

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

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This handout is designed to help doctoral students at Karolinska Institutet (KI) with common educational and administrative tasks. It has been written by the [Doctoral Students' Association](#) (DSA) in collaboration with KI and other stakeholders. 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:

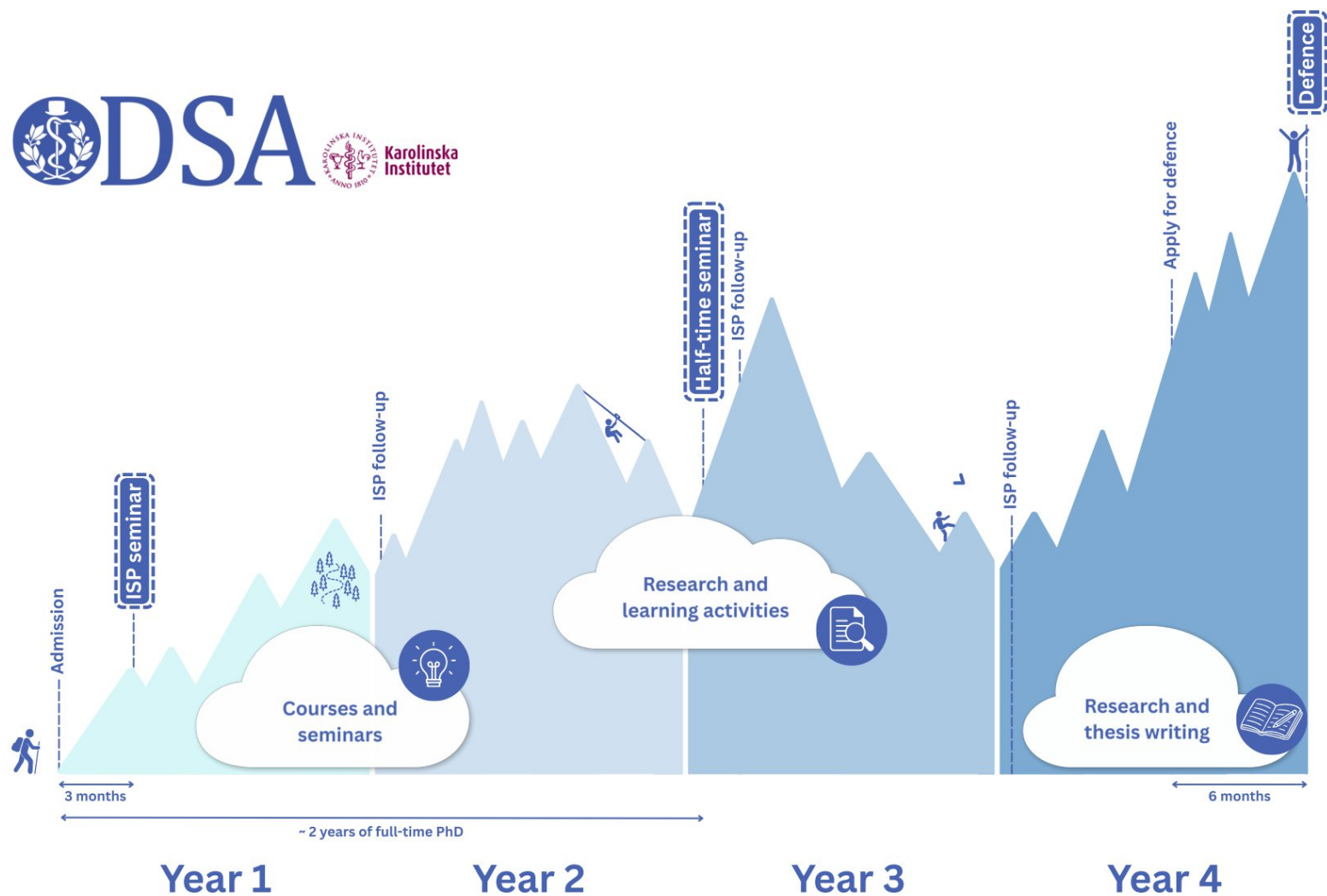
- dsa@medicinskaforeningen.se, and/or
- dsaeduc@medicinskaforeningen.se.

DISCLAIMER

Please be aware that some information may differ between departments or become outdated.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

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Figure 1. Overview of your journey ahead



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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.

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

Within the first month:

Living in Sweden and work-life related matters:

1. See the [checklist for international students moving to Sweden](#).
2. If interested: [join MF](#) and sign up for the [SSSB housing queue](#).

KI General:

3. Register your semester in Ladok.
4. Register for the compulsory course: 'Introduction to Doctoral Education'.
5. Set up meetings with your main and co-supervisors.
6. If doing wet lab – ensure you are signed up to the required safety trainings.
7. Sign up for the fire safety and CPR courses.

Administrative:

8. Get access to all necessary buildings with your KI card (link).
9. Connect to Eduroam.
10. Get your KI email up and running.
11. Check out your [profile on KI RIMS](#).
12. Add the KI standard [email signature](#).

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13. Figure out how to print.
14. Register your [ELN](#).

