

Guidelines for responsible internationalisation

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**Karolinska
Institutet**



Guidelines for responsible internationalisation

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1. Introduction

Karolinska Institutet (KI) actively participates in educational and research collaborations worldwide. International collaboration is essential for KI to be able to work towards better health for all. Collaboration with leading international educational and research environments is a prerequisite for driving education and research forward and for maintaining KI's international position. It is KI's shared responsibility to maintain and deepen these collaborations in a responsible manner.

Responsible internationalisation is a concept that involves making the most of the opportunities offered by internationalisation taking into account the challenges arising from internationalisation and developments in the world.

Responsible internationalisation also involves creating conditions for international collaboration by fostering a culture of responsibility, conducting comprehensive assessments of the collaboration's benefits, feasibility, impacts and potential risks before and during the collaboration, and, where necessary, minimising and managing risks.

KI's guidelines for responsible internationalisation complement the national guidelines for responsible internationalisation developed by the Swedish Research Council¹.

2. Purpose

These guidelines are intended for all staff, affiliated personnel and students involved in international activities. The purpose of the guidelines is to raise awareness of the potential risks associated with international collaboration, clarify decision-making processes and highlight the tools available.

¹ [En ansvarsfull internationalisering – Vägledande nationella riktlinjer 2026 – Vetenskapsrådet](#)

The guidelines complement KI's other security activities in line with completed risk analyses and relevant policy documents².

The guidelines complement other guidelines which, together, constitute KI's comprehensive ethical framework for research outside Sweden³.

3. Principles for responsible internationalisation

When KI staff, affiliated researchers and students take part in international activities, they have to take into account the national guidelines for responsible internationalisation drawn up by the Swedish Research Council on behalf of the Government.

It is KI's responsibility to ensure that everyone is informed about the guidelines and that the international student exchange programmes offered are, as far as possible, in line with the guidelines. A responsible approach to education means that students are given the opportunity to develop in a global context, whilst the university ensures that mobility and international collaboration take place in a responsible manner in accordance with established strategies and codes of conduct⁴.

3.1 Risk assessment

A risk assessment of potential risks associated with international activities have to consider the areas described in the national guidelines. These cover the Swedish context, the organisation's own activities, the foreign context, the cooperation partner and the design of the cooperation. KI's risk assessment tool, which is published on the staff portal's pages on

² Riktlinjer för säkerhetsskydd på KI (beslutas juni 2026), Riktlinjer för Karolinska Institutets krisorganisation och krisledning, Riktlinjer för roller och ansvar inom ledningssystem för informationssäkerhet vid Karolinska Institutet, Anvisningar om informationssäkerhet för verksamma vid Karolinska Institutet, Anvisningar för strålsäkerhet vid KI, Riktlinjer för riskhantering

³ Etiska riktlinjer för internationella samarbeten, Riktlinjer om etiska principer för humanforskning utanför Sverige, Riktlinjer om etiska principer för djurbaserad forskning utomlands

⁴ Information om förhållningssätt och uppförandekod för studenter vid Karolinska Institutet, Uppförandekod vid internationell studentmobilitet, Strategi för rekrytering av studenter till utbildning på grundnivå och avancerad nivå

responsible internationalisation, is regularly updated to be in line with the national guidelines for responsible internationalisation.

The principle of proportionality must be taken into account in connection with the risk assessment. This means that the risks that a collaboration may entail should not be disproportionately large in relation to the benefits that the collaboration may bring.

Heads of department and deans shall regularly discuss responsible internationalisation within their respective departments/departmental groups in order to foster a culture of responsible internationalisation.

3.2 Division of responsibilities

It is everyone's responsibility to take potential risks into account in the context of their international activities, and one should always consider whether a risk assessment needs to be carried out.

For collaborations in research and doctoral education, the responsibility for carrying out a risk assessment lies with the individual researcher/supervisor in the case of individual collaborations, and with the research group and department in the case of formalised collaborations. The outcome of a risk assessment has to be reported to the immediate supervisor for further action where required.

In first and second cycle education, responsibility for collaborations at programme level lies with the programme-responsible board (UN/PN), and for collaborations at course level with the education board at the department responsible for the course. The outcome of a risk assessment must be reported to the head of department⁵ for further action where required.

Each manager is responsible for ensuring that a risk assessment is carried out within their own area of responsibility.

⁵ For programmes where programme responsibility is managed by KU, the head of department is equivalent to the dean for higher education.

The Head of Department has the ultimate responsibility for the department's international activities in research⁶ and must ensure that risk assessments are carried out in accordance with current guidelines.

The person(s) responsible, under the delegation scheme or further delegation, for entering into or signing a cooperation agreement shall be informed of the outcome of the risk assessment and, on that basis, decide whether the cooperation can proceed, whether it needs to be paused or reviewed, or whether further measures need to be taken.

4. Support in connection with risk assessments

4.1 The departments and the professional services

If support is required in connection with risk assessments, please contact for advice first the departments' administrative support teams, and then the relevant units within KI's professional services (GVS).

The International Office (IK) coordinates a network for responsible internationalisation with representatives from specific functions within GVS, to discuss issues arising from the functions relating to international activities and responsible internationalisation. The network organises capacity-building initiatives and ensures that relevant websites are updated with information on points of contact and available tools to work on responsible internationalisation. IK is the main point of contact towards the Swedish Research Council, which is responsible for the national guidelines on responsible internationalisation.

The network's coordinator may, if necessary, escalate issues to the Committee for Ethics and Good Research Practice.

4.2 Scientific ombudsman

KI's scientific ombudsman can be contacted for advice, given their role as an accessible and independent point of contact who can provide guidance

⁶ Rektors besluts- och delegationsordning för Karolinska Institutet

and advice on matters relating to responsible internationalisation and ethical considerations in external relations.

4.3 Committee for Ethics and Good Research Practice

The Committee for Ethics and Good Research Practice is tasked with providing support and guidance on ethical issues relating to responsible internationalisation. Matters concerning the ethical aspects of responsible internationalisation are handled via KI's coordinator of the network for responsible internationalisation at GVS or via the scientific ombudsman. They may, where necessary, escalate matters to the Committee, which monitors this area and, where required, can provide advisory opinions to support assessments and decisions.

4.4 KI's Animal Welfare Body

For international collaborations involving animal experiments abroad, KI's Animal Welfare Body has to be contacted for assistance with risk assessment (President's decision ref. no. 1-576/2024).

4.5 KI's security forum

KI's security forum is intended to serve as an advisory and coordinating body for KI's overall security work.

The Security Forum may be contacted if necessary for support and guidance on security-related issues concerning responsible internationalisation.

The Security Forum provides support for heads of department in their decision-making once issues concerning responsible internationalisation have been escalated within their respective departments.