Rules for doctoral education at Karolinska Institutet

Ref. no. 1-755/2026

Karolinska Institutet

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to gather everything that governs and affects doctoral education at Karolinska Institutet (KI) to ensure easy access for doctoral students as well as supervisors, administrators and department management to these rules and regulations.

Doctoral education is regulated by the Higher Education Act (HL), the Higher Education Ordinance (HF) and by local regulations decided by KI.

This document is updated following any decisions that changes existing rules and regulations. In the beginning of the document, the latest updates are listed together with a reference to where and when the decisions are taken. At the end all previous updates are listed.

The latest version of this document is published on KI's website: Staff > Doctoral education.

This document is a translation from Swedish. In the event of any discrepancy, the Swedish version has preferential interpretation.

Version: 2026-08-15
Ref.no. 1-755/2026

Updates

Updates since the last version 2025-09-04 (ref.no. 1-817/2025) due to the following changes in rules or procedures:

Section	Updates	Decision
5.1 6.4 5.3.4	Due to the implementation of a new digital system for ISP, some amendments to the wording in these sections has been done, including that the mentor will no longer be registered in the ISP.	-
7.2.1 (footnote)	A definition has been established of how the requirement for original papers in the thesis is to be interpreted.	KFU 2026-06-15 Ref.no: 3-2186/2026
8.3	The entire section has been restructured and the text adapted to KI's new guidelines for scholarships.	President 2026-05-26 Ref.no: 1-1367/2025

KFU = Committee for Doctoral Education
ISP = Individual study plan

Editorial updates:

Section 1.1 Aim: This section has been removed as it does not belong in a regulatory document (this affects the numbering of headings throughout Section 1).

Section 2, Admission: In the introduction and in section 2.2.3, the term "quality assurance" has been removed or replaced with other expressions, as it was not used in accordance with KI's guidelines for systematic quality assurance.

Section 9.2: "Vice Academic President for Doctoral Education" has been changed to "Dean for Doctoral Education" due to the change of titles.

Section 5.1.1 Forcing the establishment of an ISP: "consultation with the Central Study Director and/or Vice Academic Vice President" changed to "consultation with the Dean for Doctoral Education"

Section 8.1, Employment of doctoral students: A statement added that the general rule is that doctoral students should be employed (in accordance with the Higher Education Ordinance). The order of the paragraphs has been revised.

Section 8.2: Other types of appointment: The heading is changed to "Other employer" to better align with the context. The text has been revised to improve clarity and to better align with similar formulations and with the Higher Education Ordinance.

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1 Doctoral Education at Karolinska Institutet

Karolinska Institutet's (KI) mission is to contribute to the improvement of human health through education and research. KI strives to carry out high quality, innovative research with the highest possible international impact. This commitment shall also permeate doctoral education.

1.1 Outcomes of doctoral education

After completing their doctoral education at KI, our graduates will possess a grounding in medical science, a broad knowledge and systematic understanding of his or her research field, and an advanced and up-to-date specialised knowledge in his or her project and the surrounding context.

See below the intended outcomes for doctoral education as specified in the Higher Education Ordinance.

1.1.1 Outcomes for the Degree of Doctor

The Higher Education Ordinance, Appendix 2 - Qualifications ordinance:

A. Knowledge and understanding

To obtain a doctoral degree, the student is required to

A1. demonstrate broad knowledge and systematic understanding of his/her research field as well as deep and current specialist knowledge in a particular aspect of this field; and

A2. demonstrate familiarity with scientific methodology in general and with the methods of his/her specific field of research in particular.

B. Proficiency and ability

To obtain a doctoral degree, the student is required to

B1. demonstrate a capacity for scientific analysis and synthesis and the independent critical review and assessment of new and complex phenomena, issues and situations;

B2. demonstrate an ability to identify and formulate research questions critically, independently, creatively and with scientific rigour, and to plan and conduct research and other advanced tasks using appropriate methods and within given time frames as well as to review and evaluate such work;

B3. demonstrate through the writing of a thesis the ability to make a significant contribution to the development of knowledge through his/her own research;

B4. demonstrate an ability to present and discuss research and research results, orally and in writing and with authority, both in national and international contexts and in dialogue with the scientific community and society in general;

B5. demonstrate an ability to identify the need for further knowledge; and

B6. demonstrate an ability to contribute to the development of society and to support the learning of others in research, education and other advanced professional contexts.

C. Judgement and approach

To obtain a doctoral degree, the student is required to

C1. demonstrate intellectual independence and scientific integrity as well as an ability to make ethical judgements in research; and

C2. demonstrate deeper insight into the possibilities and limitations of science, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual in its application.

1.1.2 Outcomes for the Degree of Licentiate

The Higher Education Ordinance, Appendix 2 - Qualifications ordinance:

A. Knowledge and understanding

To obtain a licentiate degree, the student is required to

A1. demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the field of research including current specialist knowledge in a limited area of this field as well as specialised knowledge of research methodology in general and the methods of the specific field of research in particular.

B. Skills and ability

To obtain a licentiate degree, the student is required to

B1. demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues with scholarly precision critically, autonomously and creatively, and plan and use appropriate methods to undertake a limited piece of research and other qualified tasks within predetermined time frames in order to contribute to the formation of knowledge as well as to evaluate this work,

B2. demonstrate the ability in both national and international contexts to present and discuss research and research findings in speech and writing and in dialogue with the academic community and society in general, and

B3. demonstrate the skills required to participate autonomously in research and development work and to work autonomously in some other qualified capacity.

C. Judgement and approach

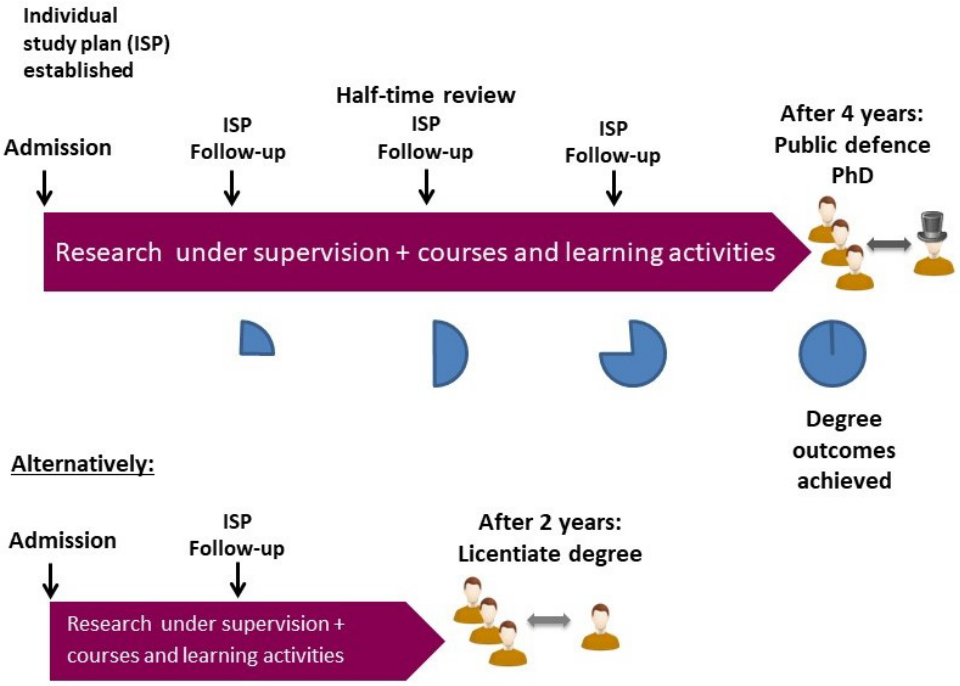
To obtain a licentiate degree, the student is required to

C1. demonstrate the ability to make assessments of ethical aspects of his or her own research,

C2. demonstrate insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used, and

C3. demonstrate the ability to identify the personal need for further knowledge and take responsibility for their ongoing learning.

1.2 An overview of doctoral education



Doctoral education is, to a great extent, based on the doctoral student's individual research project, which is complemented with a specific knowledge requirement.

For a doctoral degree, the equivalent of four years of full-time third-cycle education is required. A licentiate degree corresponds to two years of doctoral education. Doctoral studies may be conducted in parallel to clinical practice or other duties but must be completed within eight years for a doctoral degree and within four years for a licentiate degree.