Within the first three months:

General:

1. Establish the [ISP and plan the ISP Seminar](#).
2. Join a [trade union](#).
3. Join the unemployment fund ([A-Kassa](#)).
4. Decide if you want to join a [research school](#).
5. Register for [doctoral courses](#) (course catalogues are published annually around April 15th and October 15th). Especially try to register early on for the mandatory courses.
6. MEB: Check when the mandatory data management course is and sign up if possible.
7. Read the whole PhD Information Booklet!

Administrative:

8. Check out the overview of the webpages and softwares at KI and get used to the ones relevant to your project.
9. See if you can transfer credits for your courses from your prior degrees.

Within the first year:

10. Choose a [mentor](#).
11. Update [eISP](#).
12. MTC: Complete the book exam.

A.3 Individual Study Plan (ISP)

The [Individual Study Plan](#) is an agreement between the PhD student and their supervisor, outlining the goals, progress and outcomes of your doctoral

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studies. It is critical to use your ISP as a live document and 'contract', ensuring progress and agreements with your supervisor are updated at least yearly.

Due to the varied nature of each doctoral student's projects and timelines, the ISP is arguably the most critical documentation of your PhD, alongside your employment contract. It includes general information about supervision, employment and financing, time plan, your projects, ethical permits, how you will achieve your [*learning outcomes*](#), and which educational activities you will take during your PhD and your departmental duty allocation.

You get a lot of things out of the ISP. Some of these benefits include:

- It allows you to follow up on what you have planned and plan ahead.
- You formulate clear goals for your research project as well as your own learning.
- Together with your supervisor, you reflect on how different activities will contribute to your progress.
- Together with your supervisor, you identify what needs to be done during different periods, what the obstacles and opportunities are, what your strengths and weaknesses are, and what motivates you as a doctoral student.
- In a broader sense, you learn to express in words your capacity to conduct research, your familiarity with your subject field, and your life as a researcher, theoretically and methodologically, even beyond completing your doctoral thesis.
- You can reuse these words about your skills when you apply for jobs and research grants and when updating your CV.

Within the first 3 months of registration, you will 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

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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. These formal reviews are an opportunity to discuss any concerns or ideas with your supervisor(s), and to document progress and changes to plans.



Important

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.3.1 ISP Editing

The electronic ISP (eISP) is opened in the [ISP-system](#). Your supervisor must establish the first version of the ISP prior to the aforementioned ISP seminar within the first three months of the PhD. If any changes are agreed, your PI needs to open a new version of the ISP and together you need to make the changes and agree on them. Once you have made the changes, you send it to your PI for approval, then to the department's PhD study director to approve it as well. The status needs to be "Established" for the process to be completed. Every new review (ie. annual/half-time), this cycle must be repeated.

Sometimes the ISP can get stuck with the supervisor. If your supervisor does not approve the changes, after several reminders, try to contact the study director at your department and ask for their guidance.

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A.3.2 Intended Learning Outcomes

At the thesis defence, one of the evaluations made is whether a student achieved the **intended learning outcomes of doctoral education (ILOs)**. The ISP requires documentation of both the **planning** to achieve this learning and the **progress** made towards achieving this learning.

Gothenburg University has published an amazing short guide on this, which you can read for yourself by clicking [here](#). They provide key recommendations for phrasing, listed below. For the full version of the following table, including examples from real-world ISPs, read the full guide.

A1	I am extending my knowledge through...
	I work independently to ...
	I am carrying on self-studies in... in order to...
	To be acquainted with ... I
	By... I learned how to...
	The ... enabled me to... because....
	To increase familiarity with ... I retrieved...
A2	I performed critical thinking regarding...
	I collected data by way of...
	I use.... methods to deal with...
	I analysed and interpreted the data using...
	In order to... I had to modify the ... method such that...
B1	Through I identified knowledge gaps that...
	By... I could bring up new scientific objectives
	To... will enable me to... because...
B2	In order to... I deployed ...
	The lack of... justifies...
& B3	For the reason that ... I tried a new approach, namely ... which made it possible to...
	In the process of ... I learned how to...
B4	I conveyed my message to ... by using the ... multimedia tool

B5	that... In group training assignments I learned to translate ... and make it accessible ... which led ... to ... of relevance to... The analysis of ... and change of methodology by way of ... led to ... As a response to ... I adapted ... A careful selection of new method was needed because ... Noting that ... has allowed to ... The detection of ... was possible thanks to ... I contributed to the learning... in their professional setting...
	The course... enabled me to ... improve... Through collaboration... I learned... and taught... about... I have also... enabling others to ... I supervised... and contributed to...
C1	I have questioned ... because I did not find ... Talked with... about... and how it could have been avoided. Accept failing... and not... Try to explain, rather than...
C2	I am developing... to interpret the role of physics... such as... Will take part in... that aims to promote science... ... will have great impact on ... especially for ...

A.4 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 \(Fubas\)*](#), which is published around April 15th and October 15th. Applications are open for one month. After the application deadline has passed, [*open vacancies*](#) are updated.

Once you have received confirmation of your spot on a course, you can register the course for credits. The national student interface [*Ladok*](#) allows you

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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”.

Depending on your kind of academic background, research area and project, you will have a set of [mandatory courses](#) which must be completed before your [half-time review](#). Examples include human physiology, laboratory safety, ethics, statistics, and quality assurance in clinical research courses. Note that many of these courses fill up quickly and have a slight backlog, so we recommend applying early.

