

# PhD Information Booklet

This handout is designed to help PhD students at KI with common education and administrative tasks and was written by the [Doctoral Students' Association](#) (a section of [Medicinska Föreningen](#)).

\*Be aware that some information may differ between departments or become outdated. Please consult the official KI website and documentation if in doubt.

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## DOCTORAL EDUCATION

### GENERAL INFORMATION

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

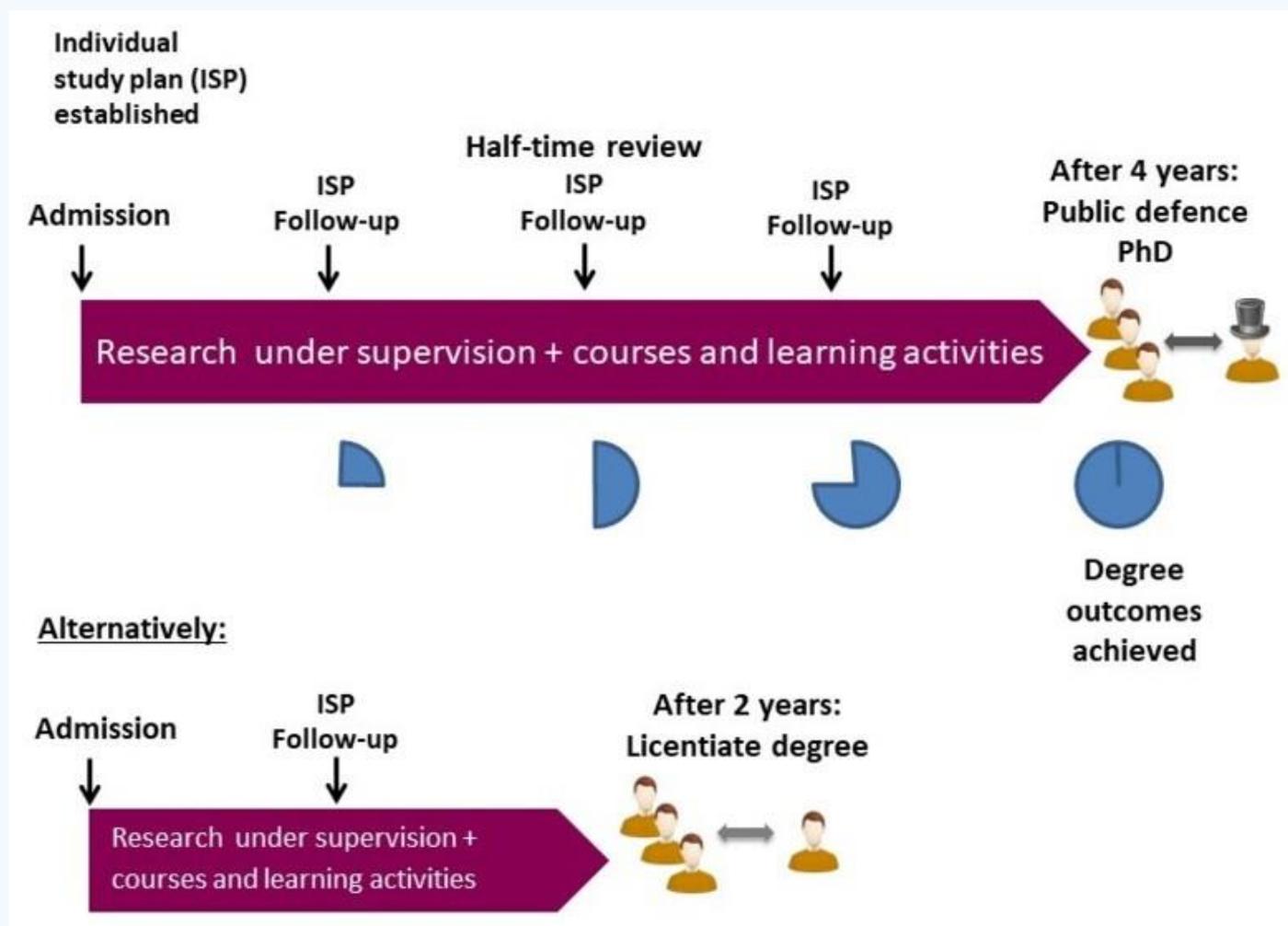


Figure 1. Illustration representing the main milestones of the 4 years of PhD at KI. ISP: Individual Study Plan (more info [below](#)). Ref: <https://education.ki.se/about-doctoral-education-at-ki>.