An individual study plan is established for each doctoral student stating the university's and the student's commitments and how the student plans to achieve the objectives and intended outcomes for doctoral education, both through his or her research and by attending courses and other educational activities.

The progress of doctoral studies is followed up annually. The half-time review, which takes place after the equivalent of two years of full-time doctoral studies, is more comprehensive than the annual follow-up.

For a doctoral degree, the doctoral student shall have achieved the outcomes for the degree of doctoral and been awarded a pass grade for a research thesis. The thesis is defended during a public defence. For a licentiate degree, the doctoral student shall have achieved the outcomes for the degree of licentiate and been awarded a pass grade for a licentiate thesis. This thesis is defended during a licentiate seminar.

KI's ethical regulations and guidelines shall be adhered to at all times while pursuing doctoral education.

1.3 Organisation of doctoral education at KI

1.2.1 Faculty

The faculty is led by a Faculty Board with the overall responsibility for the faculty's education and research.

The Committee of Doctoral Education (KFU) is a subordinate committee to the Faculty board, with an assignment to work for high quality in KI's doctoral education.

1.3.2 Department

Head of Department

The President has delegated the right of decision to the Head of Department as regards:

a. The establishment of doctoral positions
b. Admissions to doctoral education
c. The approval of financing plans
d. The appointment of supervisors

The following decision-making rights have also been delegated for the purposes of sub-delegation:

e. The establishment of ISPs (Director of Doctoral Studies)
f. Decisions on credit transfer (Director of Doctoral Studies)
g. The appointment of course examiners

Director of Doctoral Studies

Every department has at least one Director of Doctoral Studies to support its doctoral students and supervisors as instructed by the Committee for Doctoral Education.

Doctoral boards

Every department is to have a board that deals with matters relating to doctoral education. The purpose of such a board is:

- to assess the scientific project when the doctoral position is first established
- to assist the director of doctoral studies in preparing a decision on the admission of a prospective student, when necessary
- to assist with other matters relating to doctoral education, if the department so wishes

The board is to comprise:

- the departmental Director of Doctoral Studies (chairperson/convenor)
- at least two other researchers/teachers
- at least one student representative

The board may co-opt specific expertise when necessary.

2. Admission to Doctoral Education

Admission regulations setting the general frameworks for admission, entry requirements, advertisement and selection for doctoral education have been established by the University Board (ref.no. 1-419/2018). More detailed rules and instructions have been produced under these regulations for the purposes of the quality assurance of the admission process.

The admissions process is to have the same general four-step structure at all departments:

Step 1: The establishment of a doctoral position
Assessment of the research project, supervision and the doctoral environment in general.

Step 2: Recruitment
Assessment of the prospective doctoral student on grounds of eligibility, suitability and capability.

Step 3: Admission decision
Decision to admit the selected applicant to doctoral education on the basis of steps 1 and 2.

Step 4: The preparation of an individual study plan

2.1 Step 1: The establishment of a doctoral position

A prospective principal supervisor applies to establish a doctoral position at the department at which the student is planned to be registered.

The aim of this step is to ensure at an early stage that all doctoral students have the opportunities and resources needed to pursue quality doctoral education.

If the applicant plans to pursue doctoral education in parallel with employment within another organisation, e.g. Region Stockholm, there is a requirement that the head of the clinic, or similar, approve the financing plan and certify that the doctoral student will have time and opportunity to perform the doctoral education.

The following conditions must be met before a doctoral position can be established:

- The scientific project is viable and suitable as a doctoral project
- The principal supervisor meets the Green Light requirements (*see 2.1.1*)
- The supervisory constellation is relevant to the project
- The doctoral student can be offered a sound doctoral study environment (*see 2.1.2*)
- Ethical permits (if required) are in place or planned
- There is a financial plan

Prospective doctoral positions are assessed on the basis of the material appended to the application for the establishment of a doctoral position.

The assessment of a project must include a peer-review (see section *1.4 Doctoral boards*). The assessment of financial resources must involve the department's Head of Administration.

Whether the doctoral position is to be advertised or exempted from this requirement by the Higher Education Ordinance is also decided at this stage (*see 2.2.1*).

The decision to establish a doctoral position is made by the Head of Department. It remains in effect for one year and at that department only. Reasons for rejections must always be stated. Rejected applicants are entitled to re-apply.

2.1.1 Assessment of supervisor – the "Green Light"

An assessment of the intended principal supervisor, the Green Light, form part of the step of establishing a new doctoral position.

It is also possible for a supervisor to apply for a Green Light under circumstances separate from the establishment of a doctoral position, such as funding applications or the replacement of principal supervisor during an ongoing doctoral project.

It is the suitability of the prospective supervisor that is assessed, focusing on time available for supervision and track record.

The Green Light assessment and decision is made by the Head of Department and the Director of Doctoral Studies, but more people can be included.

There are two possible outcomes: 1) Approved or 2) Rejected. Reason must always be given in the event of a rejection. A rejected applicant is entitled to re-apply.

2.1.2 Assessment of doctoral environment

The establishment of a doctoral position requires an environment that is conducive to doctoral education of the highest standards.

Questions to consider when assessing the environment:

- Are there opportunities for contacts with other doctoral students and researchers, e.g. through networking activities, seminars etc.?
- Is there support available for the doctoral student's studies, e.g. in the form of postdocs, statisticians and biomedical analysts?
- Are there opportunities for international exchange/contacts?
- Are there alternative ways to achieve the objectives if the chosen strategy is not successful?
- What previous experience of supervision do the principal and co-supervisors have?
- Access to supervisors – full- or part-time, the same physical workplace, etc.? How many doctoral students are currently being supervised?
- How will the supervision of the proposed doctoral project be organised (in which way will the various competencies of the supervisors be utilised in the project)?

2.2 Step 2: Recruitment of doctoral student

Once a doctoral position has been established, the recruitment process is as follows:

1. Advertisement and application
2. Eligibility assessment
3. Selection among eligible applicants

2.2.1 Advertisement

Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7

§ 37: …When a higher education institution intends to admit one or more doctoral students, information shall be provided by the higher education institution through advertising or some equivalent method. Information need not, however, be provided

1. when admitting a doctoral student who is to complete the course or study programme within the framework of employment by an employer other than the higher education institution
2. when admitting a doctoral student who has previously begun doctoral studies at another higher education institution, or
3. if there are similar special grounds.

All doctoral positions at KI must be advertised. Exceptions from the required advertisement may be allowed in accordance with Chapter 7, § 37 of the Higher Education Ordinance (see above). "Similar special grounds" could for example be when the doctoral student has been selected in another competitive recruitment process.

When advertised, positions must:

- be advertised via the KI recruitment system
- be advertised at a suitable time, and for an application period which is recommended, as a rule, to last for three weeks or longer

Before a doctoral position may be advertised, it must be formally established by the Head of Department in question.

2.2.2 Entry requirements

In order to be admitted to doctoral education, the potential doctoral student must meet the general and specific entry requirements. Assessment of qualifications is conducted by administrators at Professional services.

General entry requirements

Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7

§ 39.
A person meets the general entry requirements for doctoral education if they:

1. have been awarded a second-cycle qualification,
2. have satisfied the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 credits, of which at least 60 credits were awarded in the second-cycle, or
3. have acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in some other way, either in Sweden or abroad.

The higher education institution may permit an exemption from the general entry requirements for an individual applicant if there are special grounds.

Specific entry requirements

To be eligible for doctoral education at KI, the student must have knowledge of the English language equivalent to a pass grade at English B/English 6.

Applicants who fulfil the general entry requirements (in accordance with Chapter 7, § 39, points 1 and 2 above) as a result of academic education in an educational institution in one of the Nordic countries are judged to have fulfilled this requirement.

For other equivalence assessments, the Association of Swedish Higher Education (SUHF) recommendations.

2.2.3 Selection

Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7

§ 41. In selecting between applicants who meet the requirements laid down in §§ 35 & 36 their ability to benefit from the course of study programmes shall be taken into account.

The higher education institution determines which assessment criteria shall be used in determining the ability to benefit from the courses and study programmes.

However, the fact that an applicant is considered able to transfer credits from prior courses and study programmes or for professional or vocational experience may not alone give the applicant priority over other applicants.