For some research areas at KI, there are [doctoral programmes](#) and [clinical research schools](#). They offer courses that may be of interest to PhD students in the specific research/clinical area. See more in a section below.

A.5 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 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’s students), participation in

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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.6 Departmental Duties

Departmental duties (such as being the responsible person for 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.

A.7 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.8 Doctoral programmes and (Clinical) Research Schools

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

Similarly, KI offers a number of [clinical research schools](#), which offer several weeks of classes tailored to specific clinical profiles, and reimburse the clinic for the paid leave time required to complete the courses. To be eligible, the following must apply:

- You are clinically active, working for Region Stockholm.
- You are a doctoral student at KI, or will be registered as a doctoral student at the latest three weeks before start of the research school.
- You have not yet completed your half-time review and have conducted less than the equivalent of two years of full-time doctoral studies.

Like the clinical research schools, KI hosts a number of local and national [research schools](#) across a broad spectrum of topics. You can find more information [here](#).

A.9 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 the 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. 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.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.

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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, and type of support you need.

A.11 Before finishing your 1st year

Above, various concepts are introduced which will need to be addressed in your first year. Most will pop up naturally as you progress. However, please double-check that you have completed the three tasks below as well:

- a) Choose a mentor and tick the box in your ISP (you can find more info [below](#)).
- b) Do your 1st annual ISP update.
- c) Join the unemployment fund (A-kassa) and a trade union. Read more about the benefits in a later [section](#).

A.12 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. 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](#)).

- c) **MTC department only**: Complete the [book exam](#).

A.13 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 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](#).

We also strongly recommend taking the half-time as a personal moment to reflect on your progress as well. Review the learning outcomes and goals stated initially, and check that all mandatory requirements are being met (at least 10 credits, all mandatory courses, you have a mentor registered etc).

Furthermore, please briefly discuss with your supervisor the following points:

1. At this stage, does this PhD look like it is going to culminate in a [compilation thesis](#) or a [monograph thesis](#)? What does this mean for my work in the coming two years?
2. If a compilation thesis: do my publications follow the **criteria for original and empirical research**? If not or if unsure (for example, if theoretical AI method development with almost no medical data involvement), please discuss this with the half time committee and director of doctoral education in context of the guidelines for applying for a PhD defence (see more details in [this section](#)).

3. Have we confirmed that for my research topic, the correct **mandatory courses** have been identified (ie. Quality Assurance in Clinical Research) and that they have been completed? If unsure, please address it at the half-time and/or with the study director.
4. Similarly, requirements related to ethical approval may vary depending on the nature and origin of the data. For example, studies involving data collected outside Sweden but analysed within a KI doctoral project may still require Swedish ethical approval. This should be clarified early to avoid delays in the defence application.

A.14 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 (at least 1st author for students admitted after March 1st, 2024).
- 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 at KI is a [compilation thesis](#), whereby you write a kappa (introduction) and constituent papers. Alternatively, some PhD students at KI publish a thesis in the form of a [monograph thesis](#) (only written thesis, no publications). More information can be found [here](#). It is recommended to prepare your defence application at least 3 months or more

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before the desired defence date for a compilation thesis, and at least 5 months in advance for a monograph thesis.

For the compilation thesis, please check that your publications adhere to the [guidelines](#) on the types of papers which are accepted as original work. In case your work might not exactly follow these guidelines (ie. an AI-oriented thesis with no clear application in medicine), please reach out to your director of doctoral studies as early as possible to ensure no miscommunication occurs.

Part of the process of defence preparation includes the application to the dissertation committee, which decides if you can proceed with a defence. The **most common reason for a rejection** from the dissertation committee is a **conflict of interest** – often when supervisors have (recently) collaborated with a proposed member of the defence committee. Please review this in detail with your supervisor.

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.15 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 the Higher Education Ordinance, she/he 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 the Higher Education Ordinance.

When requesting extension, do not forget to mention any [departmental duties](#) performed during the PhD and whether you have been a [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](#).

A.16 Research Ethics and Integrity

**MEB students abide
by 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 relevant [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 system [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 other agencies, 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.

A.17 Where to go for help and support

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

In this section, we will first introduce different support systems within KI, the student union (Medicinska Föreningen, MF) and the trade unions. Next, we have created a workflow to navigate any problem, to help you out how to choose the right systems or the right sequence of events with a problem.

A.17.1 IA Reporting System

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.

A.17.2 Student Safety Officers

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.

A.17.3 Departmental student representative

The doctoral student representative at your department is a fellow PhD student, who sits on the departmental board and can be contacted for any sort of issue, though may be most helpful for department-specific or course-specific concerns. 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.

A.17.4 MF Ombudperson

The student union (MF) employs two [ombudspersons](#) to help students and doctoral students navigate problems with the university. This can include issues with a (co-)supervisor, plagiarism, exams, courses, work environment and defence application rejections. You can contact them using the [contact form](#) on the MF website.

