

Doctoral programmes at KI

Responsibilities and instructions

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**Karolinska
Institutet**

Doctoral programmes at KI

Responsibilities and instructions

Contents

| | |
|--|---|
| Contents..... | 2 |
| 1. What is a doctoral programme?..... | 1 |
| 2. What is a doctoral programme's assignment? | 1 |
| 2.1 To coordinate and organise a range of courses and activities | 1 |
| 2.2 To develop and guarantee quality | 1 |
| 2.3 To be cost-effective and to comply with the prevailing rules and regulations | 2 |
| 2.4 To communicate and inform | 2 |
| 2.5 To plan and report | 2 |
| 3. Organisation and responsibilities | 3 |
| 3.1 Programme director/steering group chairperson | 3 |
| 3.2 Steering group | 3 |
| 3.3 Host department | 3 |
| 3.4 Head of the host department..... | 4 |
| 3.5 Coordinator/administrator | 4 |
| 3.6 The Course and Programme Committee (KPK)..... | 4 |
| 3.7 The Committee for Doctoral Education (KFU) | 4 |
| 4. Compensation principles | 4 |
| 4.1 Course costs..... | 4 |
| 4.2 Personnel costs | 5 |
| 4.3 Other costs | 5 |
| 5. Programme financing principles | 5 |
| Appendix. Doctoral course progression | 7 |

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1. What is a doctoral programme?

Karolinska Institutet (KI)'s doctoral programmes are thematic inter-departmental networks that coordinate courses and other learning activities for doctoral students within defined subject fields.

Courses and activities are arranged in the form of a doctoral programme in order to:

- support a “bottom-up” principle, in which the need for courses and learning activities for doctoral students is determined by those who are knowledgeable of the field of research in question
- aid coordination and effectiveness
- encourage high-quality doctoral activities in support of learning and to provide a network that reaches beyond the students' own particular research group and department.

The fundamental principle is for all a programme's courses and activities to be open to all doctoral students at KI. Courses are also to be open to all postdocs at KI. The courses are also to be open for postdocs.

The Committee for Doctoral Education (KFU) decides which research fields are to have a doctoral programme on the basis of principles set by the Faculty Board according to the Principles for starting, modifying and closing doctoral programmes. Research fields not covered by a programme apply instead for financing from the Course and Programme Committee (KPK).

2. What is a doctoral programme's assignment?

2.1 To coordinate and organise a range of courses and activities

Each programme is to present an overview of the range of courses in its particular research field as well as an extended, well-conceived range of courses designed to meet the students' needs and adapted to the number of students in the research field. Progression is also to be taken into consideration in the range of courses available (see appendix 1).

To help students draw up their individual study plans, they must be able to see which courses are held regularly and at what interval, and which courses are held sporadically.

Courses held are to contain both basic and more specific/advanced knowledge of the subject field. Programmes are not to finance general science courses unless specifically required to do so.

The programmes are also expected to encourage, coordinate, and arrange other learning activities for doctoral students, such as seminars, workshops, and residential conferences.

A range of such activities helps to create a conducive doctoral environment at KI and makes it easier for students to attain the [national outcomes for doctoral education](#).¹

2.2 To develop and guarantee quality

Each programme has joint responsibility with the course providers to ensure that the quality of the courses is maintained by following up on [course evaluations and course analyses](#)² and on [analyses of all other doctoral activities](#)³.

Each programme is to review the course providers' syllabi before they are submitted to the Course and Programme Committee, and to approve the details/dates (“course instances”) in KIWAS for courses held under the auspices of the programme.

Each programme is to adopt a pedagogical approach and modify/develop courses when necessary.

¹ <https://staff.ki.se/outcomes-for-doctoral-education-according-to-the-higher-education-ordinance>

² <https://staff.ki.se/course-evaluation-and-analysis-of-doctoral-courses>

³ <https://staff.ki.se/activity-evaluation-and-analysis>

Each programme is encouraged to support the course providers' pedagogical development by, for example, informing them of relevant activities at KI, encouraging them to use pedagogical tools and/or arranging workshops for them.

2.3 To be cost-effective and to comply with the prevailing rules and regulations

Each programme is required to operate cost-effectively and within its budget.

Each programme is to process financing applications from course providers and arrangers of other learning activities and disburse funding in accordance with established principles (see below).

Each programme is to comply with the contents of this steering document and [other relevant rules](#)⁴, such as those governing doctoral education, official entertainment, and procurement. The tenets of GDPR are also to be observed.

When appropriate, each programme is to strive for synergy by cooperating with departments and other existing networks and environments at KI (e.g. other doctoral programmes, KI's research networks, strategic research areas, research centres, research schools, Master programmes, national centres of excellence and other universities). It must, however, be made clear how financing is shared between the different bodies.