Selection from amongst the applicants will take place on the following grounds:

- Documented knowledge of the subject that is of significance to the research area
- Analytical expertise
- Other documented knowledge/experience which may be of significance

A combined assessment of the applicants' qualifications and suitability will be conducted.

It is the responsibility of the department to ensure ability and suitability, even if the position is exempt from the advertisement requirement.

In order to quality-assure the selection process, potential candidates should ideally by invited to the research group for interview and/or demonstrations of ability. It is also recommended that a recruitment group be set up with the competence and experience to assess candidates.

Departments may introduce their own compulsory recruitment processes and procedures.

2.3 Step 3: Decision on admission

The President has delegated decisions on doctoral admission to the Head of Department at which the student is to be registered[i]. The report is made by the departmental Director of Doctoral Studies. The Head of Department's decision is final.

Decision on admission is made at once when a candidate has been selected.

Departments that fail to comply with the rules of doctoral education in effect at KI may have their right to admit doctoral students restricted.

2.4 Step 4: Establishment of individual study plan

Within one month of the commencement of studies, the student and his/her supervisor are to submit a proposed individual study plan (ISP) to the department's Director of Doctoral Studies.

Within three months of the commencement of studies, all doctoral students at KI are to have an established ISP.

The ISP rules can be found in chapter 5.

2.4.1 ISP seminar

The doctoral student shall conduct an ISP seminar at the department during the establishment of their individual study plan (ISP).

The purpose of the seminar is:

- to be a start-up seminar and to welcome the student
- to allow the student to present their research project and to receive feedback
- to serve as a learning opportunity for the doctoral student
- to allow the department to ensure that all doctoral students have an ISP

ISP seminars are held in English.

The date of the ISP seminar is documented in the ISP.

2.5 Admission towards a licentiate degree

Doctoral students shall, as a rule, be admitted with a doctoral degree as their goal. Only those who are professionally active and who would like to complement or deepen their knowledge in a field of research and only wish to take a licentiate degree may be accepted with a licentiate degree as their goal.

3. Courses

Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6

§ 32. Examinations that form part of doctoral courses and study programmes shall be assessed in accordance with the grading system prescribed by the higher education institution.

3.1 Course syllabus

All doctoral courses at KI must have an established syllabus. The Course and Programme Committee establishes syllabi and course credits on delegation from the Committee for Doctoral Education.

3.2 Admission of courses

Course organisers are responsible for the selection and admission of applicants. For admission to doctoral courses, the following general selection criteria must be followed:

1. doctoral students at KI (doctoral students in collaborative programmes are considered KI doctoral students)
2. post docs at KI

3. doctoral students at other universities (in Sweden or abroad)
4. other applicants.

3.3 Examination of courses

Examination of doctoral courses is performed at an individual level. The examiner must hold a PhD degree. If a person other than the examiner is responsible for the course, he/she is recommended to hold a PhD degree The Head of Department appoints examiners.

3.4 Evaluation of courses

Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 1 – Course evaluations

§ 14. Higher education institutions shall enable students who are participating in or have completed a course to express their experiences of and views about the course through a course evaluation to be organised by the higher education institution. The higher education institution shall collate the course evaluations and provide information about their results and any actions prompted by the course evaluations. The results shall be made available to the students.

KI's template for doctoral course evaluation must be used for the evaluation of doctoral courses at KI. Course evaluations shall be used for the continuous development of the courses. Course evaluations are followed-up and feedback is provided to the Committee of Doctoral Education.

Course evaluations must be made available for past and future participants.

4. General syllabus and credit transfer

4.1 General syllabus

Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6

§ 2. The extent of a course or study programme shall be denoted by credits, with full-time study during a normal academic year of 40 weeks corresponding to 60 credits.

§ 25. A university or higher education institution entitled to award doctoral qualifications shall determine the subjects in which doctoral education may be offered.

§ 26. For each subject in which doctoral courses or study programmes are offered, a general syllabus is required.

§ 27. A general syllabus shall indicate the following: the main content of the study programme, specific entry requirements and any other regulations required.

The doctoral students shall complete their doctoral education following the course requirements specified in the general syllabus for which they have been admitted.

Since 1 March 2006, all new doctoral students are admitted to the same doctoral education subject: Medical science. Doctoral students who were admitted before that to other subjects, must change to medical science if they want to continue their studies.

There are five versions of the general syllabi in the subject of medical science:

General syllabus for doctoral students admitted from 1 Jan 2018, ref no. 3-3225/2017

General syllabus for those admitted from 01/07/2013 to 31/12/2018, ref. no. 3-749/2013

General syllabus for those admitted from 01/07/2009 to 30/06/2013, ref. no. 1993/09-506

General syllabus for those admitted from 01/07/2007 to 30/06/2009, ref. no. 197/06-506

General syllabus for those admitted from 01/07/2006 to 30/06/2007, ref. no. 197/06-506

4.2 Credit transfer

Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6

§ 7.A student has the right to have their previous knowledge and skills formally recognised. However, a student's previous knowledge and skills cannot be formally recognised if they are found to differ considerably from the knowledge and skills required for the particular course or study programme.

Knowledge and skills refer to those the student has developed

1. by having successfully completed higher education studies at a Swedish higher education institution,
2. by having successfully completed higher education studies at a higher education institution abroad,
3. through another type of education resulting in a documented qualification presented in Annex 2 of the Ordinance (2015:545) on the reference framework for lifelong learning qualifications, or following official confirmation that the knowledge and skills are the equivalent of a level included in the reference framework, or
4. through another type of education or professional practice.

§ 8. The higher education institution must assess an application for formal recognition, in accordance with § 7. Credits may only be awarded to those who are students unless otherwise provided by statute or ordinance.

The credits from courses taken within the framework of a licentiate degree may be transferred to a subsequent doctoral degree, which has the same specialisation.

The Head of Department may delegate decisions about credit transferral to the Director of Doctoral Studies. Decisions about the transfer of credits may be appealed.

5. Individual study plan

Higher education ordinance Chapter 6 – Individual study plan

§ 29. An individual study plan shall be drawn up for each doctoral student. This study plan shall contain the undertakings made by the doctoral student and the higher education institution and a timetable for the doctoral student's study programme. The study plan shall be adopted after consultation with the doctoral student and their supervisors.

The individual study plan shall be reviewed regularly and amended by the higher education institution, to the extent required after consultation with the doctoral student and their supervisors. The period of study may only be extended if there are special grounds for doing so. Such grounds may comprise leave of absence because of illness, leave of absence for service in the defence forces or an elected position in a trade union or student organisation, or parental leave.

5.1 Establishing an individual study plan

Establishing an individual study plan is the step 4 in the admission process, *see chapter 2*.

The individual study plan shall be approved by the department's Director of Doctoral Studies on behalf of the Head of Department after consultation with the doctoral student and his or her supervisor. Consultation means that the doctoral student and supervisor are given the opportunity to express their views.

The following should be considered when establishing an individual study plan:

- If the proposed courses and the general content of the study plan are relevant and sufficiently extensive in relation to the learning outcomes according to the Higher Education Ordinance.
- If the requirements of the general syllabus have been met (e.g. are all mandatory courses included).
- If the timetable is reasonable.

5.1.1 Forcing the establishment of an individual study plan

Doctoral students and supervisors must always be given the opportunity to express their views on the content of an individual study plan before it is established. The aim should be for all parties to agree on the content, but sometimes consensus cannot be reached.

In the following situations, the Director of Studies (acting on behalf of the Head of Department) may establish an individual study plan without the approval of the doctoral student or principal supervisor, i.e. 'forcing' its establishment:

1. When the doctoral student and supervisor are unable to t agree on the content of the individual study plan due to a conflict situation.
2. When a doctoral student or supervisor is unable to approve the study plan due to reasons they cannot control, for example serious illness.

The Study Director, after consultation with the Dean for Doctoral Education, decides on the final content of the study plan.

The background and reason for the forced establishment must be documented.

The doctoral student and the supervisor must be informed why the study plan is established without their approval.

The Head of the Department must be informed.

5.2 Annual follow-up

The individual study plan and the student's progress in the doctoral education must be followed-up once a year.

The follow-up contains the following:

- The doctoral student’s progress towards the fulfilment of the degree objectives
- Completed activities
- An update on the planned research project and planned courses/credit-generating elements
- An update of the timetable and financial plan
- Other parts of the current individual study plan that are to be revised.

The department's Director of Doctoral Studies control that there has been a follow-up and decide on revisions to the individual study plan.