A.17.5 KI Ombudsperson

You should contact [KI's ombudsperson](#) in the case of science-related issues, intellectual property, plagiarism, authorship issues, GLP code, and

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

A.17.6 Departmental contacts

The departmental **administrator of doctoral studies** can be contacted for matters related to the half-time documentation, credit-bearing accreditation, annual reports and planning your defence. You can find the contact details [*here*](#). The departmental doctoral **study director** can be contacted for signing your ISP, half-time report, concerns about PhD studies and/or supervision. The **departmental/group administrator** can be contacted for issues with things like travel insurances, book premises, ordering fikas, etc.

A.17.7 Your Mentor

The mentor is a confidant with experience navigating challenges in similar or different work environments. In certain cases, they can advise you on how to navigate an issue within the PhD.

A.17.8 Occupational Health Service

As PhD students, we have an [*occupational health service*](#) (Avonova) that allows you to get 2 free appointments/year with 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*](#).

A.17.9 KI Career Service

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.17.10 KI 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*](#).

A.17.11 SACO-S Trade Union

In cases of issues with the employment contract or the work environment (denied sick/parental/vacation days, etc.), you can reach out to the trade union association [SACO-S](#) for support.

A.18 Workflow for solving issues

Follow the steps below to get started with solving an issue. You can find more details on how to report an issue [here](#). This could be lab safety, work environment, online security and data breaches or any other sort of incident you want to report.

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 an 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 done anonymously. If the issue is reported, keep track of the IA system progress.



Important

- 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

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Important

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, after the student has provided explicit consent to do so.
- 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 Head Student Safety Representative: If the problem remains unresolved, the Head 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 Safety Committee or KI President: For issues affecting a group of students or if the problem still persists, the Head SSO can contact the KI Safety Committee and bring this as a point of concern. For individual issues, they can contact the KI President directly.
- File a 6a Request: As a last resort, the Head 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

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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,

- a) [The work environment act](#)
- b) [The discriminations act](#)
- c) The Higher Education Act
- d) 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: According to the Higher Education Ordinance, a doctoral student has the right 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 President 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 of 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](#).

Resolve issues early:

You have the obligation to make a report when you are subjected to any form of them, or if you witness someone else being subject to them. You can get help from your supervisor, study director, your department HR, student union, and trade union.

Reporting an issue in the IA system is important, but it can sometimes feel overwhelming. Many concerns can be resolved early and informally, without needing to submit a formal report. One common challenge that some doctoral students experience is miscommunication or unclear expectations between the student and the principal supervisor. If you find yourself in this or a similar situation, there are several **other places you can turn for support**:

- a) Speak with your student departmental representative, SSO, or the MF's ombudspersons. They can offer guidance on how to approach conversations with your supervisor and help you reflect on possible next steps.
- b) Reach out to your co-supervisors or mentor. They often know your principal supervisor well and may be able to offer useful insights or suggestions.
- c) Connect with other doctoral students through DSA. Talking to peers who have faced similar situations can be reassuring and helpful.

Remember: you're not alone. Many challenges can be resolved smoothly when addressed early, and DSA is here to support you throughout your doctoral journey.

You can also receive support for a range of work-related challenges through the **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**, available 24/7. This is a telephone counselling service that is available for all employees at KI. You will first speak with a social worker, who can refer you to the appropriate expert if needed. More information is available here: [Staff support – telephone counselling | Staff Portal](#).

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

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- d) Departmental administrator of doctoral studies: half-time documentation, credit-bearing accreditation, annual reports, planning your defence.
- e) Departmental doctoral study director: signing your ISP, half-time report, concerns about PhD studies and/or supervision.
- f) Departmental/group administrator: Travel insurances, book premises, order fikas, etc.

You should contact [KI's ombudsperson](#) in the case of science-related issues, intellectual property, plagiarism, authorship issues, GLP code, and input on ethics. Do not confuse them with the aforementioned [MF's Ombudspersons](#).



Important

- g) As PhD students, we have an [occupational health service](#) (Avonova) that allows you to get 2 free appointments /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](#).
- h) 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

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Figure 2.