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## RECOMMENDED CHECKLIST FOR THE START OF THE PHD

Set-up at KI:

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

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## BEFORE FINISHING YOUR 1ST YEAR

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

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## BEFORE HALF-TIME

1. By your half-time application, you must have completed several compulsory PhD courses, for example in ethics and statistics. Depending on your project, you may also need to complete courses in laboratory safety and/or quality assurance in clinical research before your half-time. You can find more information about compulsory courses [here](#).
2. Before the half-time you need to have acquired at least 10 credits (see the [credits section](#) below).
3. (MTC department only) Complete the [book exam](#).

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## INDIVIDUAL STUDY PLAN (ISP)

The [Individual Study Plan](#) summarizes your PhD, how you will learn achieve your goals and which educational activities you will take during your PhD. You'll also have to do an ISP seminar, a public presentation to your department introducing yourself, your topic and project plan, within the first 3 months of registration. Then, there are [annual follow-ups](#) to track your progress and evaluate potential changes in your research plan, which are done with together with your supervisor. [Here](#) you can find a checklist for the annual follow-up meeting which help them to get a more meaningful follow-up. After the second year, a more extensive half-time review is held (see next [section](#)). These formal reviews are an opportunity to discuss any concerns or ideas with your supervisor(s).

It is important to update your ISP every year or when there are significant changes to your PhD, like changes in project plans, project exclusion or inclusion, change of courses and possibly changing of supervisor(s). The ISP stands as the formal contract between you and your supervisor on your respective responsibilities.

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## BOOKING HALF-TIME

The [half-time](#) is a formal check conducted after 2 years of full-time PhD studies or the equivalent for part time students. It consists of a written report of your PhD progress so far and a literature review, then an oral presentation to your half-time committee. We recommend having the half-time as close to two years into the PhD as possible. Consider 2.5 years after registration as a maximum for full-time students.

This is to make sure your projects are progressing well and to get feedback from researchers outside your supervision team. **It is not an exam.** Publications or how much data you have are not important and are not a reason to delay your half-time.

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## SETTING UP YOUR ELECTRONIC NOTEBOOK (ELN)

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

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## DOCTORAL COURSES

[Doctoral courses](#) are a great opportunity to get formal training.

You can apply for all courses, including compulsory and general science courses, in the [course catalogue](#), which is published around April 15<sup>th</sup> and October 15<sup>th</sup>. Applications are open for a month. After the application deadline has passed, [open vacancies](#) are updated. Courses are a way to earn [credits](#).

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

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

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## SELECTING A MENTOR

You are required to select a [mentor](#). This is to ensure there is someone impartial you can turn to for research, personal or career advice. This can be anyone (non-family member) you can trust, preferably with a PhD. Once you have found a mentor you can tick off this box in the ISP. You don't have to name them in the ISP, just notify that you have one.

The DSA and KI careers service run a [mentorship platform](#) for you to find a mentor easily!

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## YOUR SUPERVISION

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

Make sure that you and your supervisors communicate frequently and agree on shared expectations of each other. A healthy and honest working relationship with your supervisors is key to a successful PhD.

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

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## WHERE TO GO IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR SUPERVISION

We strongly recommend communicating with your supervisor clearly and discussing any challenges or concerns as soon as possible. There is also a [work environment dialogue](#) which you may have every year with your manager and possibly supervisor. If you are having a poor working relationship with your supervisor, consider going to the PhD study director in your department for advice. You can also go to the [Students 'and Doctoral students' Ombudspersons](#) to get an impartial view. You can see the support offered [here](#).

However, if your working relationship becomes untenable and you want to [change your main supervisor](#), then refer to the [changing supervisor document](#) for a flow chart of what to do. The forms required for changing supervisor are [here](#) in the “Other forms” section. For more serious cases there is also an anonymous [KI whistleblowing service](#).