In connection to the first annual follow-up the doctoral student shall be offered a meeting with the department's Director of Doctoral Studies. This can take place individually or in a group containing all of those recently admitted to the department.

The aim is to identify any possible uncertainty, to ensure that the doctoral education is proceeding according to plan, and to establish contact between the study director and the doctoral student.

5.2.1 Reporting of activities and financial support

Each semester, doctoral students must report their activities and financial support to their department, and this information will be registered in Ladok. Activities refer, here, to the proportion of equivalent full-time involvement that a doctoral student has devoted to their doctoral education. The activities are reported in per cent (proportion of equivalent full-time commitment).

5.3 Half-time review

The half-time review shall be carried out for each doctoral student planning to take a doctoral degree. The principal supervisor and the doctoral student are responsible for, and will take the initiative in, conducting the half-time review.

The half-time review consists of a seminar, and a follow-up meeting.

5.3.1 When?

The half-time review shall take place following the equivalent of two years of full-time doctoral education. The time for the half-time review is not dependent on the number of manuscripts or published articles.

5.3.2 Half-time committee

After proposal by the supervisor and the doctoral student, the Director of Doctoral Studies will appoint a committee consisting of three researchers with adequate knowledge of the subject, and who are independent from the project and have obtained a doctoral degree. At least one member must be from a different department than the doctoral student. If possible, it is recommended that at least one of these should later form part of the examination committee at the doctoral thesis defence (*see 7.2.5*)

The committee, together with the supervisors and the doctoral student, shall assess the prospects of the project leading to a doctoral degree, and propose any necessary changes to the individual study plan.

5.3.3 Half-time report

Ahead of the half-time review, the doctoral student shall write a half-time report comprising:

- a literature review of the research field
- a status report of the doctoral education project
- a status report on the progress the student is making towards the intended outcomes for the degree of doctor (*see 1.2.1*)
- a plan for the remaining of his/her doctoral studies
- his/her reflection on ethical considerations, stating for each constituent paper:
    - existing ethical permits (ref.no/*diarienummer*).
    - whether there are plans to apply for ethical permits, or
    - reasons why ethical permits are not required

The literature review is to be uploaded into the designated text matching software as the basis for an instructive discussion on scientific writing between supervisor and student.

5.3.4 Documents to the half-time committee

The supervisors and the doctoral student ensure that the committee receives the documents at least two weeks ahead of the half-time seminar. These documents are:

- half-time report (see 5.3.3)
- a copy of the latest version of the individual study plan
- ethical permits[1], if any
- completed publications and manuscripts that will form part of the thesis, if any.

5.3.5 Half-time seminar

The seminar consists of a presentation held by the doctoral student in English, followed by a discussion and questions from the committee and others present.

The presentation shall summarise results and further planning of the doctoral education in relation to the doctoral student's individual study plan.

The half-time seminar shall be public and advertised internally at KI.

[1] Only the decisions, not the applications

5.3.6 Follow-up meeting

After the half-time seminar, the committee meets with the supervisors and the doctoral student and, if possible, the mentor, to review the progress.

The following factors will be discussed, based on the individual study plan, the half-time report and the seminar:

- Doctoral student:
  - Progress towards realising the intended outcomes of a doctoral degree
  - Progress towards independence
  - Overall performance at the half-time seminar
- Doctoral education project:
  - Progress and time plan
  - Plans for remaining education
- Supervision:
  - Scope and structure
  - Plans for remaining education
- Courses and other learning activities:
  - Plans for remaining education
- Ethical matters

After the discussion, the student and his/her supervisor leave the room in turns for the committee to hold separate meetings with each to discuss their views on their collaboration, working conditions and communication.

Comments and recommendations from the committee is documented in the half-time review protocol. The departmental study director confirms that he/she has read the comments by signing the protocol. A copy is uploaded to the ISP system[2].

5.3.7 Following the half-time review

The completed half-time review is registered in Ladok.

The individual study plan can be revised as necessary in accordance with the comments and suggestions of the half-time committee. Any revisions shall then be endorsed by the principal supervisor and then approved by the Director of Doctoral Studies in line with usual practice.

[2] Doctoral students without a digital individual study plan saves a copy of the protocol elsewhere.

5.3.8 Exceptions

Half-time reviews, completed at KI, are mandatory for those who wish to conduct a doctoral dissertation. However, exceptions are made for those doctoral students who hold a previous licentiate degree within the same subject area.

6. Supervision

Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6 – Supervision

§ 28. At least two supervisors shall be appointed for each doctoral student. One of them shall be nominated as the principal supervisor. Doctoral students are entitled to supervision during their studies, unless the President has decided otherwise by virtue of § 30.
A doctoral student who so requests shall be allowed to change supervisor.

Supervisors are appointed by the Head of Department.

The individual study plan describes how the supervision and activities will be organised and divided between the supervisors.

Even though a doctoral student may only be registered at one department, the doctoral education may benefit from taking place in more than one department and with supervisors from more than one department.

6.1 Requirements for doctoral supervisors

Following requirements apply for a doctoral supervisor:

- The principal supervisor must have the means to assist with good, professional supervision (must have 'green light', *see 2.1.1*).
- All supervisors must have a doctoral degree.
- At least one of the supervisors must be an associate professor (*docent*) or a professor.
- The principal supervisor must be either employed by KI or formally affiliated to KI.
- The LAS-age must be considered when appointing a principal supervisor[3]

[3] More information in *Guidelines for employment after the right to remain employed* (ref.no. 1-616/2024): The LAS-age today is 69 years. (LAS = Employment Protection Act).

- At least one of the supervisors, preferably the principal supervisor, must be active in the department to which the doctoral student is admitted.
- The principal supervisor must have completed doctoral supervisor training as below.
- Family relationships or other close relationships between doctoral student and supervisor is not allowed.
- Two persons with a close relationship or family relationship may not be in the same supervisor group.

6.1.1 Supervisor training

A principal supervisor must have completed doctoral supervisor training arranged according to the instructions of the Committee for doctoral education.

It is mandatory for all principal supervisors, including those with equivalent expertise, to complete the web course for supervisors for doctoral students. A passing score on the web course cannot be older than 5 years prior to accepting a new doctoral student. The purpose is to ensure that all supervisors are familiar with the prevailing rules for doctoral education.

In addition, a principal supervisor, unless having equivalent expertise, must complete the introductory course in doctoral supervision. The aim of the course is to prepare participants for the role of supervisor and to provide insight into the responsibilities that it entails.

Equivalent expertise

Those who have equivalent expertise

- have been principal supervisors for doctoral students who have graduated with doctoral degrees from, for example, a university in one of the Nordic countries or another country which has comparable doctoral education, *or*
- have taken part of another research supervisor training equivalent to the course given by KI.

6.2 Duties of a doctoral supervisor

Supervisors at KI shall have a professional approach. This means that a supervisor shall take responsibility for ensuring that planned and implemented doctoral

education is of good quality and has a realistic scope in relation to the doctoral student's individual study plan.

The supervisor shall be thoroughly familiar with the regulations and conditions of doctoral education.

The supervisor shall be available for the doctoral student, be clear and consistent in their supervision, and critically review the results achieved.

Supervisors shall always work to ensure equality of treatment, by clearly working against all forms of discrimination and harassment.

6.2.1 Principal supervisor

The principal supervisor shall have the overall responsibility for supervision when it comes to the planning and execution of the research project. The principal supervisor also has, together with the doctoral student, a responsibility to ensure that the doctoral courses and other elements that are specified in the general syllabus and individual study plan, are completed.

The principal supervisor shall work to ensure that the annual follow-up, as well as the half-time review and defence of thesis, or licentiate seminar, are planned and implemented.

The principal supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the funding plan is drawn up and revised.

6.2.2. Co-supervisor

A co-supervisor should be active in contributing to and following the development of the doctoral student and provide complementary scientific expertise to the project. The respective roles of all co-supervisors should be clearly stated in the individual study plan.

6.3 Changing supervisors

A doctoral student who so requests shall, according to the Higher Education Ordinance, be allowed to change supervisor. A Higher Education Institution is not allowed to have a restrictive attitude against such requests, but the right to change supervisor is in practice subjected to different limitations, for example the access to

competent staff and other factual circumstances. There exists no right for the doctoral student to choose supervisor at his/her own discretion.[4]

A change of supervisor must be approved by the Head of Department. If the change involves a principal supervisor an assessment of suitability has to be done (*see section 2.1.1 "Green Light"*).