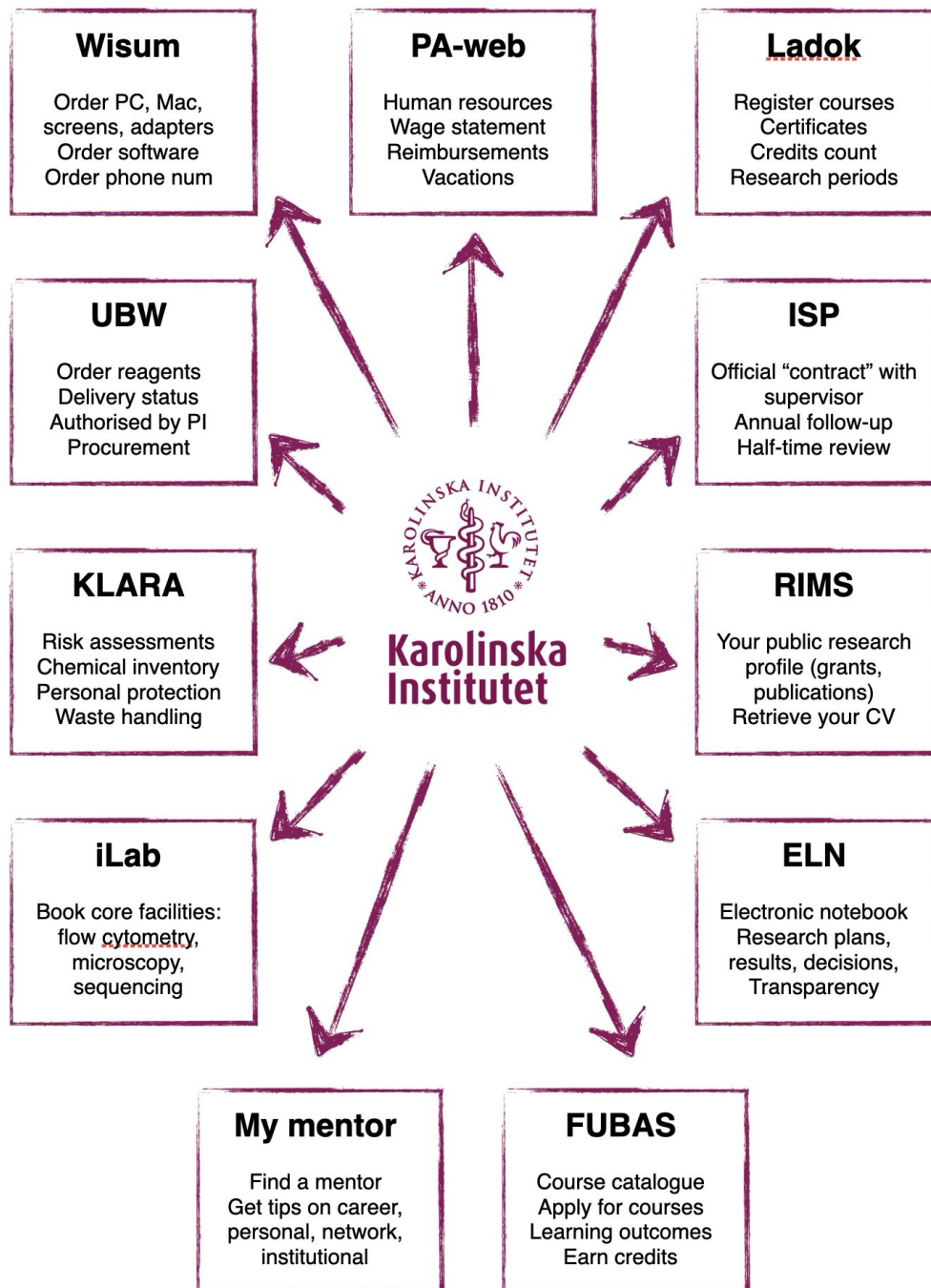


Illustration of the most important webpages that are both useful and necessary during your PhD. They are related to your PhD education, employment, and administration.

B. GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE

B.1 Primula (PA-Web)

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 (see next [section](#) for more information).

B.2 Salary

If you are employed by KI, you get a monthly salary. The doctoral student salaries are negotiated by the aforementioned trade union association 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 electronic mail from organisations), unless you want it in paper format by post. You will pay taxes on your salary monthly and you are expected to submit your declaration in the spring of each year. Depending on your declaration, you may be entitled to a refund or residual tax. Remember to check what applies to your situation and make sure that you submit all the necessary information to the Swedish Tax Agency (Skatteverket). For example, you may be entitled to receive a tax refund if you lived a full calendar year in Sweden or if 90% of your income for a calendar year was earned in

Sweden. All information about taxes in Sweden can be found on [Skatteverket's website](#).

In case you are a scholarship holder, then your external scholarship is paid directly to you from the scholarship giver. If the scholarship does not meet the salary level requirements at KI, 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 in these cases, feel free to contact the HR of the respective employer.

B.3 Pension

You, as a doctoral student at KI, receive a pensionable income, similarly to the other employees. Every year, you and KI pay a fee based on your income. The fee is paid into the pension system and gives you what is known as pension entitlement. Your total pension entitlement over your lifetime determines the size of your pension ([Pensionsmyndigheten in Swedish](#)).

Your pension consists of three parts; **National public pension** ([allmän pension](#)), **Occupational pension** ([tjänstepension](#)), and your **Private pension** (eget sparande).

The **National public pension** consists of **income-based pension** ([inkomstpension](#)) and **premium pension** ([premiepension](#)) and is paid out by the state via the Pensions Agency (Pensionsmyndigheten). The basic principles of the state pension are simple. Each year, part of your salary is paid into two different accounts. The difference between the income-based and premium pensions is that you can choose to invest the contents of the premium pension in funds of your choice.

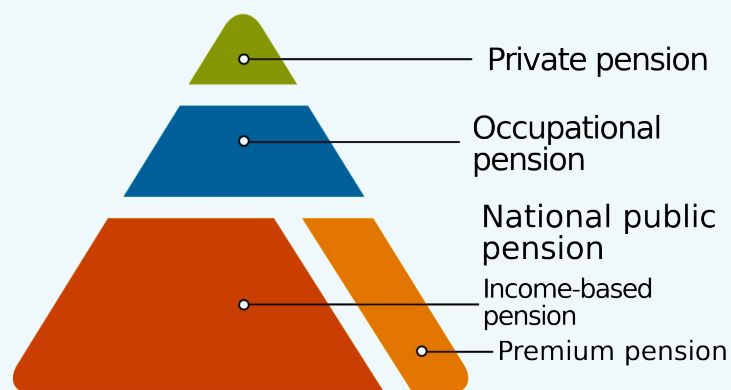
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The **Occupational pension** is paid directly by KI. The younger you are and/or the higher salary you earn, the higher proportion of your total pension the Occupational pension will take.

