

Rules and instructions: Withdrawal of resources for doctoral students at Karolinska Institutet

Ref. no. 1-434/2014

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



**Karolinska
Institutet**



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1. Introduction

The document *Rules and instructions: withdrawal of resources for doctoral students* has been prepared in order to clarify the regulations, the situations in which resources may be withdrawn, the implications of withdrawing resources, how matters regarding the withdrawal of resources shall be processed and how the decision to withdraw resources for doctoral students can be appealed.

2. Statutory regulations

The following statutory regulations apply to the individual study plan, for the withdrawal of resources for doctoral students, and regulations for the possibility for doctoral students to regain their resources. Statutory regulations regarding decisions that can be appealed to the Higher Education Appeals Board are also presented below.

2.1 Swedish Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100)

Chapter 6

Section 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 his or her supervisor.

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. Ordinance (2010:1064).

Section 30. If a doctoral student substantially neglects his or her undertakings as specified in the individual study plan, the vice-chancellor 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 is employed as a doctoral student or is receiving a doctoral grant.

Section 31. If study resources have been withdrawn pursuant to Section 30, the doctoral student may, apply to vice-chancellor to regain 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.

[...] Section 36. The Vice-Chancellor may not delegate decisions pursuant to Sections 30 & 31.

Chapter 12

[...] Section 2. The following decisions by a university may be appealed to the Higher Education Appeals Board:

[...] 5. The decision to withdraw resources for a doctoral students' education according to Chap. 6, Section 30 and the decision that the doctoral student may not regain his or her resources pursuant to Chap. 6, Section 31.

[...] Section 5. The decision of the Higher Education Appeals Board cannot be appealed.

2.2 Rules at Karolinska Institutet

The *Rules for doctoral education at Karolinska Institutet*¹ stipulate that the individual study plan shall include the following information:

- research plan
- learning objectives for doctoral education
- description of the supervision
- timetable
- funding plan

According to delegation procedure² at Karolinska Institutet, the head of department decides on the individual study plan when the student is admitted to doctoral education after a recommendation from the Admissions Board.

The *Rules for doctoral education at Karolinska Institutet* stipulate that the individual study plan and the student's progress in the doctoral education must be followed-up in writing once a year at the request of the department's director of doctoral education.³ If it is the supervisor's view that the doctoral student is not making any progress in his or her studies and/or fails to follow the decided individual study plan, this shall be documented at the annual follow-up. Deviations from the planned education shall be also documented, e.g. through the revision of the individual study plan.

3. In which situations can resources be withdrawn?

The individual study plan is a steering document for doctoral students' education. Resources can only be withdrawn if the doctoral student neglects his or her undertakings as specified in the individual study plan. It is therefore important to have a clear and detailed individual study plan that is followed up regularly by the doctoral student, the principal supervisor and co-supervisor and by the director of doctoral education of the 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.

When assessing whether resources should be withdrawn, it should also be taken into consideration whether Karolinska Institutet has fulfilled its obligations as specified in the individual study plan.⁴ The supervisor(s) and the department management should therefore have jointly, on several occasions and in different

¹See Rules for Doctoral Education at Karolinska Institutet, chapter 5.

²See Vice-Chancellor's decision and delegation procedure for Karolinska Institutet

³See Rules for Doctoral Education at Karolinska Institutet, chapter 5.2

⁴See processing of appeals about the withdrawal of resources, Higher Education Board of Appeals (in Swedish): <http://www.onh.se/avgoranden/indragningavdoktorandshandledning.4.7924e74611777d7c66080002280.html>

ways, tried to induce the doctoral student to pursue his or her education as specified in the individual study plan, e.g. by revising the individual study plan, providing extra supervisory support, or changing supervisor.

Withdrawing the resources for a doctoral student should be the final course of action when all other solutions have been exhausted.

4. What does the withdrawal of resources entail?

The decision to withdraw resources for a doctoral student entails, inter alia, that supervisory resources, workplace, computer, telephone and e-mail address, access to laboratory premises and equipment and access to other teaching resources are withdrawn.

A doctoral student whose resources have been withdrawn is still admitted to doctoral education at Karolinska Institutet. The doctoral student has the right to pursue doctoral studies independently and also has the right to be examined, i.e. defend his/her thesis at a public defence or at a licentiate seminar.

5. Processing

The processing of the matter at department level, head of department's report to the Vice-Chancellor regarding the withdrawal of resources for a doctoral student and the preparation of the report before the Vice-Chancellor's decision (if applicable) to withdraw the resources are described below.

In many cases, handling the matter well at the initial stage results in the supervisor and doctoral student, with the department management's help, finding a solution to the problem concerned.

5.1. Meetings with supervisors

If, for different reasons, a doctoral student neglects his or her undertakings as specified in the individual study plan, the principal supervisor shall, with the help of the co-supervisor, discuss the matter with the doctoral student at an early stage. The supervisor should introduce more and shorter time intervals for checking study performance against the clear requirements in the individual study plan. All measures and agreements with the doctoral student shall be documented and followed up.

If the supervisor(s) consider that the doctoral student continues to neglect his or her undertakings despite the above-mentioned measures, the supervisors shall inform the head of department, the administrative officer and the director of doctoral education.