Changing supervisors will necessitate the revision of the individual study plan.

6.4 External mentor

As a complement to the supervisor, an independent person shall be appointed to act as mentor to the doctoral student during the doctoral education. The external mentor may be from the university, Region, industry, or another sector of society. The external mentor should provide support to the doctoral student with regard to advice from an independent person concerning issues such as career planning, contacts outside KI, or other types of advice.

The doctoral student chooses a mentor within a year of the admission.

7. Examination

Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6

§ 33. The qualification descriptions of doctoral degrees indicate that an approved doctoral thesis, amongst other things, is required for the award of these degrees.

The doctoral thesis shall be presented and defended orally in public. A faculty examiner [*opponent*] shall be appointed for this presentation.

§ 34. At least one of those participating in the grading of a doctoral thesis shall be someone who does not have a post at the higher education institution awarding the degree.

§ 35. A higher education institution may issue regulations on the grading system to be used and on public defences and grading in other respects.

[4] Interpretation of the Higher Education Ordinance by the Higher Education Appeals Board (ÖNH), decision 2006-03-17, reg.nr 451-462-05. Confirmed by Högskoleverket (HSV) in Report 2008:5R *"Fakultetsnämndernas tillsyn över utbildningen på forskarnivå ur rättssäkerhetsperspektiv"*.

7.1 Thesis defence application

To ensure the highest possible quality of theses from KI, and to verify that all elements of the doctoral education have been completed prior to the examination, an application for thesis defence shall be submitted to the dissertation committee in accordance with the instructions on the KI website: Staff > Doctoral education.

The dissertation committee shall ensure that the regulations concerning thesis defence, licentiate seminar and examination are adhered to.

The dissertation committee appoints the examination board, and also the opponent in the case of a doctoral thesis defence and decides the date and place for the licentiate seminar or thesis defence.

Incomplete information regarding ethical approval may result in further investigation concerning suspicion of irregularities.

Further practical information about the application may be found on KI's website.

7.2 Doctoral degree

The examination for a doctoral degree may be carried out following the equivalent of four years' full-time doctoral education (240 higher education credits). For a doctoral student to receive a doctoral degree from KI, they are required to have:

- been admitted to doctoral education at KI,
- completed at least half of their doctoral education at KI (as evidenced by their KI departmental affiliation in the articles included in the thesis),
- conducted their half-time review at KI, or have a licentiate degree within the same subject area,
- fulfilled the requirements in the general syllabus to which the doctoral student was admitted,
- written a doctoral thesis that has been awarded a pass,
- conducted a public thesis defence of their doctoral thesis that has been awarded a pass, and
- fulfilled the intended outcomes of doctoral education according to the Higher Education Ordinance *(see 1.2.1)*.

At KI, the following doctoral degrees are awarded: *Medicine doktor*, *Filosofie doktor*, *Teknologie doktor*, and *Odontologie doktor*. In English all doctoral degrees have the title *Doctor of Philosophy*, which is abbreviated to Ph.D.

7.2.1 Compilation thesis

Most theses from KI are compilation theses, based on a number of separate scientific papers combined with a 'kappa' (comprehensive summary).

Constituent papers

The number of constituent papers in a compilation thesis varies, but they must have a scope that in total is equivalent to four years of full-time doctoral education and a scientific quality expected at an internationally renowned university. The doctoral student's contribution to the constituent papers must be clearly identified.

At least two of the constituent papers must be original papers[5] that have been accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Doctoral education includes taking active part in the publication of scientific papers.

The other constituent papers can be original papers, published or manuscripts, or other scientific papers accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

The doctoral student must be the first author[6] of at least one original paper.

A doctoral student admitted to KI must indicate the department at KI as their address on each scientific article they publish.

'Kappa' (comprehensive summary)

The constituent papers that are included in a compilation thesis shall be introduced and discussed in the thesis in the form of a 'kappa' (comprehensive summary).

The purpose of the 'kappa' is to:

- demonstrate the depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding they have of the research field, and their ability to identify a need for further knowledge in the field,
- encapsulate the aim of their research project and the hypotheses/points of enquiry that have been addressed,

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[5] The following definition is used when assessing whether the requirement regarding the number of original works in a thesis has been met: An original paper is a study presenting results from empirical research for the first time. It is typically, but not exclusively, structured according to IMRaD (i.e. Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion).

Note that a systematic review that includes a meta-analysis or other comprehensive qualitative or quantitative synthesis, and that follows the established reporting guidelines for systematic reviews, is an original article. A good example of reporting guidelines is PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses). It is recommended that the protocol has been registered in an online repository like PROSPERO or a peer-reviewed journal publishing protocols.

[6] The requirement for first authorship only applies to doctoral students admitted from 1 March 2024 onwards.

- demonstrate familiarity with the methods applied in the research field,
- demonstrate an ability to places their own research in a wider context of the latest research in the field,
- demonstrate that the intended outcomes for doctoral education have been achieved.

The 'kappa' should be weighted towards a reflective discussion and contextualisation of the student's own research results. The text of the 'kappa' must be the student's own original work without the extensive reproduction of extracts from the constituent papers. [7]

Preliminary results that are not part of any paper, but which the doctoral student wishes to include in the thesis, may be presented in the summary.

7.2.2 Monograph thesis

At KI, a doctoral thesis, but not a licentiate thesis, may be presented in the form of a monograph thesis.

A monograph thesis is a written account of the research conducted as part of the doctoral education. A monograph does not contain any appended constituent papers and is more comprehensive than the *kappa* in a compilation thesis.

Monograph reviewers

In addition to the Examination Board, monograph theses are also reviewed by two specially appointed monograph reviewers. The purpose is to replace the review process that takes place when articles are published.

The reviewers may be internal or external to KI, but only one reviewer may come from the same department as the doctoral student or the principal supervisor.

A fee of SEK 5,000 is paid to the monograph reviewers, regardless of their affiliation, which is paid by the principal supervisor or department.

Defence process for monograph theses

1. *Thesis defence application:* Together with the application for defence, a draft of the monograph is submitted along with a proposal for two monograph reviewers.
2. *Review:* The monograph reviewers review the work and write a report similar to the referee reports in scientific journals. The report shall result in a statement on the quality of the research conducted.

[7] According to *Guidelines for writing a compilation thesis summary chapter*, dnr 7451/11-500

3. *The doctoral student's response:* The doctoral student prepares a written response (known as rebuttal) to the monograph reviewers' report, in which the comments are addressed point by point.
4. *Preliminary review by the Examination Board:* The completed monograph is sent to the members of the Examination Board together with the reviewers' report and the doctoral student's response. The Examination Board assesses whether the thesis as a whole corresponds to four years of doctoral studies and has the scientific quality that can be expected at an internationally renowned university.
5. *Nailing*: If publishing the monograph electronically affects the possibility of publishing the research results later, it is permissible to publish only the abstract in KI Open Archive in connection with the nailing, and to choose up to a one-year embargo for the rest of the monograph thesis. However, the thesis must always be physically nailed to the designated place at KI's library in Solna or Flemingsberg in its entirety at the time of official nailing.

7.2.3 Plagiarism check

All *kappas* of complitation thesis, as well as monographs, are checked for plagiarism. They are uploaded in a text matching software and the result sent to the examination board. The board has a duty to report cheating and this report serves as a supporting document in the review of the thesis. The Dissertation Committee has an assignment to, when needed, help the examination boards in their interpretation of the text matching reports.

7.2.4 Opponent

The 'opponent' shall be a researcher who must hold a doctoral degree (exceptions may be made for very well qualified professors), who is an expert in the field of the project, and who is unbiased with respect to the doctoral student, the supervisors and the project.

The role of the opponent is to critically review all parts of the thesis, both the 'kappa' (comprehensive summary) and the constituent papers, and to discuss these in detail with the respondent during the thesis defence. The opponent is to highlight the strengths and weaknesses in the thesis in a discussion with the respondent, in which the respondent shall also have the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge obtained. This discussion shall cover both technical and practical details, and how the results of the thesis may be viewed in a broader context.

The opponent receives a fee of SEK 15,000.