The **Private pension** is what you have managed to personally save over the years.

Your pension is calculated based on how much money you have in your accounts when you choose to withdraw your pension and how many years you are expected to live at that time. Do you want to know how much you have already earned in your pension accounts? The best way to know is by visiting <https://www.minpension.se/>, an independent service in collaboration with the state and private pensions companies.

Figure 3.



Overview of the pension system in Sweden

B.4 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:

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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.5 Vacation and public holidays

B.5.1 Vacation

The following rules and guidelines for vacation are specific to PhD students; 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](#).

How many vacation days you get each year depends on your age:

- 28 days if you are 29 or younger
- 31 days if you are 30–40
- 35 days if you are 40 or older

By law, you are entitled to **4 consecutive weeks off between June–August**, and you must use **at least 20 days each year**. As a PhD student at KI, you have **schablonsemester** (block holidays or standard vacation). This means your vacation days are paid out automatically at one time, usually on the last Sunday in July and Christmas Day. This means that you don't apply for vacation—just agree with your supervisor when you take your days. It is up to you to make sure that you take your vacation.

It is assumed you will **use all your vacation**, but you can save days if needed. To do that, plan and talk to your supervisor and notify the department **by March 31**. If you do not report that you are saving days, it is assumed you are using them all that year.

B.5.2 Public Holidays & Work Free Days

PhD students have **unregulated working hours**, meaning no paid overtime and no automatic bridge days. You manage your own schedule with your supervisor.

Work-free public holidays in Sweden include:



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- Sundays
- New Year's Eve (31/12) and New Year's Day (1/1)
- Epiphany (6/1)
- Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Whit Monday
- Labour Day (1/5)
- Ascension Day
- National Day (6/6)
- Midsummer Day
- All Saints' Day (31/10)
- Christmas Days (24 and 25/12), Boxing Day (26/12)

B.6 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 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*](#) and [*if you get sick*](#). Ask HR at your department if you are in doubt, employed outside of KI or on a scholarship.

B.7 A-kassa and Trade Unions

B.7.1 A-kassa

Akademikernas A-kassa, also known as Akademikernas arbetslöshetskassa, is an unemployment fund in Sweden that specifically supports academics and individuals with a 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

B.7.2 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:

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- 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% of your income for up to 150 days. You gain this benefit after being a member of a trade union for at least one year.
- If you find yourself in a difficult situation at work, the trade union can provide support on employment and labour law matters.
- 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 because 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.8 Student Representation and Student Union

B.8.1 Medicinska Föreningen (MF)

DSA is part of Medicinska Föreningen (MF), which is the student union at Karolinska Institutet. MF represents all KI students, including PhD students.

If you're a registered PhD student, you're welcome to become an MF member. All DSA board members and representatives need to be members,

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but it's optional for everyone else. You can still join events and seek help from DSA even if you are not an MF member.

Why join MF?

- SSSB housing queue: MF members can collect queue days with Stockholm Studentbostäder (SSSB). This lets you join the student housing queue for rooms and apartments around Stockholm. This option tends to have lower rents than normal housing.
- The Student Safety Network: MF offers support for both psychosocial and physical study environments, so you have someone to turn to if challenges come up during your studies.
- Events & activities: Members get discounts on MF-organized activities. There are also plenty of social events, gatherings, and fun student traditions to take part in.

How to become a member

You register your membership through the Hitract app, where MF handles all communication. You can also sign up online [here](#).

MF offers three types of membership:

- Student member – for registered, active KI students.
- Supporting member – for anyone interested in MF's activities but not currently studying at KI.
- Permanent member – for KI alumni.

Membership fees are paid per semester (unless you purchase the newly released yearly membership).

B.8.2 Difference between student and trade unions

Student unions, like MF and DSA, are organisations that represent the doctoral students at the university. Our DSA representatives sit in different committees at KI, both centrally, where decisions affecting KI in general are taken, and at every department. Trade unions, on the other hand, are organisations that represent employees in a specific profession or industry. In the context of KI doctoral students, it is SACO-S that can provide support and

representation on issues related to employment, working conditions, and professional development.

Doctoral students are both employed and enrolled as students in Sweden. So, in practice, both DSA and [SACO-S](#) represent KI doctoral students in the following way; DSA represents you in matters related to doctoral education, and SACO-S in matters related to employment.

B.8.3 Doctoral student representatives

Doctoral student representatives are involved at all levels of KI management, from the central leadership of the institution to the individual departments, 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 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, where we systematically elect the majority of representatives, although we also accept applications outside of this framework. At the time of writing the fifth edition of the booklet, we have approximately 60 representatives at various levels of KI. In case you are interested in becoming a doctoral student representative then feel free to contact us at:

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

Note: Becoming a doctoral student representative and regularly attending meetings within a committee means that you build a close working

relationship with the members of that committee. When selecting an opponent for your defence, you will have strong conflict of interest with the aforementioned committee members and you therefore risk your choice of opponent being rejected.

