussions or actions taken. This documentation can be crucial in the resolution process.

Your Rights:

The purpose of the Work Environment Act is to prevent bad health and accidents among employees at work and students at their place of study as well as to create a good work environment. It states, for example, that the employer/education provider is ultimately responsible for the work environment and must lead the work towards a better work environment.

Some the major and important laws that are relevant of the doctoral students are as follows,

- [*The work environment act*](#)
- [*The discriminations act*](#)
- The higher education act
- The higher education ordinance

But a simplified and more detailed document for rules regarding the same is found in the document - [*Rules for doctoral education at Karolinska Institutet Reg.no. 1-797/2024*](#). Section 9 of this document details with regards to Dealing with problems, withdrawing resources and expulsion.

Note: A doctoral student has the right according to the Higher Education Ordinance, to be allowed to [*change supervisor*](#). Refer to the changing supervisor document for a flow chart of what to do. This should be treated as a last resort. The forms required for changing supervisors are [*here*](#) in the “Other forms” section. A Higher Education Institution is not allowed to have a restrictive attitude against such requests. Similarly, it is only the Rector of KI who has the right to make decisions with regards to expulsion and withdrawal of resources (all means) of a

candidate from their doctoral studies as prescribed by the Ordinance on the Expulsion of Students from Higher Education (Förordning om avskiljande av studenter från högskoleutbildning, 2007:989). In these cases, there must be a written notice and investigation to all parties involved. The student has the right to view all investigative documents associated with them.

KI's whistleblower service:

Whistleblowing reports can concern risks to life, health, safety, security, or the environment. It also includes financial irregularities, corruption, and environmental regulation breaches. Whistleblowing does not include circumstances related to the whistleblower's own work or employment conditions. You can find more information [here](#).

Other forms of support:

Below is a short list of contacts and what they can do for you. You should refer to it whenever you are uncertain of what to do.

- a. Departmental administrator of doctoral studies: half-time documentation, credit-bearing accreditation, annual reports, planning your defence.
- b. Departmental doctoral study director: signing your ISP, half-time report, concerns about PhD studies and/or supervision.
- c. Departmental/group administrator: Travel insurances, book premises, order fikas, etc.
- d. The doctoral student representative at your department: a fellow PhD student for any sort of issue (if they are unable to help you solve it, they will be able to guide you to the right person). See [section](#) below for more information.
- e. You should contact [KI's ombudsperson](#) in the case of science-related issues, intellectual property, plagiarism, authorship issues, GLP code, and



Important

input on ethics. Do not confuse them with the aforementioned [*MF's Ombudspersons*](#).

f. As PhD students, we have an [*occupational health service*](#) (Avonova) that allows you to get 2 free appointments a year for different specialists such as family doctor, ergonomist, psychologist, and get vaccinated for hepatitis B if working with human samples or cells. You can also receive [*telephone counseling*](#).

g. Career Guidance. Doctoral students can ask for a one-to-one meeting with KI Career Service by sending an e-mail to [*career-service@ki.se*](mailto:career-service@ki.se)

A.13 KI core facilities

KI has around 50 core facilities providing equipment like flow cytometry, sequencing, microscopy or BSL3 environment, access to tissues, animals, medical registry, epidemiology data and much more. Staff at core facilities are experts in their domain and can help your project go much faster. Reach out for advice on experimental design, analysis and troubleshooting as well as their paid services. All Core Facilities use the same booking system called [*iLab*](#). The Single Point Of Contact can help you find the right facility for your project. All you need to know about the services available at the KI Core Facilities can be found on the [*KI Core Facility page*](#). Additionally, if you want to learn more about the Core Facilities, you can attend the biannual poster session organised in the Spring (Flemingsberg) and Autumn (Solna).

A.14 Student representation

Doctoral student representatives are involved at all levels of KI management, from the central leadership of the institution to the individual departments. These representatives play an active role in central and departmental management, serving as a vital link between PhD students and the administration.

In addition, should students have any specific inquiries pertaining to their PhD studies, courses, or related matters, they can readily approach their department's designated representatives. Moreover, these representatives serve as valuable sources of information regarding developments at a KI or departmental level, as well as events relevant to doctoral students, such as those organised by DSA. By fostering communication and providing guidance, they contribute to a conducive academic environment for all PhD students.

The responsibility of finding and appointing these doctoral student representatives lies with DSA. We hold elections annually in Autumn to find representatives for the coming calendar year. In case you are interested in becoming a student representative then feel free to contact us at:

- dsa@medicinskaforeningen.se, and/or
- dsarepresent@medicinskaforeningen.se

A.15 Reporting activity and registration

Each semester, you are required to report your [activity](#) to your department. You must also [register each semester](#) in [Ladok](#) to let KI know that you are continuing with your PhD.