7.2.5 Examination board

The following apply to examination boards for doctoral degree:

- The examination board shall comprise three members (if there are special reasons, such as a doctoral thesis being of a pronounced interdisciplinary character, the number of members on the examination board may be increased to five).
- One of the members shall be designated as the coordinator. The coordinator shall not belong to the same department as the doctoral student, the principal supervisor or any of the co-supervisors.
- All of the members of the examination board must be associate professors (*docent*) or professors.
- All of the members must be experts in the field of the project. The combined expertise of the examination board shall cover the entire content of the thesis.
- The members of the examination board must be independent of and unbiased in relation to the doctoral student, the supervisors and the project.
- If possible, at least one member of the examination board shall have been a member of the committee at the doctoral student's half-time review.
- Only one of the members may belong to the same department as the doctoral student (or the principal supervisor, in cases when the principal supervisor is in a different department as the doctoral student).
- At least one member shall come from another university than the doctoral student, principal supervisor and co-supervisors.

7.2.6 Preliminary review

Before the thesis is submitted for printing, the examination board shall conduct a preliminary review of the thesis in order to assess if the quality of its constituent papers[8] is of a sufficiently high standard for a PhD. In the event of disagreement, the matter is decided by the majority opinion, even if all members of the board are expected to comment in its pronouncement.

If the examination board deems the quality of a thesis to be insufficient, it is recommended that the student postpone the defence. On the first such occasion, the student is entitled to further supervision and educational resources for an additional six months over and above the original study schedule in order that he/she may have the opportunity to improve the quality of his/her work.

[8] If it is a monograph, the entire thesis is reviewed (more information in section 7.2.2)

7.2.7 Graphic rules

A thesis from KI must follow KI's regulation regarding visual identity (graphic style) Information and templates regarding thesis design and structure can be found on the KI website.

7.2.8 Public notification – "nailing"

A doctoral student shall publish the thesis by a notification process known as "nailing", no later than three weeks prior to its public defence. Nailing means that the thesis is published electronically in KI Open Archive, and that the printed thesis is nailed to the designated place at KI's library in either Solna or Flemingsberg.

According to KI's open publication policy[9], KI researchers should choose an open licence, e.g. CC BY, for their publications where possible. While this is not a requirement for theses, KI's policy and national guidelines[10] should be considered.

At the latest on the day of the nailing, the thesis shall be sent to the opponent, the examination board, and the chairperson for the thesis defence.

7.2.9 Thesis defence

The doctoral thesis shall be presented and defended orally. The defence shall take place during the established thesis defence semester and be held at a venue and in such a way that students and employees of KI are easily able to participate.

The public defence is led by a chairperson. A member of KI faculty who has a doctoral degree is appointed chairperson. It is not recommended that the chairperson be one of the supervisors.

The thesis defence shall be public and preferably held in English, but Swedish is also acceptable.

If the proceedings are very long, the chairperson may suspend them for a break. Under no circumstances may the defence proceedings be concluded until all opposition and discussions from the opponent, the examination board members and the auditorium have been dealt with.

Digital participation

The examination board and opponent may take part remotely via a digital platform provided that it does not compromise the quality of proceedings. Should a technical

[9] Policy for open publication at Karolinska Institutet (link)

[10] National-Guidelines-for-Open-Science.pdf

problem arise, the proceedings must be suspended until it is properly and satisfactorily resolved.

The respondent and the chairperson must be present in person and may only take part remotely for exceptional reasons (*e.g.* a pandemic) upon the approval of the dissertation committee.

A remote audience is allowed, but it is only the audience present in the auditorium that can be guaranteed an opportunity to interact with the respondent.

Thesis defence proceedings

1. The chairperson will open proceedings and present the respondent, the title of the thesis to be defended, the opponent and the examination board.
2. The respondent gives notice of any corrections to the thesis and may, if necessary, distribute a list of errata.
3. The opponent or the respondent is invited to present a brief popular scientific introduction to the thesis and the field dealt with by the research.
4. The respondent or the opponent presents the main results and conclusions of the thesis.
5. The opponent discusses the thesis with the respondent, comments on its strengths and weaknesses, and poses questions which the respondent must answer to the best of their ability.
6. The chairperson invites the examination board to pose questions.
7. The chairperson invites the audience to pose questions.
8. The chairperson concludes proceedings.

Unable to attend

If the opponent is unable to attend, the thesis defence may proceed with the examination board taking on the role of the opponent.

If one of the examination board 's members is unable to attend, the chairperson must contact the dissertation committee administrator so that a new member can be appointed. The defence can only proceed if there are three examination board members.

7.2.10 Examination board meeting following the thesis defence

Following the thesis defence, the examination board is called to an immediate meeting to decide on the grade. The examination board appoints a chairperson from amongst themselves.

The examination board meeting is comprised of two parts:

1. In the first part, the defence chairperson, supervisors and the opponent may be present for discussing the respondent's performance with the examination board.
2. In the second part of the meeting, only members of the examination board are present. The grade and the written justification for this are confirmed, after which the minutes are written up and signed.

If there are any remarks made during the thesis defence which were so extraordinary that the examination board considers it necessary to undertake specific investigations or consultations before a decision can be made, the examination board should adjourn the meeting. The adjournment must be short, two weeks at most.

7.2.11 Grade

The examination board shall assess the thesis and its defence with regard to:

- the respondent's presentation of the thesis at the public defence, including the discussion with the opponent, and the ability to answer questions and discuss the significance of the results within the field of research,
- the quality of the 'kappa' (comprehensive summary)[11],
- the scientific content of the constituent papers[12], and
- the fulfilment of the objectives of the doctoral degree.

Against the background of this assessment, the examination board comes to a decision to award a grade of either pass or fail.

The decision of the majority applies. A single member may dissent from the examination board's decision on the grade, in which case specific justification must be given.

The examination board must provide a written justification when awarding a fail. The doctoral student will then have the opportunity to, at a later date, re-apply for a public defence of their thesis. However, there is no obligation on the part of supervisors, the department or KI, to cover the additional costs that result from a renewed defence of thesis, or to support the doctoral student after a failed doctoral examination beyond the expiry of the existing appointment.

[11] In the case of a monograph, the 'quality and scientific content of the thesis' applies instead of the 'quality of the kappa (comprehensive summary)' and the 'scientific content of the constituent parts'.

7.3 Licentiate degree

The examination for a licentiate degree may be carried out following the equivalent of two years' full-time doctoral studies (120 higher education credits). For a doctoral student to receive a licentiate degree from KI, they are required to have:

- been admitted to doctoral education at KI,
- completed at least half of their doctoral education at KI (as evidenced by their KI departmental affiliation in the articles which in the thesis),
- fulfilled the knowledge requirements for a licentiate degree in accordance with the general syllabus to which the doctoral student was admitted,
- written a licentiate thesis that has been awarded a pass,
- defended the licentiate thesis at a licentiate seminar which has been awarded a pass, and
- have fulfilled the intended outcomes of doctoral education according to the Higher Education Ordinance *(see 1.2.1)*.

After the award of a licentiate degree, the doctoral student will have completed their doctoral education at KI. It is possible, however, to subsequently apply for admission to further doctoral studies with the aim of obtaining a doctoral degree.

7.3.1 Licentiate thesis

A licentiate thesis is written in the form of a compilation thesis. The requirements are the same as for a doctoral thesis, see 7.2.1, except for the following:

- The constituent papers must have a scope that in total is equivalent to two years of full-time doctoral education.
- At least one original paper must be accepted for publication in a referee-reviewed journal.
- There is no requirement for the doctoral student to be the first author of any of the papers.

7.3.2 Plagiarism check

All thesis frames are checked for plagiarism, see 7.2.3.

7.3.3 Examination board

An examination board, but no opponent, is appointed to assess a licentiate thesis and seminar. The same regulations apply to the examination board for licentiate degrees as apply to those for doctoral degrees, see 7.2.5.

7.3.4 Preliminary review

The regulations regarding preliminary review are the same as apply in the case of doctoral degrees, see 7.2.6.

7.3.5 Graphic rules

The graphical rules are the same as for doctoral theses, see 7.2.7.

7.3.6 Public notification – "nailing"

The regulations governing the nailing process are the same as for doctoral theses, see 7.2.8.

7.3.7 Licentiate seminar

The defence shall be public and be held at a venue and in such a way that students and employees of KI are easily able to participate.

The respondent will describe the research project which constitutes the basis for the licentiate thesis, including its background, methods, results and conclusions.