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## KI FACILITIES

KI has many scientific core facilities such as flow cytometry, sequencing and microscopy. They can be reached for enquiries or bookings at through [ILab](#) . They can provide help on experimental design, analysis and troubleshooting as well as their paid services.

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## STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES AND DSA/MF

The [Doctoral Students' Association](#) (DSA) is an active and dynamic group of students that represent doctoral students from all departments at Karolinska Institutet. DSA is a section of [Medicinska Föreningen](#) (MF) which is the student union for all students in KI. [Becoming a member of MF](#) also gives you discount for public transport and other student deals.

Every department has one or more PhD representatives elected by the DSA annually. These representatives are active in the management of the department and act as a bridge between the PhD students and the management. There are also student safety representatives in

each department which represent the students in work environment issues for students. You can find your local representative on your department website or by asking HR.

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## REPORTING ACTIVITY AND REGISTRATION

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

For clinically active PhD students, it may be complicated to calculate their activity during the semester as their studies may be part of their clinical employment. More information about reporting activity for clinical PhD students can be found [here \(in Swedish\)](#).

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## CREDITS

During your PhD you will accumulate doctoral courses, seminars, conferences, and other activities. You need to have at least 30 credits to be allowed to defend your thesis.

If you have already covered a similar topic during your Master program in KI or from previous professional experience/courses prior the start of your PhD, you have the option to apply for a [credit transfer](#). This can also be for courses you take during the PhD, but not run by KI. Your PhD study director decides if the credits can be transferred.

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

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

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## UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING

You can be involved in undergraduate teaching as a learning experience and to gain credits. This may be compulsory and organized by your human resources (HR) department or completely voluntary depending on the department. Ask your HR department when you would like to be involved in more teaching.

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## PRESENTATIONS AND TEMPLATES

KI has [standard templates](#) for posters, PowerPoint presentations and the PhD thesis. Some templates can also be found when opening the Office app under “New”, you’ll find folder for each affiliation (example, KI and KS), size, type of document. For copyright [free images](#) there

is also the [KI mediabank](#). Guidance for using images and more resources for finding images is [here](#).

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## FINISHING THE PHD: THE DEFENCE

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

- At least two of the constituent papers included in the thesis must have been accepted for publication in peer-reviewed journals with you as an author (you do not need to be a 1<sup>st</sup> author; it can be any position).
- At least 30 doctoral credits collected.
- Have achieved all the learning outcomes (these are listed in your ISP).

You can read the rules for doctoral education at KI document [here](#) for more guidelines.

The most common thesis type is a compilation thesis. In some circumstances where publications are a difficult option and you have no accepted peer review articles, a monograph thesis is possible (more information can be found [here](#)).

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## IF YOU DON'T FINISH AFTER 4 YEARS

Doctoral students who have not finished after 4 years (starting from registration) can ask to be (if the supervisor has funds) [employed for a limited time](#) according to LAS (The Employment Protection Act) as “Doktorand-L”. This is called “Special fixed-term employment” (SÄVA) and can be held for 360 days during a five-year period.

If you have been employed on this particular contract as a research assistant before starting your PhD this may affect your possibilities to extend. In addition, this employment may affect the possibility of employment as a postdoctoral researcher at KI in the future.

## ADMINISTRATION

### PRIMULA

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

### SALARY

If you are employed by KI, you get a monthly salary. Your salary may vary depending on if you are a medical doctor/dentist (see documents [here](#)). Note that the numbers represent the lowest possible salary that you are allowed to have. You are always entitled to discuss your salary at the start of the position, and each year thereafter. Your wage statement is stated and stored in Primula or [Kivra](#) (an app for receiving paper mail from organizations electronically) unless you want it on paper format by post.

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

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

### REIMBURSEMENTS

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

Preventative health care allowance (see [KI benefits](#), [wellness benefits](#)) allows all KI staff to claim [1500SEK](#) as a health promotion incentive annually. This means that for all physical activities that you do within one year, you can get reimbursed for these expenses through Primula by the end of November each year. This can be a gym membership, a class or any other form of physical activity. Note that this does not apply to PhD students on a scholarship or employed elsewhere. If in doubt, ask HR at your department.