For clinically active PhD students, it may be complicated to calculate their activity during the semester as their studies may be part of their clinical employment. More information about reporting activity for clinical PhD students can be found [here](#) (in Swedish). It is important to keep in mind that the activity you report as a student is not the same as your employment.

Currently, clinically active doctoral students that are not solely financed by Region Stockholm (including forskar-AT), are usually strongly advised to resign their doctoral position during their clinical employment. Since there are laws that regulate the maximum time a PhD student can be employed, KI wants to ensure that you do not override that time limit. You are still registered as a student at KI

and If you have concerns about your continued employment at KI, between/ after your clinical period, please contact your manager or HR at your KI department.

A.16 Presentations and templates

KI has [standard templates](#) for posters, PowerPoint presentations and the PhD thesis. Templates for the Office365 suite can be found when creating a new file in Word/PowerPoint under “New”. A folder with templates for each affiliation (for example KI or Karolinska Hospital), size, and type of document is accessible there. For copyright [free images](#) there is also the [KI mediabank](#). Guidance for using images and more resources for finding images is [here](#).

A.17 Research ethics and integrity

MEB students abide to a different system

It is important to follow good research practice by making sure that all your raw data is properly documented and archived. Use the KI electronic notebook (Website:[ELN](#) or read the previous [section](#)) to document all experiments. Make sure that you carefully read any work before accepting being a coauthor, and make sure that your contributions are carefully and accurately described. Always remember that you have the right, and you should request any raw data included in any work being prepared for publication. As a PhD student at KI, you also have free access to the text matching systems [iThenticate](#) to check plagiarism.

It is important to remember that as a researcher it is not your duty to investigate scientific misconduct nor to issue accusations against other researchers. You instead have the duty to report your suspicion in an objective manner to your research institute without making any accusations. The report will then be evaluated by your research institute and forwarded to NPOF, which will conduct a thorough investigation and make a proper decision about the case. Making any prejudgment may be considered as slander and have legal consequences.

Issues related to research integrity (plagiarism, falsification and fabrication) are considered extremely serious in Sweden, and they are not investigated by the

research institute, but instead by the National Board for Assessment of Research Misconduct ([NPOF](#)).

The aim of PhD education is not only to learn how to conduct good science, but also to gain the ability to evaluate other researchers' work. Moreover, scientific integrity is everyone's responsibility, and most of these issues start small and can be resolved very easily before they escalate. Therefore, always discuss anything that is not clear to you with your colleague or supervisor. If you suspect something, discuss it clearly with your supervisor, or your study director. You can also [report it anonymously to KI](#), but make sure to provide an accurate and very detailed description of your suspicions, supported by all evidence that you may have. You also have the right to send your report directly to NPOF.

A.18 Doctoral programmes

[Doctoral Programs](#) are cross departmental scientific communities designed to support researchers in a field. They run activities such as retreats, training programs, journal clubs and provide a useful professional and social network. You can join as many doctoral programs as you like! Apply and find out more [here](#).

A.19 Finishing the PhD: the Defence

Before [applying for the public defense](#) keep in mind that you should have achieved the following:

- At least two of the constituent papers included in the thesis (if writing a compilation thesis, see below) must have been accepted for publication in peer-reviewed journals with you as an author (you do not need to be a 1ST author; it can be any position).
- At least 30 doctoral credits collected according to the syllabus.
- Describe the learning outcomes you have achieved during your studies.

[Here is a more detailed guide](#) about preparing for the defence. You can also read the "Rules for doctoral education at KI" document [here](#) for more guidelines.

The most common thesis type is a compilation thesis (more information can be found [here](#)). Before the public defence the thesis is “nailed” so it is visible to the public. This must be done 3 weeks before the defence, both [electronically](#) (eNailing) and physically at one of the KI libraries. If you have any questions regarding the defence requirements, do not hesitate to email: disputation@ki.se.

A.20 If you don't finish in 4 years

In exceptional cases, a doctoral student who has not finished during the employment period available according to HF (The Higher Education Ordinance) can be [employed for a limited time](#) according to LAS (The Employment Protection Act) as “Doktorand-L”. This employment, according to LAS, is a special fixed-term employment (SÄVA) and can be held for 360 days during a five-year period.