Following the seminar, the examination board will pose questions in order to assure themselves that the respondent has achieved the intended outcomes for licentiate degree. Others in the audience will also be given an opportunity to ask questions.

Regarding digital participation, the same rules apply as for doctoral thesis defences, see 7.2.9.

7.3.8 The Examination board meeting after licentiate seminar

The regulations governing the examination board meeting for licentiate degrees are the same as for doctoral degrees, see 7.2.10.

7.3.9 Grade

The regulations governing the grading for licentiate degrees are the same as for doctoral degrees, see 7.2.10, except that it is the fulfilment of the intended outcomes of licentiate degree that should be assessed not the outcomes of doctoral degree.

7.4 Degree Certificate and Diploma Supplement

A doctoral student who is awarded a pass for a licentiate or doctoral degree at KI will upon request receive a degree certificate.

All degree certificates at KI are issued in both Swedish and in English. The Diploma supplement is issued in English and describes the education and its place in the Swedish educational system.

The degree certificate, including the Diploma supplement, is an original document issued in only one original.

8. Study funding

Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 7 – Admission to doctoral education – General regulations

§ 36. A higher education institution may only admit applicants to doctoral education that are employed as doctoral students.

The higher education institution may, however, admit applicants who have some other form of funding for their studies, if it considers

1. that the funding can be guaranteed throughout the entire period of study and
2. that the applicants can devote enough time to their studies to enable their completion, within four years in the case of a licentiate degree or eight years in the case of a doctoral degree.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Department to assess whether a doctoral student, upon admission, can be ensured financial support during the entire period of their doctoral education.

8.1 Employment of doctoral students

Employment as a doctoral student (*i.e.* "doctoral studentship") is regulated in Chapter 5, §§ 1-7 of the Higher Education Ordinance.

A doctoral studentship shall be a full-time post. If a doctoral student so requests, the appointment may be a part-time post but for no less than 50 per cent of a full-time post.

A person may be appointed to a doctoral studentship for a total of eight years. The total employment period may, however, not exceed the time corresponding to full-time doctoral studies for four years.

The total period of employment may, however, exceed that if special grounds exist. Such grounds may comprise leave of absence because of illness, service in the defence forces, an elected position in a trade union or student organisation, or parental leave.

Those appointed to doctoral studentships shall primarily devote themselves to their studies. The student may work to a limited extent in teaching and other department

duties up to 20 per cent of a full-time post. Such arrangement should be described in the individual study plan.

8.2 Another employer

Doctoral education may also be undertaken within the framework of employment with an employer other than KI, e.g. in the healthcare sector, industry, or at another higher education institution.

This should be made clear in the individual study plan and in the financial plan when the doctoral position is established.

Prerequisites are that:

- funding can be secured for the entire duration of the doctoral education;
- applicable regulations, including both the Higher Education Ordinance and KI's rules and guidelines, are complied with; and
- the progress of the education, as specified in the general syllabus and the individual study plan, is not impeded by restrictions arising from requirements associated with this form of funding.

8.3 Scholarships / stipends

The possibility of financing a doctoral student through scholarships is very limited.

8.3.1 External scholarships

An external scholarship refers to a scholarship or stipend awarded by an external funding body and paid directly to the doctoral student by that funding body.

According to the Higher Education Ordinance (Chapter 5, Section 4), a doctoral student whose studies are financed through a scholarship must be employed as a doctoral student no later than when, according to the individual study plan, the equivalent of three years of full-time doctoral education remains.

The following exceptions apply (Chapter 5, Section 4a of the Higher Education Ordinance):

1. If the scholarship is awarded within the framework of a development aid and capacity-building programme.

   At KI, this is defined as scholarships which, at the time of admission to doctoral education at KI, originate from a country included on the OECD DAC list of ODA Recipients, excluding countries classified as Upper Middle-Income Countries.

   In addition, the following conditions must be met:

- Scholarships are an established form of funding within the programme;
- the scholarship terms and conditions are reasonable; and
- KI has full transparency regarding the scholarship conditions and the manner in which the scholarship is disbursed.

2. If the scholarship is awarded within the framework of a programme funded by the European Union or other collaborations.

   In practice, this refers only to EU-funded programmes. "Other collaborations" may be applied only in exceptional circumstances following a decision by the President and only within university-wide collaborations in doctoral education.

   In addition, the following conditions must be met:

   - Scholarships are an established form of funding within the programme;
   - the scholarship terms and conditions are reasonable; and
   - a requirement for employment would constitute an obstacle to KI's participation.

According to Chapter 7, Section 36 of the Higher Education Ordinance, the scholarship amount must be equivalent to the salary level for doctoral students stipulated by Swedish collective agreements, after tax deductions. If the scholarship amount is lower than KI's doctoral student salary ladder, the doctoral student must be offered supplementary funding, either through an internal top-up scholarship, see below, or through employment.

For further information, including examples of unreasonable scholarship conditions, see Guidelines for Scholarships at Karolinska Institutet.

8.3.2 Internal scholarships

An internal scholarship refers to a scholarship established and paid by KI. Internal scholarships are for doctoral students only permitted as supplementary funding to an existing external scholarship.

For further information, see Guidelines for Scholarships at Karolinska Institutet.

8.3.2. Insurance

According to the Higher Education Ordinance (Chapter 1, § 11c), KI shall provide insurance cover at *Kammarkollegiet* for doctoral students whose studies are funded through a stipend. The insurance shall apply when the doctoral student's stipend is reduced due to absence from studies in the case of illness or parental leave.

8.4 Faculty grants for financing doctoral students

The following conditions apply to KID funding (block grants for the partial financing of doctoral education) or similar financing programmes:

A person may only be awarded faculty funds as principal supervisor for one student per faculty grant call.

A person who applies for funds as principal supervisor in two simultaneous advertised grant calls may only be awarded funds in one of them.

A person who has been awarded funds as principal supervisor is not eligible to apply for faculty grants as principal supervisor under another call in the same or the following year. It is the year the application period closes that counts.

The purpose of these conditions is to ensure the more diverse distribution of faculty funds.

For KID funds to be paid, a doctoral student must be recruited to the project within one year of the notification of the award decision. If there is a satisfactory justification, this period may be extended, but at most for a further year.

9. Dealing with problems, withdrawing resources and expulsion

9.1 The Doctoral Students' Ombudsperson

The Doctoral Students' Ombudsperson at KI is an independent expert, employed by the student union with the task of supporting doctoral students who need help during the time they are studying. The Doctoral Students' Ombudsperson also operates as a representative for doctoral students in conflicts with the department. Cases handled by the Doctoral Students' Ombudsperson are confidential.

9.2 Dealing with problems

Employer and educational responsibility for a doctoral student is delegated to the departmental level. Consequently, the Head of Department, the department's Director of Doctoral Studies, and the Head of Administration or HR Manager, must always be contacted first and as early as possible.

The Doctoral students' ombudsperson, the Faculty office or Human resources office can be contacted for advice, but the responsibility for dealing with issues, in most cases, rests with the department.

Some types of case are, however, dealt with in specific regulations:

- Reports of (suspected) discrimination or/and harassment the Discrimination Act).
- Reports of (suspected) cheating, plagiarism etc. (case sent to the Disciplinary committee, Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 10, and KI's guidelines for the management of cheating).
- Reports of (suspected) cheating/fraud in research.
- Withdrawal of resources from the doctoral student (President's decision, Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, § 30). (*see below*)

If the department, supervisor(s) or student think that the matter needs to be discussed or reviewed by an expert outside of the department, either party may request the help of the Committee of Doctoral Education, once the relevant people at the department have been informed. The case is then prepared by the Faculty Office and the decision is made by the Dean for Doctoral Education. The case may also be submitted to the Faculty Board and/or referred to the President.

9.3 Withdrawing a doctoral student's resources

Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6 – Right to supervision and other resources

§ 30. If a doctoral student substantially neglects their undertakings as specified in the individual study plan, the President shall decide whether the doctoral student will no longer be entitled to supervision and other educational resources.

Before such a decision is made, the doctoral student and the supervisors shall be given an opportunity to submit statements. The case shall be considered on the basis of their reports and any other records available. The assessment shall take into account whether the higher education institution has fulfilled its own undertakings in accordance with the individual study plan. The decision should be set out in writing and include justification. Resources may not be withdrawn for any period during which the doctoral student has been employed as a doctoral student or is receiving a doctoral grant.