B.9 Reimbursements for travel and health care

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

B.10 Occupational health and Wellness Benefits

As part of occupational health, you can also have a [*paid eye examination and working glasses*](#) if needed. Furthermore, KI covers vaccinations depending on work-related exposure risk, and health checkups in relation to exposure to allergenic or CMR chemicals.

[Avonova](#) is the Occupational Health Centre for KI employees. You can approach Avonova directly, without previous approval from your manager. This is, of course, for support with work-related health problems (problems that may be related to your ability to work and the demands that your work makes). You can also contact Avonova for consultation about your physical and mental health for preventive purposes. For example, if you want support to get started with a physical activity but are unsure about your fitness and issues that may affect you. Avonova collaborates with KI Health Hub and can issue a prescription for physical activity. They can also provide 2 appointments with a specialist/year at no cost. These appointments could for example be with a PhD-tailored psychologist.



Important

If you need medical care that is not considered to be work-related, you should contact your regular family doctor. KI covers all prescription medication and up to 95SEK/appointment for medical appointments ([link](#)).

Preventative health care allowance (see [KI benefits](#), [wellness benefits](#)) allows all KI staff to claim **3 000 SEK** 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.

The PhD can be stressful for various reasons – decline in mental health is unfortunately a well-documented feature of PhD student trajectories. A lot of support resources are available for mental health:

- Avonova (refer to relevant section)
- Consulting line (24/7, call 0200-216300)
- [Student Wellbeing Centre](#)

In case mental health declines are caused by supervisor relationships, work environment issues or similar concerns, please review the guidance for finding support in section [A.17](#) and [A.18](#).

B.11 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.12 Travel grants

The [KI travel grant](#) has 4 periods to apply with corresponding traveling times to travel. These grants are 10,000SEK for EU travels and 17,000SEK 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 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.13 Research grants

As a PhD student at KI, you do not 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 project. 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.14 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's 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.15 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.16 Printing

As long as you have your KI ID card, you can use the [printers](#) located on 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 print pamphlets, posters, etc. and also offer services including video production, poster production and illustrations.

B.17 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).

B.18 Purchases and procurement through WISUM and UBW

[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 your department administrator.

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.

B.19 Other IT related issues

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.20 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.21 KI Core Facilities and iLab Booking System

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 progress faster. Reach out for advice on experimental design, analysis and troubleshooting. 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).

B.22 KI Library Support, writing and publishing

For most PhD students at KI, writing and publishing articles in peer-reviewed journals is a central part of the doctoral education journey. But the publication process can be difficult to navigate—different research fields have their own traditions, and every journal has its own rules and expectations.

The KI Library (KIB) can support you throughout the whole process. You can find more information on their website: [Publication support | Karolinska Institutet University Library](#).

One key aspect of publishing is the author list. Disagreements can sometimes arise when people have different views on who contributed what. Here are some useful resources that can help you avoid or resolve misunderstandings:

The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) provides widely accepted guidelines and criteria used by most medical journals. You can find their recommendations here: [ICMJE | Recommendations](#).

KI DS (Danderyds sjukhus) also has authorship guidelines (in Swedish) here: [Riktlinjer för publicering och medförfattarskap på KI DS | Medarbetare](#).

If you're facing challenges related to authorship, research ethics, good research practice, or scientific integrity that you cannot solve within your group, you can contact the Scientific Representative (Vetenskapligt ombud) at KI. They can offer support and help guide you through the situation. Find who is your representative here: [Scientific Representatives \(Vetenskapliga ombud\) | Karolinska Institutet](#).

B.23 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 Microsoft Copilot then please access the AI tool through the [DuckDuckGo AI chat interface](#).

B.24 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](#).

B.25 Intellectual Property and Research-Related Entrepreneurship

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 (you) 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 in a paper, conference, poster, or in a bachelor / master / PhD thesis 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.25.1 KI Innovations

KI Innovations is based in the [Innomedicum](#) building on the Solna campus. They run an innovation office known as the [START project](#). If you have an idea about a potential product then they can help validate its potential. They help you to gain an understanding of the market, assess the possibilities to protect your idea by patents or trademarks and to confirm that you have the right to commercialise the concept. In a later phase they help to identify important aspects to take your idea to the next level.

The next level involves their [business incubator DRIVE](#). *DRIVE* is a dedicated life science incubator programme, which supports the successful commercial development of businesses within life sciences. It offers unique business development opportunities and financing support adapted to the company's specific needs. Some of these benefits include:

- Access to IP advice
- Access to expert consulting services
- Access to investor networks

KI Innovations works under secrecy. Your supervisor or anyone else do not need to know you are interested in commercialising your idea. You are encouraged to have a first meeting with KI Innovations alone if you so prefer.

B.26 Career support and KI Career Service

[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. 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.