You can only be employed on this kind of contract at the same institute once. Therefore, if you have been employed on this particular contract as a research assistant before starting your PhD this may affect your possibilities to extend your PhD. In addition, this may affect the times you wish to perform other activities under KI employment such as being a research assistant or a postdoc. SÄVA cannot be extended due to special reasons. It is up to KI as an employer to decide if you should have an employment on SÄVA after your employment according to HF.

When requesting extension, do not forget to mention any departmental duties performed during the PhD and whether you have been doctoral student representative.

It is worth noting that the net study time for a doctoral student at KI was on average 4.8 years in 2023, according to [official KI statistics](#).

B.

ADMINISTRATION

B.1 Primula

The [*Primula*](#) web (also called *PA-webben*) is the employee webpage where you, if you are employed by KI, can see and modify your personal information, employment, and vacation days, as well as report sick leave, report secondary occupation, view your wage statements and claims for reimbursements (next [*section*](#) for more information).

B.2 KI card

The [*KI access card*](#) can be issued at Aula Medica (Solna) or Alfred Nobels Allé 10, 4th floor (Flemingsberg). You need to bring a photo identification. You will be asked to fill in and sign the certificate for a badge and take a picture for the card.

Hospital buildings such as [*Bioclinicum*](#), Novum, Vecura, St. Erik Eye Hospital require a different access card.

Buildings normally require your KI card to access. After 5pm you may also need your PIN code. Some buildings may vary and have separate access rules.

B.3 KI profile, RIMS and email signature

It is useful to have a professional photo for your KI profile. To access your profile, go to the KI website and login as a staff member. You can make further changes to your profile by adding a small biography, list of publications, former education, links to external profile pages, and links to news articles published on the KI websites.

KI has recently introduced [*RIMS*](#) (Research Information Management System) that facilitates the collection and integration of information regarding

researcher's and group's professional activities and publications. As a PhD student [you can](#): add more information about yourself and your research to improve your public profile and extract all this information to build your CV.

Note that your access to email and OneDrive will be deactivated once you stop working at KI. More information can be found [here](#).

There is a KI template for [Email signature](#).

B.4 A-kassa and Trade unions

A-kassa

[Akademikernas A-kassa](#), also known as Akademikernas arbetslöshetskassa, is an unemployment fund in Sweden that specifically targets academics and people with higher education. The unemployment fund offers financial support and security for members who become unemployed.

Members of Akademikernas A-kassa can receive 80% of their previous salary for a certain amount of time, provided they fulfil certain conditions, such as having worked a certain number of hours and actively seeking work. The unemployment fund also offers support and guidance in job search and career development.

It is vital that you sign up for A-kassa in time. You need to be a member for at least 12 months before you finish your PhD to receive the unemployment benefit. It is not that expensive so we recommend to sign up early on because that is last thing you will be thinking about during your 3rd or 4th year of your PhD.



Important

Trade unions

A trade union is an organisation that represents the interests of workers at the workplace. Do not confuse the trade unions with the student union Medicinska Föreningen (MF) and DSA. They are completely different entities, even if both are some sort of a “union”.

The main goals of trade unions are:

- Negotiate better salaries, and working conditions for their members through collective bargaining with employers. Salary negotiations for doctoral students occur every autumn between KI and SACO-S (more about this actor later).
- Protect the rights and interests of workers, such as preventing unfair dismissals, and advocating for workers' rights.
- Provide support and representation for workers, such as helping with disputes with employers.

As a doctoral student, you get the following benefits by joining a trade union:

- You gain income insurance, which means that If you lose your job (or your contract expires), the trade union will supplement your unemployment benefit (A-kassa) and give you up to 80 per cent of your income for up to 150 days. You gain this benefit after being a member of a trade union for at least a year.
- If you find yourself in a difficult situation at work, the trade union can provide support on employment and labour law matters when you need it.
- They can help if you have questions about your salary and salary levels, working time, terms of employment and working environment.

At KI, there are three local trade union groupings: OFR, SACO-S, and SEKO, representing different professionals. We recommend becoming a member of either the trade union [SULF](#) or [Naturvetarna](#), both of which are individual trade union members of SACO-S. There are not many differences between the individual trade unions.



Important

It is vital that you join a trade union to gain the aforementioned benefits cause you never know when you might need assistance. For SULF, and presumably other unions, you can create a case with them only after being a member for 3 months and receive the income insurance after 12 months. If you have to choose between a-kassa and a trade union, then join A-kassa.