2.4 To communicate and inform

Each programme is to inform the whole of KI, including enrolled doctoral students, about itself and its activities. Apart from publishing its courses in the course catalogue (prospectus) in KIWAS, each programme is also to maintain its own KI website and keep it updated as the need arises. The website is to contain:

- general programme information
- programme courses and other doctoral activities according to 2.1,
- names and contact details of the steering group members
- information on how to enrol
- information on how course providers/activity arrangers can apply for financing for their courses/activities

Programmes are also recommended to draw up a communication plan showing how communication with relevant target groups is to be channelled.

2.5 To plan and report

Operational planning

Every year, the programme directors are to submit a plan for the coming three years as directed and within the time-limit set by the Course and Programme Committee.

If during its "term of office" a programme receives suggestions for new "unforeseen" courses, it is urged to take an open attitude and the steering group is encouraged to decide on whether to include them and, if so, their budget. Budgeted costs for unforeseen courses and doctoral activities may not exceed 10% of the programme's total budget. The Course and Programme Committee must be notified of any such departures from plan and budget well in advance of a committee meeting.

Activity and financial reporting

Every year, programme directors are also required to submit a full written report on the past budget year as directed and within the time-limit set by the Course and Programme Committee. Any departures from plan and budget are to be made clear and explained.

⁴ <https://staff.ki.se/rules-and-guidelines-a-z>

Note that all costs are to be reported as total sums including INDI. It is recommended that INDI be calculated using the UBW finance system rather than manually.

If a programme has additional financing (to that from Committee for Doctoral Education) the report must make clear which parts are separately financed in this way.

The Course and Programme Committee has responsibility for following up on the annual reports.

Other follow-ups

Every year, Course and Programme Committee representatives interview programme directors and other programme representatives in order to give feedback on the annual reports and to gather feedback on potential areas of improvement. The interviews also provide an opportunity to reflect on programme activities.

The Course and Programme Committee arranges at least one group meeting a year with programme representatives. Programme directors are contractually obliged to attend these meetings.

3. Organisation and responsibilities

3.1 Programme director/steering group chairperson

Programme directors are appointed by the Committee for Doctoral Education. Only *one* programme director may be appointed per programme. The programme director may also assume other roles within the programme.

A programme director:

- acts as chairperson of the steering group
- appoints the other steering group members
- liaises between the Committee for Doctoral Education/Course and Programme Committee, head of the host department and steering group
- ensures full compliance with the rules (e.g. that reports are submitted as per directions)
- leads and delegates the operative work within the framework set by the steering group
- ensures that course providers are correctly compensated by approving/authorising disbursements.

3.2 Steering group

The steering group has responsibility for quality assurance and for ensuring the presence of an effective, long-term range of courses in the research field and compliance with prevailing rules and directions. The steering group suggest the budget of the doctoral programme based on planned courses and educational activities. The steering group decides on the budget of the doctoral programme according planned courses and activities.

The steering group liaises with the relevant managers to decide how the operative work in the programme is to be generally organised.

The members of the steering group must be knowledgeable of the research field and have a full grasp of the courses and other learning activities that should be offered doctoral students. They should also possess sufficient pedagogical competence to be able to provide feedback on syllabi.

The steering group should comprise members from multiple departments and must include student representatives. However, it should not be so big as to make it difficult for members to convene at least once a semester.

3.3 Host department

The host department is the one that receives regular programme financing and transfers funds to course providers. It is normally also the department at which the programme director is employed, but other arrangements are possible if everyone involved is in agreement.

3.4 Head of the host department

The head of department has responsibility for all the department's activities, as delegated by the President. In this context, this entails ensuring that funds are employed as intended and that administrative resources are made available corresponding to the sum disbursed for this purpose. The head of department has ultimate employer responsibility for the *programme director*, *coordinator* and *administrator* provided that they are all departmental employees. The decision to appoint a programme director is always made in consultation with the head of department, who has a right of veto.

3.5 Coordinator/administrator

Each programme is to have one or more operational coordinator(s)/administrator(s). The funds disbursed to the host institution include compensation for administrative costs (see Compensation Principles below). The same person can have several roles, such as coordinator and administrator, or programme director and coordinator.

3.6 The Course and Programme Committee (KPK)

The Course and Programme Committee is subordinated to the Committee for Doctoral Education, which delegates it responsibility for coordinating and following up on programme activities.

KPK suggest the budget of the doctoral programmes to the Committee for Doctoral Education.

KPK also has the responsibility to approve all syllabus for doctoral courses. Before entering a syllabus proposal in KIWAS, the responsible person of the doctoral programme that intends to finance the course need to approve the syllabus proposal.

3.7 The Committee for Doctoral Education (KFU)

The Committee for Doctoral Education has ultimate responsibility for assuring the quality of doctoral education at KI. This includes:

- deciding in which research fields programme courses are to be organised for doctoral students (on the basis of the principles and criteria decided by the Faculty Board)
- establishing the purpose, assignment and instructions for doctoral programmes
- appointing, in consultation with the relevant heads of department, a *programme director* for each programme and deciding on its *host department* (normally the programme director's department)

KFU prepare the overall doctoral programme budget for meetings of the Faculty Board.