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

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## TRAVELING AS PHD STUDENTS

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

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

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

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

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

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## RESEARCH GRANTS

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

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## TRAVEL GRANTS

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

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

There may also be private travel grants for different research fields and purposes. Most likely the same meeting/conference you are attending provides a travel grant application when registration is being done. Also ask your direct colleagues for advice.

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## REPORTING INCIDENTS

If you want to report an incident of any type: please see [here](#). This could be lab safety, work environment, online security and data breaches or any other sort of incident you want to report.

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## KI PENDELBUSSEN

If you are working between the North and South campuses or you are using some of the facilities or having meetings on the other side, there is a [free commuter bus](#) between the Solna and Flemingsberg campus. You need your KI-card to use this service.

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## SECONDARY OCCUPATIONS

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

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## VACATION AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

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

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

[Public holidays](#) include holidays that fall on a weekday, Easter, Midsummer, Christmas and New Year's Eve. Bridge days (a workday between two work-free days) are also work-free.

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## PARENTAL LEAVE AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

You have the right to [parental leave](#) while doing your PhD. You have the right to stay at home to take care of your child until they are 18 months old. You also have the right to work part time if you have a child under 12 years old. Any parental leave must be applied for in Primula web 2 months in advance and cannot be rejected as long as you comply with the regulations. Your parental benefit is handled by [Försäkringskassan](#) and as an employment benefit you are in some cases entitled to additional payment from KI. You also have the right to stay at

home to take care of a sick child and during that time you are entitled to benefits from *Försäkringskassan* in certain cases.

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

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## WHERE TO GO FOR HELP OR SUPPORT

A short list of people you should be familiarized with and have close contact with for several administrative tasks or support:

1. Department administrator of PhD studies: half-time documentation, credit-bearing accreditation, annual reports, defense.
2. Department PhD study director: signing your ISP, half-time report, concerns about PhD studies or supervision.
3. Head of department (first person after your supervisor): raise concerns about PhD studies, employment, etc.
4. Department administrator: Travel insurances, book premises, order *fikas*, etc.
5. Your local PhD representative, a fellow PhD student for any sort of issue.
6. There are two types of ombudspersons that you can reach out to: one from [MF](#) and one from [KI](#). You would like to contact [MF's ombudsperson](#) for help with challenges with supervision or lab members, PhD responsibilities and rights, but you want to contact [KI's ombudsperson](#) in the case of science related issues, IP, plagiarism, authorship issues, GLP code, ethics.
7. As PhD students, we have an [occupational health service](#) (Avonova) that allows you to get 2 appointments a year for different specialists such as family doctor, ergonomist, psychologist, and get vaccination of hepatitis B if working with human samples or cells.

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## IT RELATED ISSUES

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

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

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

You can use [Eduroam WiFi](#) which works throughout all European universities and can be accessed on the following format: user is [username@ki.se](#) and your usual password. There

is also a KI staff WiFi that KI computers connect to automatically and a guest WiFi for temporary use.

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## KI CARD

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

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

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

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## KI PROFILE AND EMAIL SIGNATURE

It is useful to have a professional photo for your KI profile. To access this, go to the KI website and login as a staff member then go to edit profile. You can also add a small biography, list of publications, former education, links to external profile pages, news.

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

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## KI HEALTH BENEFITS

We as KI employers have 3 main [health benefits](#): we have access to facilities like gyms, tennis court and volleyball court in our campuses, we have the right to an annual [wellness allowance](#) of 1,500SEK and we have a one weekly wellness hour.

## LIVING IN SWEDEN

### ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS FOR NEWCOMERS TO SWEDEN

- a) Apply for a [personnummer](#) (personal number) in *Skatteverket* (Swedish tax agency). Right after getting it, get a [Swedish ID card](#).
- b) Get a Swedish phone number from any phone company like Comviq, Hallon, Vimla, Telia. Note that some may have a student discount!
- c) Get a [bank account](#) in any Swedish bank, so you can get your salary in Swedish kronor. Get the mobile [BankID](#) service, it's a must in Sweden to get things ID verified digitally and also [Swish](#) to easily pay small amounts to other people. Both are included in most bank packages. Be cautious about opening one without your *personnummer* (personal number) as some banks may not allow you to.
- d) Insure your home with a *hemförsäkring* from any insurance company like Folksam, Trygg-Hansa, Hedvig, Lansforsakringar. Note that some have student discounts!
- e) Register into [Försäkringskassan](#) (the Swedish Social Insurance Agency) by filling in a form of [Flytta till Sverige](#) (waiting time for approval 1-6 months).