More information on the trade union groupings at KI can be found here:

<https://staff.ki.se/your-employment/union-organisations>

B.5 Salary

If you are employed by KI, you get a monthly salary. The doctoral student salaries are negotiated by the aforementioned trade union grouping SACO-S. [The agreement](#) is published online alongside the [KI interpretation of the agreement](#). The salary differs depending on your educational background, with medical doctors and dentists earning significantly more than the rest.

Note that the numbers represent the lowest possible salary that you are allowed to have. You are always entitled to discuss your salary at the start of the position, and each year thereafter. Help from a trade union representative is highly encouraged.

Your wage statement is stated and stored in Primula or [Kivra](#) (an app for receiving paper mail from organisations electronically) unless you want it in paper format by post.

In case you are a scholarship holder then your external scholarship is paid directly to you from the scholarship giver. If the scholarship is not high enough, your supervisor must give you a complementary income, either through a KI-scholarship or as a part-time employment as doctoral student. Talk with the HR administrator at your department if you want more information about your situation.

Many doctoral students are employed by another employer than KI, often Region Stockholm and get their salary from them. If you have questions then, contact the HR of the respective employer.

B.6 Reimbursements and Health Benefits

When you need to pay yourself for some work-related expenses these are susceptible for a reimbursement from KI. Generally, under “Travel/expenses” in [Primula](#) you can register your expenses. There are 4 options being Travel domestic, Travel international, Expenses and car allowance, and Preventative health care allowance.

Preventative health care allowance (see [KI benefits](#), [wellness benefits](#)) allows all KI staff to claim [3000SEK](#) as a health promotion incentive annually. This means that for all physical activities that you do within one year, you can get reimbursed for these expenses through Primula by the end of November each year. This can be a gym membership, a class or any other form of physical activity. Note that this does not apply to PhD students on a scholarship or employed elsewhere. If in doubt, ask HR at your department.

As part of occupational health, you can also have a [paid eye examination and working glasses](#) if needed.

For all claims you need to attach receipts/tickets proving dates and expenses.

B.7 Traveling as a PhD student

As a PhD student it is mandatory to attend conferences, workshops, seminars, retreats and courses of which many require travelling abroad. Different research groups have different opportunities to allow PhD students to travel, but you can help yourself by applying to travel grants (see [below](#)).

The KI's business trip and travel provider is [AMEX-GBT](#), through their [NEO portal](#) you can book hotels, trains, flights, boats. You should book your travels through the travel agency as much as possible as private bookings with retrospective reimbursement may not be accepted.

As mentioned before, all travel expenses outside what the travel agency provides, such as visa fees, taxis, public transport fees, meal allowance, can be purchased privately and get a reimbursement retrospectively within the next 3 months.

The Swedish Tax Agency (*Skatteverket*) does [return subsistence allowances](#) (per diem) when you do your yearly declaration.

Before traveling make sure you download and keep handy the [travel insurance issued by KI](#). Ask for it from your department administrator.

B.8 Research grants

As a PhD student at KI, you don't need to apply for grants to sustain your research or your salary. There is the option to apply for [research/salary supplementation](#) for your research group. This will support your research group and your CV. The calls for PhD students can be from [KI](#) internally or private, but some grants exist also from [the Swedish government or EU commission](#). All [KI grants](#) are centralised and can be found in [Prisma](#).

B.9 Travel grants

The [KI travel grant](#) has 4 periods to apply with corresponding traveling times to travel. These grants are 8,000SEK for EU travels and 14,000SEK for international trips. When you apply for a travel grant in Prisma, remember to add in the Budget section the INDI item. This stands for indirect costs that represent 25% of the total costs that can be avoided by adding this to the budget.

There is a separate travel grant to support [research visits for PhD students](#).

There may also be private travel grants for different research fields and purposes, more information also available [here](#). Another database about research grants and travel grants, but also awards and prizes that you may be entitled to apply for as a doctoral student can be found [here](#). Most likely the same meeting/conference you are attending provides a travel grant application when registration is being done. Also ask your direct colleagues for advice.

B.10 Research Implementation Beyond Academia

You might develop ideas and new knowledge that could create value other than in the form of academic publications. Under Swedish law, due to the professors' privilege, all ideas and creations generated at Swedish universities are owned by the creators and not by the university. This means that researchers at KI own the right to their patentable results. It is important to remember that if you

intend to protect such ideas with a patent, you cannot publish them before the patent filing.

Support with this and other related issues is found at the [External Engagement Office](#) (focusing on industry collaboration and [impact](#)) or [KI Innovations](#) (focusing on commercial development of inventions).