4. Compensation principles

4.1 Course costs

The standard amount for allocating course funds should tally with the [standard amount](#)⁵ decided by the Committee for Doctoral Education. Funding applications for longer courses should be assessed on the basis of teacher input and budget.

A programme may pay additional compensation for extraordinary costs, such as for external teachers with unique competence or laboratory activities requiring extra resources and special material. Programmes are encouraged to decide on such circumstances systematically and transparently. A

⁵ <https://staff.ki.se/applying-for-funding-of-freestanding-doctoral-courses>

higher amount than the standard may be granted after checking with the Course and Programme Committee if there are exceptional reasons to do so.

Course funds may be used to cover such costs as:

- teaching (internal and external)
- administration
- teaching material (not course books)
- teaching premises

Course funds may *not* be used for:

- catering/refreshments
- office rent

To obtain full financing from the programme, a course must have been attended by at least eight participants comprising either KI doctoral students (including those qualifying as such on selection⁶) or KI postdocs. If there are fewer than eight, the amount is reduced by 10% for every individual shortfall. *Example:* If a total of 5 KI doctoral students and/or KI postdocs completed the course, the course will receive 70% of the standard amount. Any other individuals taking the course do not affect the compensation level. Note that there are also compensation rules covering [late dropouts](#)⁷.

If courses or activities are arranged jointly with other doctoral programmes or research schools, the shared financing solution must be clearly described. If senior researchers are involved in activities, their participation should be paid for by other bodies involved (e.g. networks or departments.)

4.2 Personnel costs

A programme's annual coordination and administration costs may not exceed SEK 100,000 + 20% of its total annual budget provision.

Example: For a programme with a total annual budget of SEK 2 million, the total allowable coordination and administration costs would be SEK 100,000 + 400,000 (i.e. 2,000,000 x 0.2) = 500,000.

4.3 Other costs

Residential conferences, retreats, etc.

Programmes may contribute a maximum of SEK 3,000 per KI doctoral student (or the equivalent, see above).

Travel

Compensation paid to programmes does not include funding for doctoral travel allowances. Instead, doctoral students are encouraged to apply for the travel allowances advertised by KI.

Programmes may cover travel costs for speakers/lecturers. Travel costs for steering group members may be covered in connection with approved programme activities. All other travel must be checked well in advance with the Course and Programme Committee chairperson.

5. Programme financing principles

Disbursements to doctoral programmes are made per calendar year. 75% of a programme's annual budget provision is paid monthly in twelfths to the host department. The remaining 25% is paid on approval of its annual report, provided that the programme has produced for the entire amount. A financial settlement is made after the programme period has concluded.

⁶ The following doctoral students qualify as KI doctoral students on selection: 1) those active under the international collaborations as described in <https://ki.se/en/collaboration/collaboration-within-doctoral-education> and 2) those in national research schools as described in <https://education.ki.se/research-schools>

⁷ <https://staff.ki.se/student-cancellations-late-dropouts-and-course-cancellation>

In the event of unforeseen departures from a programme's activity plan and budget, the programme administrator must notify the Course and Programme Committee and, when necessary, consult it in good time beforehand.

Appendix. Doctoral course progression

Below are details of what is meant by doctoral course progression at KI (level 1-4). Course progression can also be shown in the form of specific eligibility.

What is course progression at doctoral level?

- From basic knowledge for the many to advanced knowledge for the few “specialists”
- From broad knowledge to in-depth/specialist knowledge
- From basic/generic skills to specific research methodology
- From low to high difficulty and complexity

The four levels of doctoral course progression

Level 1

- Provides a broad base, suitable for many doctoral students in one research field or students in many different research fields.
- Normally no specific eligibility required.
- Examples: Many general science courses, orientation courses and generic courses, course on lab safety, foundation course on laboratory animal science, course on human biology or pathology.

Level 2

- Suitable for many doctoral students in one research field or, sometimes, students in many different research fields.
- More entrance requirements than at level 1.
- Often based on level 1 courses or similar.
- Examples: General science courses, such as on multivariate analysis, many technical courses.

Level 3

- Advanced medical science courses, suitable for in-depth study for a limited number of doctoral students with a solid subject grounding.
- Important to stress constructive alignment and student activation in course design (e.g. not only lectures/Q&A sessions with high profile lecturers as the sole activity).
- Examples: Advanced theory or methodology courses. Normally more cutting edge within the research field.

Level 4

- Highly advanced courses in the doctoral subject of medical science.
- Advanced courses requiring more in-depth/specialist knowledge than at level 3.
- The number of doctoral students is normally too small for KI to arrange level 4 courses for its own students; collaboration with another national or international university is therefore desirable and worth pursuing in the interests of course quality, and possibly even a pre-requisite.