### ACCOMMODATION

**Housing** is a challenge in Stockholm. There are different options for housing: (a) share a place with partner/friend/landlord, (b) getting into a queue, (c) buy a place. The range of rental prices that one can face are: for rooms 9-14m<sup>2</sup> (with shared common spaces) is 4,500-7,000SEK/month. For studios 12-35m<sup>2</sup> (one room with kitchen and separate bathroom) is 6,000-15,000SEK/month. For apartments (more than one room with kitchen and bathroom) can go from 7,000+ depending on the size.

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

**Note! Scam alert!** When you rent second hand, the law only allows to lease a place when the landlord is traveling out of Sweden for a while, otherwise if they sublet it while living somewhere else it's illegal under your responsibility.

**Queue for housing:** When you arrive for the first time in Sweden and particularly in KI, you can apply for [KI housing](#). They have apartments around the campuses, but you can only stay for 1 year from when you move to Stockholm. As a student, you can be a member of MF and by default get to [SSSB](#) rental queue where you can apply to room (mean waiting time 1-2 years depending on conditions of the apartment and area) or apartments (mean waiting time 4-5 years depending on conditions of the apartment and area). If you plan to stay here for more time after your PhD, you can get into the [Stockholm stad bostad](#) queue (200SEK/year).

Lastly, there are private communities that locally have an independent queue system for rental accommodations for example Nobelus in Flemingsberg by [Byggvesta](#).

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

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## LEARNING SWEDISH

In academia it's hard to motivate yourself to learn Swedish because of the international environment. If you are aiming to stay in Sweden long term, you may want to start [learning Swedish](#). KI offers a 10-week course ran by [Folkuniversitetet](#) from A1 to B2. *Svenska för invandrare* ([SFI](#)) is the national public courses you can apply from any level until B2. If you want to pursue learning more after SFI, you can go for *Svenska som andraspråk* ([SAS](#)). If courses are not your thing or you don't have time for them, you can try different apps to learn the basics on [Duolingo](#) or [Babbel](#). Alternatively there is [SVT](#) (national TV) in easy Swedish or on Spotify: [Simple Swedish podcast](#), [Coffee Break Swedish](#) or [Radio Sweden på lätt Svenska](#).

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## HEALTHCARE

[Healthcare in Sweden](#) is public and decentralized. Public meaning your taxes cover all health care you may need in Sweden and in EU ([EU blue card request](#) by [Försäkringskassan](#)). Even though it's public, you need to pay 250kr for each visit and 120kr/day for each day in the hospital. Once you have reached an expense of 1300kr/12 months, you [don't need](#) to pay these fees anymore. Note that dental care is free up to 26 years-old, that includes any teeth adjustment. Decentralized meaning that each center is ran publicly or privately with support of its regions and is run independently.

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

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## CAREER SUPPORT

The [KI careers service](#) offers support to PhD students, postdocs and researchers for their future careers. Seminars, workshops, lectures and online support is offered as well as a PhD course every semester. The academic and industry world in science is active on [LinkedIn](#), so we recommend working on a profile page there. Every year there is [CHaSE](#): a fair where industry and academy meets and aims to recruit people looking for jobs on Life sciences and Health.

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## WITHIN THE LAST YEAR FINISHING YOUR PHD

There are some things one needs to be aware of when getting to the final year of your PhD. If you are staying in Sweden after your PhD contract finishes you are entitled to ask for unemployment benefit from [Försäkringskassan](#) up to 50% of your income. There are two things that you need to consider, first you actively register then to complement your unemployment benefit, you need to register to an A-kassa (only applicable if employed by KI) which is an income insurance for the field you work in ([Akademikernas](#) for us). Moreover, you want to become a member of our science *föreningen* insurance like [SULF](#) or [Naturvetarna](#) which are associations that can take your benefit to up to 80% of your past income.

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