B.11 Reporting Misconduct and Lab Safety issues

Maintaining a good and friendly working environment is everyone's responsibility. KI has zero tolerance toward any form of harassment, bullying and discrimination ([link to the code of conduct of KI](#)).

If you want to report an incident of any type then please read the section "[A.12 Where to go for help and support](#)" for a detailed description of the steps you need to take. You can also find this information [here](#). This could be lab safety, work environment, online security and data breaches or any other sort of incident you want to report.

Therefore, you have the obligation to make a report when you are subjected to any form of them, or if you witness someone being subject to them (use this form to make a report). You can get help when you need it from your supervisor, study director, your department HR, student union, and Labor union. You can make your report anonymous or ask for confidentiality in your communications.

B.12 KI Pendelbussen

In those situations where a KI researchers needs to reach the Solna campus from the Flemingsberg campus or vice versa, KI offers a free [commuter bus](#) between them. All that is needed is a KI (or Karolinska Hospital) card to use this service.

B.13 Secondary occupations

You are allowed to have [*secondary occupations*](#) if they are formally logged in the [*Primula*](#) system and approved by the department administrator/head of department. The regulatory framework for this is in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). KI needs to receive enough information about the secondary occupation to rule out: competing interests, credibility-damaging factors (to KI) or factors hindering your work at KI. Note that additional work for the main employer or other authority may also be considered a secondary occupation. When in doubt: contact HR at your department.

B.14 Vacation and public holidays

PhD students are entitled to 28 days of [*vacation*](#) per calendar year. Note that this increases to 31 days if you are over 30, and 35 days if you are over 40. You are entitled by law to 4 weeks of continuous vacation during the period June to August. Usually, administrators assign vacation around Midsummer and Christmas in [*Primula*](#) for administrative reasons, but you can take vacation anytime as long as it is agreed with you and your supervisor(s). You can see in Primula the actual period that was assigned to you, in that month you'll receive a vacation complement to your salary. No documents need to be filled.

Note that these rules do not apply to [*students who do not have a doctoral employment with KI*](#). For more information and rules about vacation see [*here*](#).

[*Public holidays*](#) include holidays that fall on a weekday, Easter, Midsummer, Christmas and New Year's Eve. PhD students are not entitled to bridge days (a workday between two work-free days).

B.15 Parental leave and leave of absence

You have the right to [*parental leave*](#) while doing your PhD. You have the right to stay at home to take care of your child until they are 18 months old. You also have the right to work part time if you have a child under 12 years old. Any

parental leave must be applied for in Primula web 2 months in advance and cannot be rejected as long as you comply with the regulations. Your parental benefit is handled by [Försäkringskassan](#) and as an employment benefit you are in some cases entitled to additional payment from KI. You also have the right to stay at home to take care of a sick child and during that time you are entitled to benefits from *Försäkringskassan* in certain cases.

You also have a right to take a paid [leave of absence](#) for other reasons such as some personal issues or care of a relative. See the KI website for more about [employment benefits](#). Ask HR at your department if you are in doubt, employed outside of KI or on a scholarship.

B.16 IT related issues

[Wisum](#) is the system for buying IT products, computers, adapters, software licenses, screens, etc. You can also talk to your IT department for help or the administrator of your department.

If you are a PC user, new software can only be downloaded through the Software Center app which is pre-installed in every KI computer. If you are a Mac user, the same applies, but the software centre is called a Self Service app. If you want some software outside the app, you first need to order through [Wisum](#) after which it will appear in it. If the software you want is not in Wisum, you can contact your IT department.

For unlicensed software that is free you'll need a temporary admin user to authorise the download that will be provided by the IT department for this special use.

You can use [Eduroam WiFi](#) which works throughout all European universities and can be accessed in the following format: user is [username@ki.se](#) and your usual password. There is also a KI staff WiFi that KI computers connect to automatically and a guest WiFi for temporary use.

B.17 Printing

As long as you have your KI ID card, you can use the [printers](#) located in KI premises. Contact your local IT staff to get their IP so you can use your Ethernet cable to print or just get a USB stick. There are also some poster printers, for example the 6th floor in the NEO building Flemingsberg which requires a USB stick.

KI has a [printing and graphic design service](#) (*Bildmakarna*), that can just print pamphlets, posters, etc and also offer services including video production, poster production, illustrations.

B.18 Generative AI tools

You can access Microsoft Copilot, an AI powered chat tool with your KI login and Microsoft Edge browser [here](#). Microsoft Copilot is under KI's agreement with Microsoft, and therefore all data is handled securely in accordance with [Microsoft Enterprise data protection](#). This, combined with the fact that none of the data entered is used to train the underlying model, makes it our recommended tool for generative AI.