§ 31. If study resources have been withdrawn pursuant to § 30, the doctoral student may, on application to the President, recover his or her entitlement to supervision and other resources. The doctoral student must then demonstrate convincingly, by presenting prospective study results of considerable quality and scope, or in some other way, that they can fulfil their remaining commitments as stipulated in the individual study plan.

The University President is empowered by Chapter 6, § 30 of the Higher Education Ordinance to decide whether or not a doctoral student is entitled to further supervision and other resources necessary for doctoral education. The decision is taken upon receipt of a report from the relevant Head of Department.

A report for the withdrawal of resources shall be sent if a doctoral student substantially neglects his or her undertakings as specified in the individual study plan. This includes cases where the doctoral student does not appear able to complete his or her education in a reasonable manner within the set period despite having access to adequate supervisory and other necessary resources for the planned education.

The individual study plan is a steering document for doctoral students' education. It is therefore important to have a clear and detailed individual study plan that is followed up regularly by the doctoral student and the supervisors and by the Director of Doctoral Studies at the department.

More information in the document *Instructions for administrating the withdrawal and reinstatement of doctoral student resources*.[12]

9.4 Expulsion

A doctoral student may be expelled from doctoral studies upon application to the Higher Education Expulsion Board by KI's President. This is only possible if there is a significant risk that the doctoral student may harm another person or damage valuable property.

See the Ordinance on the Expulsion of Students from Higher Education (*Förordning om avskiljande av studenter från högskoleutbildning, 2007:989)*.

[12] Instructions for administrating the withdrawal and reinstatement of doctoral student resources | Staff Portal

Revision history to this document

Date	Section	Update	Decision
2025-09-04	4.2	Amendments to the Higher Education Ordinance (HF) regarding credit transfer	The Swedish Government
	5.1.1	Clarification regarding consultation and consensus when establishing an ISP	KFU chair decision 2025:7
	7.2.2 7.3.1	Clarification of rules and process for monograph theses	KFU 2025-01-30 dnr 1-87/2025
	7.2.8	Clarification that a Creative Commons licence for the thesis is a recommendation, not a requirement.	
2024-10-01	2.4.1	Less strict about the timing of ISP seminars	KFU 2024-09-09 Ref.no. 1-725/2024
	5.2	The doctoral student's progress towards the fulfilment of the objectives has been added to the items to be discussed at the annual follow-up	Chair KFU decision 2024:12
	5.3.2	Composition of the half-time committee: At least one member from another department	KFU 2019-10-10 Chair decision 2019:38 Ref.no 1-806/2019
	7.2.2	Adjusted requirements for who can be appointed as a reviewer of monograph theses	KFU 2024-03-07 Ref.no 1-258/2024
	7.2.8	Adaptation to KI's policy for open publishing: Text added regarding open licence for theses	University president Ref.no 2-5813/2020
	8.4	Deadline for recruiting a PhD student for a KID project	KFU 2024-04-11 Ref.no 1-393/2024
2024-03-08	7.2.4	Increased fee to opponent at thesis defence	University director ref no: 1-910/2022
	7.2.1 7.3.1	Revised rules regarding constituent papers in doctoral theses	KFU 2024-01-26 Ref no: 1-14/2024
2023-09-01	6.2	The duties of a co-supervisor clarified	KFU chair 2023:21

	7.2.8	Simplified nailing procedure	Agreement with the printers
2022-09-25	8.4	Clarification of rules regarding faculty funds for financing doctoral students	KFU chair's decision 2022:20
2021-11-01	5.1.1	Establishing an individual study plan when consultation with doctoral student or supervisor is not possible	KFU 2021-01-28 ref.no. 1-18/2021
	6.3	Interpretation of the Higher Education Ordinance regarding the right to change supervisor	
	7.2.8	A step in the nailing routine ("*må spikas*") removed	KFU 2021-09-02 ref.no. 1-725/2021
	7.2.9 and 7.3.7	Remote participation in thesis defence.	KFU 2021-10-17 ref.no. 1-735/2021
2020-10-10	2.1	Adjusted rules regarding green light and establishment of doctoral positions	KFU 2020-09-03 ref.no. 1-49/2020
	2.2.1	Language in doctoral position advertisements.	Clarification from UKÄ (32-00340-18) The Swedish Language Act. (2009:600)
	4.1.2	A section added regarding an interim period for doctoral students registered to old doctoral education subjects	Faculty Board 2020-09-15 ref.no. 1-454/2020
	6.1	Sentence added regarding age limit for supervisors, according to new steering document	President's decision ref.no. 1-869/2019
	7.2.2	Clarification regarding what requirements apply to a systematic review in the thesis	KFU chair 2020:36
2020-01-10	5.3	Revision of rules and routines of the half time review	KFU 2019-10-10, § 10 Chair's decision 2019:38
	7.2.1	New section describing the routines of plagiarism check (in place since 2015)	FUS 2015-03-03, § 14 FUS 2018-09-011, § 11
2019-01-10	Chapter 2	New rules and procedures for admission: (Entire chapter 2 and minor revisions in chap 5 and 6)	FUS 2018-10-03, §12 University Board 20180611 DB 2018:66

	1.4	A doctoral board at each department.	FUS 2018-10-16, §12
	6.1	A principal supervisor to doctoral student at KI must be either employed by, or affiliated to, KI.	FUS 2018-12-11, §10
	6.6	Clarification that a mentor is chosen by the doctoral student and not appointed by another part.	
2018-07-01	Chapter 2	Revisions due to new admission process (ref.no. 3-1621/2018)	FUS 2018-05-07, §11 University Board 20180611
	5.1	Revisions due to the new process regarding the establishment of ISP	See above
	Chapter 8	New Scholarship rules due to revisions of the Higher Education Ordinance	President's decision (ref.no. 1-174/2018)
2018-02-01	2.2	Clarification: Green light decision is taken by the department of the doctoral student	Dean's decision 2017:40
	3.3	The Head of department appoints examiners of doctoral courses	FUS 2017-06-12 §13
	4.1 (1.2, 1.3)	New version of general syllabus in Medical science	FUS 2017-09-11, §8
	5	A digital system for individual study plans (ISP)	FUS 2016-04-15 §7
	5.1	Establishing an ISP can/should be delegated to the director of doctoral studies	FUS 2017-09-11 §7
	7.2.2	No longer possible with exceptions from the rule of two published papers	FUS 2017-10-09, §14
2017-08-15	2.3	"Green light" for supervisors	FUS 2017-03-06, §13
	6.1	Updated rules on relationships between supervisors and between supervisor and doctoral student	FUS 2017-03-30, § 11
	8.4	New section added concerning rules when applying for doctoral student funding	FUS 2013-05-06, and 2016-06-13

2016-07-01	6.1	A passing score on the web course for supervisors cannot be older than 5 years	FUS 2015-11-09, §8
	7.2.2	The number of published papers in a doctoral thesis.	FUS 2016-02-01, §15
	8	Doctoral grants (*utbildningsbidrag*) are no longer an option at KI	Vice-chancellor ref. no: 1-15/2015
2015-04-01	5.3.3 5.3.4	Half-time summary	FUS 2014-10-06, §9
	7.2.5	Minor revision in text regarding examination board (point 2 and 8)	FUS 2015-03-03, §9
	7.2.6	The examination board should not make any decisions at the pre-review, only assess quality	FUS 20140-10, §10
	8.4	Complementary scholarships for doctoral students	Vice-Chancellor, ref. 1-125/2014
	9.3	Rules for withdrawing of resources for doctoral students	Vice-Chancellor, ref. 1-434/2014
2014-01-01	2	New admissions regulation at KI	The University Board ref.no 1-563/2013
	2.3	Specification of requirements for advertisement of doctoral positions	FUS 06/11/2013, ref. no. 1-586/2013
	3.4	Selection criteria for course applicants	FUS 06/05/2013 ref. no. 1-258/2013
	8.1	New regulations for doctoral grants	Vice-Chancellor, ref. no. 1-501/2013
2013-07-01	The document "Rules of doctoral education" was approved in full. Replaces ref. no: 5431/10-500.		FUS 2013-03-07, ref. no 1-33/2013

FUS = Board of doctoral education,
KFU = Committee for Doctoral Education,
ISP = Individual study plan