B.27 How to find a job after the PhD

If you already have a sense of whether you want to pursue an academic or industry career after your PhD, it's a good idea to choose a mentor (see

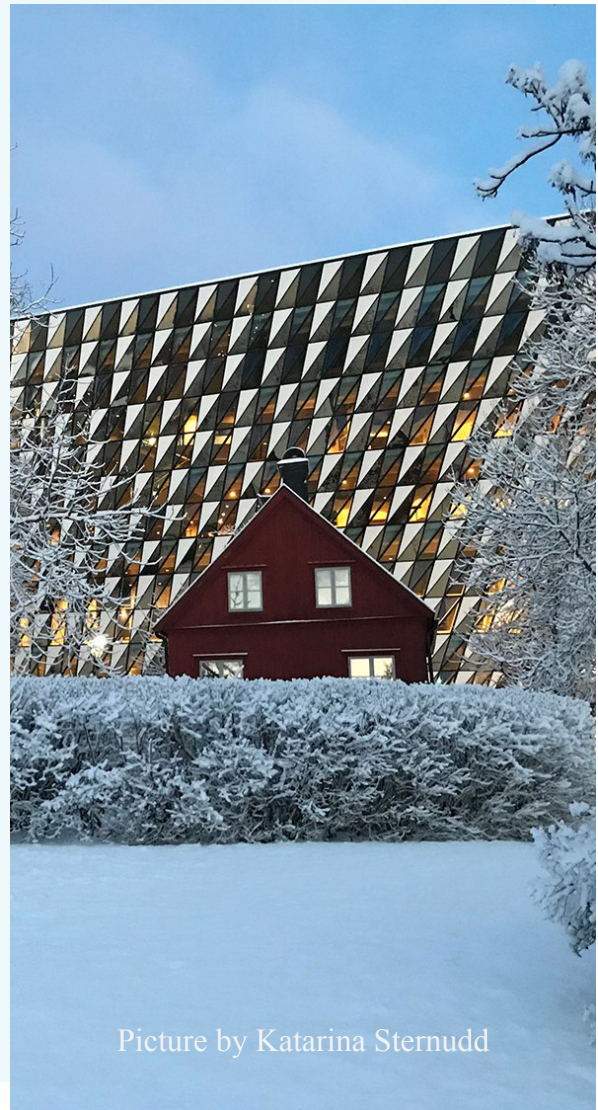
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section [A.10](#)) who works in the type of environment you're aiming for. A mentor with relevant experience can offer valuable insights, advice, and connections as you plan your next steps. You can also have multiple mentors with different areas of expertise and experience.

Carrer development is a critical point to discuss with your PI as well, especially at your half-time or third year follow-up. Consider applying for the Career Skills for Scientists course and the 1-month internship in a company offered by the KI Career Service.

If you're leaning toward an academic path, the typical move after completing your PhD is to apply for a postdoctoral research position. At KI, the application process for a postdoc is quite similar to applying for a doctoral student position. Competition for postdoc roles can be tough, so it's helpful to think early on about the skills and experiences you want to build during your PhD to strengthen your academic career prospects. You can learn more about the postdoctoral experience from the KI Postdoc Association (KIPA) here: [*Karolinska Institute Postdoc Association*](#).

Like doctoral student positions, there are online job portals with available postdoc positions across universities all over the world. For example: [*Nature Careers*](#), [*Science Careers*](#), [*ResearchGate*](#).



Picture by Katarina Sternudd

C. LIVING IN SWEDEN

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

C.1 Administrative tasks for newcomers to Sweden

- a) Apply for a [personnummer](#) (personal number) at Swedish Tax Agency (Skatteverket). 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 the Swedish Social Insurance Agency ([Försäkringskassan](#)) 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. 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 to visit the place yourself or by someone else, 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 at 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 an apartment (mean waiting time 4-5 years depending on conditions of the apartment and area). If you plan to stay here 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 cannot reach this, you can complement with independent private loans. Some banks also require permanent

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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 to trains and ferries.

For those that are members of Medicinska Föreningen (MF), and have the Mecenat app installed, an SL symbol is added automatically 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 two 10-week courses run by [Folkuniversitetet](#) from A1 to B2. *Svenska för invandrare* ([SFI](#)) are 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 do not have time for them, you can try different apps, [Duolingo](#) or [Babbel](#), to learn the basics. 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

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[*Healthcare in Sweden*](#) is public and decentralised. Public means that 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 275SEK for each visit and approximately 120SEK/day for each day in the hospital. Once you have reached an expense of 1400SEK/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 means that each centre is run publicly or privately with support of its region 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.



Important

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 the [unemployment benefit](#). To meet the requirements for basic unemployment benefits you need to register yourself at 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 an [earlier section](#) to learn more. If you are a member of *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 this benefit. Refer to an [earlier section](#) to learn more.

Three months before your fixed-term employment as a PhD student ends, you can ask KI (particularly your HR) to sign you up in the Job Security Foundation ([Trygghetsstiftelsen](#) or TSN). In this way, 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).

C.8 Where to go for immigration support

KI HR will be partially familiar with immigration procedures. However, in case of unexpected changes or issues with the Swedish Migration Agency (Migrationsverket), there are further support systems you can reach out to.

[*KI Employee Support Service*](#) offers the [*Employee Assistance Program through Falck*](#) which can be reached both by phone and email, including for personal, legal and financial matters. KI can cover the cost of up to 3 specialist appointments including with a lawyer.

In case your situation requires further legal support, you must contact a lawyer. Costs can rise quickly, and because PhD student salary exceed the threshold for legal aid you would be expected to cover this cost by yourself. Other options for low-cost legal aid can be found here: [*Rättsvisa*](#).

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