ChatGPT is another popular AI tool that can be used in a similar way. However, unlike Microsoft Copilot, there are several privacy risks related to using ChatGPT. One key concern is that you might accidentally share sensitive information, such as information about your research, during your conversations, which could be stored or misused if not handled correctly. If you need to use ChatGPT instead of the KI Copilot then please access the AI tool through the [DuckDuckGo AI chat interface](#).

B.19 Career support

[KI Career Service](#) supports PhD students and researchers for their future careers. KI Career Service offers seminars, webinars, workshops, lectures, online support, PhD course and an internship program every semester. The activities are

included in the [KI calendar](#) and advertised in the career newsletter, which you must [sign up](#) for. PhD students can receive free feedback on at least one of their documents related to job searching, such as [a CV](#), [cover letter](#), or [LinkedIn profile](#). You can also request a one-to-one meeting by sending an e-mail to career-service@ki.se. You can find more information about career support for doctoral students on the KI Career Service [webpage](#).

The internship program is available every semester. [The internship projects for PhD students](#) are advertised in February and September. To be eligible, you must be a PhD student employed at KI and have completed the doctoral course [Career Skills for Scientists \(2463\)](#). Additionally, you will need your supervisor and department's HR approval to participate. The program enables you to acquire experience outside academia by working for a month on a Life Science-related project in a company or organisation.

The academic and industry world in science is active on LinkedIn, so we recommend working on a profile page there. Every year there is [CHaSE](#): a fair where industry and academia meet and aims to recruit people looking for jobs in Life sciences and Health.



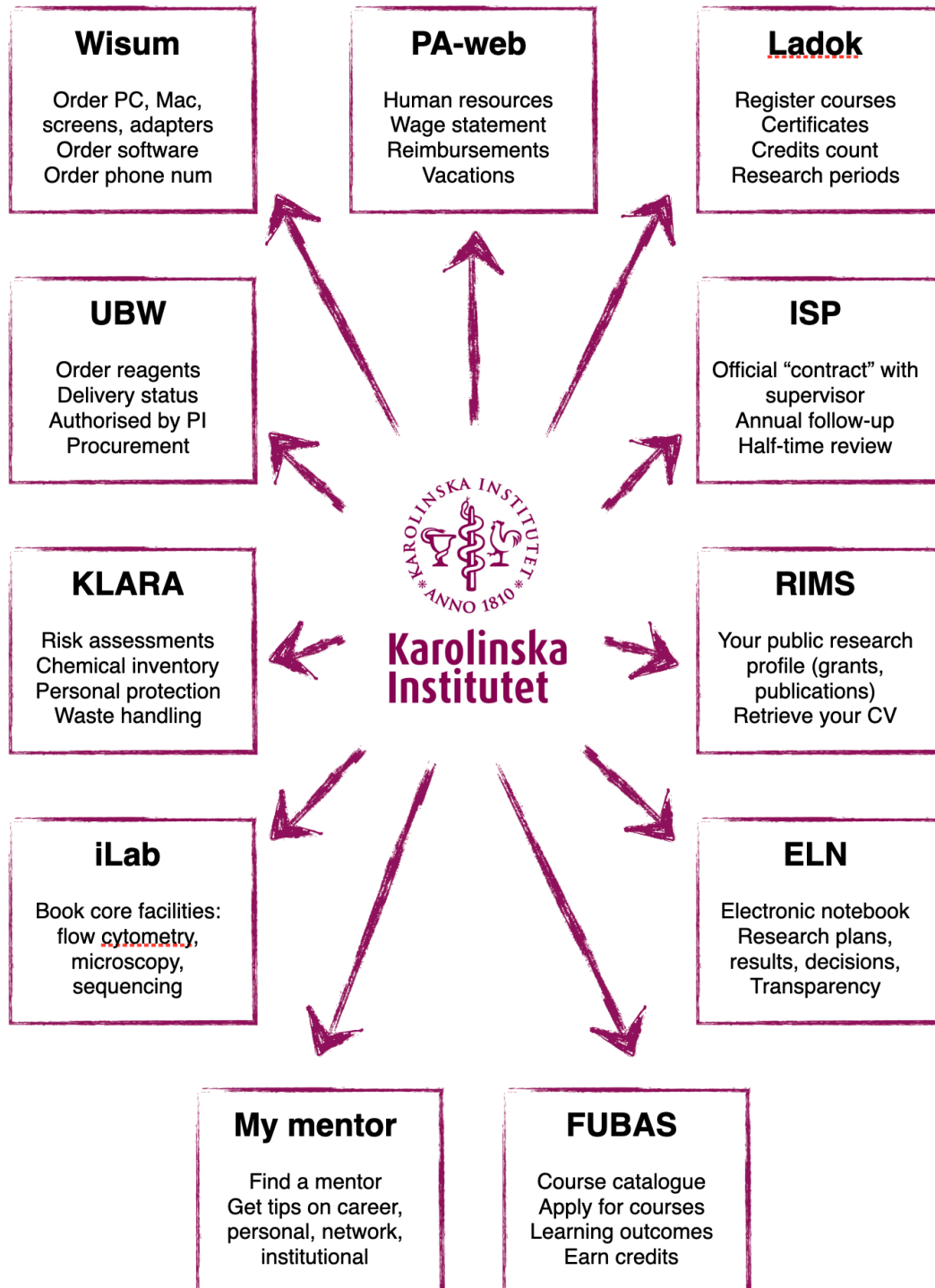
Figure 2.

Illustration of the most important webpages that are both useful and necessary during your PhD.
They are related to your PhD education, employment, and administration.

C.

LIVING IN SWEDEN



Important

KI has a page dedicated to [international staff](#).

C.1 Administrative tasks for newcomers to Sweden

- a. Apply for a [personnummer](#) (personal number) at *Skatteverket* (Swedish tax agency). Right after getting it, apply for the [Swedish ID card](#). This is not suitable for international travel, for that a [National ID card or a passport](#) is needed.
- b. Get a Swedish phone number from any phone company like Comviq, Hallon, Vimla, Telia. Note that some may have a student discount!
- c. Get a [bank account](#) in any Swedish bank, so you can get your salary in Swedish kronor. Get the mobile [BankID](#) service, it's a must in Sweden to get things ID verified digitally and also [Swish](#) to easily pay small amounts to other people. Both are included in most bank packages. Be cautious about opening one without your *personnummer* (personal number) as some banks may not allow you to.
- d. Check if you need a residence permit/visa or any legal issues at <https://www.migrationsverket.se/>
- e. Insure your home with a *hemförsäkring* from any insurance company like Folksam, Trygg-Hansa, Hedvig, Lansforsakringar. Note that some have student discounts!
- f. Register into [Försäkringskassan](#) (the Swedish Social Insurance Agency) by filling in a form of [Flytta till Sverige](#) (waiting time for approval 1-6 months).
- g. Get the [Mecenat](#) app. This is the way to access your student card digitally and get student discounts. The discount for SL (*Storstockholms Lokaltrafik*)

is especially important for saving money on transport. To get the card, you need to be a member of a student association, which in our case is Medicinska Föreningen. You can visit them on both campuses or [online](#) and get a [membership](#) for each semester or every year. You can prove you are a student with your Ladok transcript and your KI login.

C.2 Accommodation

Housing is a challenge in Stockholm. There are different options for housing: (a) share a place with partner/friend/landlord, (b) getting into a queue, (c) buy a place. The range of rental prices that one can face are: for rooms 9-14m² (with shared common spaces) is 4,500-7,000SEK/month. For studios 12-35m² (one room with kitchen and separate bathroom) is 6,000-15,000SEK/month. For apartments (more than one room with kitchen and bathroom) can go from 7,000+ depending on the size.

Renting: The practical, faster and temporary thing you do is find a place to rent. There are dedicated webpages for this such as [Blocket Bostad](#), [Bostaddirekt](#), [Qasa](#), [Akademiskkvart](#) or Facebook pages. Tips to keep in mind are visit the place yourself or by someone in person, sign a contract before you pay anything, be particularly careful to check all that is included in the rent, such as electricity, internet, etc.



Important

Note! Scam alert! When you rent second hand, the person renting out the place must have obtained the permission of their landlord.

Queue for housing: When you arrive for the first time in Sweden and particularly in KI, you can apply for [KI housing](#). They have apartments around the campuses, but you can only stay for 1 year from when you move to Stockholm. As a student, you can be a member of MF and by default get to the SSSB rental queue where you can apply for a room (mean waiting time 1-2 years depending on conditions of the apartment and area) or apartment (mean waiting time 4-5 years depending on conditions of the apartment and area). If you plan to stay here for

more time after your PhD, you can get into the [Stockholm stad bostad](#) queue (200SEK/year). Lastly, there are private communities that locally have an independent queue system for rental accommodations, for example Nobelus in Flemingsberg by [Byggvesta](#).

Buy an apartment/house: Websites like [Hemnet](#) can be used to find a residence to buy in Stockholm. You need at least 15% of the total cost of the property you attempt to buy, if you can't reach this, you can complement with independent private loans. Some banks also require permanent employment to grant loans, which can be difficult when employed as a PhD student. Read more about buying an accommodation [here](#).

C.3 Public Transportation

Stockholm has one of the best public transport networks in the world. You can buy a ticket and plan your trip on the [SL website](#) or app. The ticket covers all types of public transportations, from buses s

For those that are members of Medicinska Föreningen (MF), and have the Mecenat app installed, a new SL symbol is added to your [Mecenat](#) card allowing you to buy the discounted public transport tickets. If you ever get checked while taking public transportation, you are required to show that symbol if you have a discounted ticket, otherwise you will get fined.

KI is also offering a free bus service ([KI Pendelbussen](#)) between the two campuses as [aforementioned](#).

C.4 Learning Swedish

In academia it is hard to motivate yourself to learn Swedish because of the international environment. If you are aiming to stay in Sweden long term, you may want to start [learning Swedish](#). KI offers a 10-week course runran by [Folkuniversitetet](#) from A1 to B2. *Svenska för invandrare* ([SFI](#)) is the national public courses you can apply from any level until B2. If you want to pursue

learning more after SFI, you can go for *Svenska som andraspråk* ([SAS](#)). If courses are not your thing or you don't have time for them, you can try different apps to learn the basics on [Duolingo](#) or [Babbel](#). Alternatively there is [SVT](#) (national TV) in easy Swedish or on Spotify: [Simple Swedish podcast](#), [Coffee Break Swedish](#) or [Radio Sweden på lätt Svenska](#).

C.5 Healthcare

[Healthcare in Sweden](#) is public and decentralised. Public meaning your taxes cover all health care you may need in Sweden and in the EU ([EU blue card request](#) by [Försäkringskassan](#)). Even though it is public, you need to pay 275kr for each visit and approximately 120kr/day for each day in the hospital. Once you have reached an expense of 1400kr/12 months, you *do not need* to pay additional fees anymore. Note that dental care is free up to 24 years-old, that includes any tooth adjustments. Decentralised meaning that each centre is run publicly or privately with support of its regions and is run independently.

All is managed through the [website](#), app and phone number **1177**. You access it through your BankID. You can register to the [Vårdcentralen](#) (primary health centre) that fits you the best, same for all specialist centres.

C.6 Brought a partner to Sweden?

If you have brought your partner to Stockholm, who is looking for a job or struggling to settle in the city, consider the [Stockholm dual career network](#) (SDCN). A collaboration between all higher education institutions in Stockholm along with the City of Stockholm with the goal of supporting the partners of Stockholm based researchers through employment opportunities and cultural integration. Find more information on the SDCN 5-week [“Unlock Sweden”](#) programme or follow them on [Instagram](#) for updates on social gatherings.

C.7 Within the last year finishing your PhD

There are some things one needs to be aware of when getting to the final year of your PhD. If you are staying in Sweden after your PhD contract finishes you are entitled to ask for [unemployment benefit](#). To meet the requirements for basic unemployment benefits you need to register yourself to the [Swedish Public Employment Service \(Arbetsförmedlingen\)](#) from the FIRST day that you are unemployed and ask for the basic unemployment benefits at the [Alfa kassan unemployment insurance fund](#).

There are two things that you might want to consider. First, if you want to be eligible for a compliment on your basic employment benefit, you actively need to register to [A-kassa](#) at least a year before your contract ends. Refer to the [earlier section](#) to learn more. If you are a member [A-kassa](#), you should request your unemployment benefit directly from them. Second, you may want to become a member of a trade union like [SULF](#) or [Naturvetarna](#) which are associations that can take your benefit up to 80% of your past income. You also need to be a member for more than 12 months to get these benefit. Refer to the [earlier section](#) to learn more.

Three months before your fixed-term employment as a PhD ends, you can ask KI (particularly your HR) to sign you up in the Job Security Foundation ([Trygghetsstiftelsen](#) or TSN). Otherwise, when your contract expires and you would like to have their help, you can be registered with them immediately. TSN supports the job seekers by giving access to free Swedish classes, job seeking-related seminars, revision of your CV and LinkedIn, free access to numerous courses related to job seeking but also to specialise yourself in a field you are particularly interested that were not offered by KI PhD courses such as Regulatory Affairs, Leadership, Management (those are delivered by third parties, but if you registered to TSN, they may be free of charge for you).



Important

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