5.2. Meetings with the department management

The director of doctoral education at the department shall, in consultation with the head of department and the administrative officer, call both the doctoral student and his or her supervisors to a meeting to discuss the situation concerned and listen to both the doctoral student's and supervisors' views on the matter. The doctoral student shall be informed about the content of the meeting prior to the meeting and his/her right to bring a representative or possibility of

contacting a trade union representative see section 8. The meeting shall be documented and copies sent to all the participants.

Measures that can be decided at the meeting include the revision of the individual study plan, extra supervision support and change of supervisor. The revised version of the individual study plan shall include a timetable for and content during the studies for the remaining period of the doctoral education. It shall also clearly specify which undertakings the different supervisors have and other resources that are available to the doctoral student. The revised individual study plan shall, after joint consultation with the director of doctoral education at the department, all the supervisors and doctoral students, be approved by the head of department.

5.3. Follow-ups

The director of doctoral education and the supervisors shall jointly follow up the decisions that have been made. Additional follow-up meetings and revisions may be necessary.

If the doctoral student continues to neglect his or her undertakings as specified in the individual study plan despite of the above-mentioned measures, the head of department shall send a report to the Vice-Chancellor concerning the withdrawal of resources for the doctoral student.

5.4. Report to the Vice-Chancellor

The head of department where the doctoral student has been admitted hands over the matter regarding the withdrawal of resources to the Vice-Chancellor in a report. A report should include a summary of ways in which the doctoral student has substantially neglected his or her undertakings as specified in the individual study plan. It should also specify ways in which Karolinska Institutet has fulfilled its undertakings as specified in the individual study plan. The following documentation should be attached to the report:

- List of other measures in addition to those specified in the individual study plan that have been tried or discussed to solve the problem concerned
- Documentation from the meeting with the doctoral students, supervisors and department management that been received
- All versions of the doctoral student's individual study plan
- Any relevant e-mail conversations and other relevant documentation that is available
- All the supervisors' assessments of the doctoral student's current results and the possibility that the student will fulfil his or her undertakings as specified in the individual study plan
- The report shall be addressed to the Vice-Chancellor but sent to the registrar at the university's administrative office: registrator@ki.se.

5.5. Investigation by the Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor shall have the incoming report investigated. In the investigation the doctoral student and doctoral student's supervisor shall be asked to submit a statement. The decision will be based on their account and other records that are available see section 5.4.

The Vice-Chancellor shall, in his or her appraisal, take into consideration whether Karolinska Institutet has fulfilled its undertakings as specified in the individual study plan. Have the necessary resources been available to the doctoral student? Have the supervisor(s) and the department management jointly, on several occasions and in different ways, tried to induce the doctoral student to pursue his or her education as specified in the individual study plan?

Doctoral student and supervisors shall also be asked to submit a statement about the investigation prior to the Vice-Chancellor making the decision about whether the doctoral student's resources shall be withdrawn.

6. Decision regarding the withdrawal of resources

If, after the investigation, there are grounds for the withdrawal of resources, the Vice-Chancellor shall make the decision on the matter. The decision to withdraw resources shall be made and justified in writing.

If there are no grounds for the withdrawal of resources, all the parties involved shall be informed. It is the head of the department to which the doctoral student belongs that decides whether any further measures need to be taken, e.g. change of supervisor, revision of the individual study plan etc.

7. How is the doctoral student's employment and other allowances affected by the withdrawal of resources?

Resources may not be withdrawn for the period in which the doctoral student is employed as a doctoral student or for the period that the doctoral student has a study grant. The department should therefore adopt a holistic approach to the matter at the start of the process in cases regarding a possible withdrawal of resources for a doctoral student.

If the doctoral student is employed as a doctoral student, the decision to withdraw the resources comes into effect when the current term of employment comes to an end. In normal cases the doctoral student's term of employment is extended once a year. The senior supervisor and the director of doctoral education shall therefore give their approval before the employment term of a doctoral student is extended by an additional period. If the doctoral student is employed as a doctoral student and the head of department intends to hand in a report to the Vice-Chancellor for the withdrawal of resources, the extension of the doctoral student's term of employment shall continue to apply until the matter regarding the withdrawal of resources for doctoral student has been decided by the Vice-Chancellor.

Om doctoral student receives a study grant, the university shall, in accordance with Section 14 of the Ordinance on Study Grants for Third-Cycle Students

(1995:938) withdraw the right to a study grant if the doctoral student neglects his/her studies. The decision to withdraw the study grant is made by the head of department at department level when the Vice-Chancellor makes the decision to withdraw resources. The decision to withdraw the right to a study grant cannot be appealed.

If a doctoral student is employed by another employer than Karolinska Institutet which is substantially affected by the decision to withdraw resources, it shall be informed about the decision.

If a doctoral student holds an external scholarship to pursue doctoral education, Karolinska Institutet shall inform the scholarship fund that the decision to withdraw resources has been made. According to the Scholarship Regulations at Karolinska Institutet, Karolinska Institutet can withdraw unpaid scholarship funds, i.e. complementary scholarships for doctoral students, if the doctoral student neglects his or her studies as specified in the individual study plan.⁵

8. Right to representation, need for an interpreter, impartiality

A doctoral student has right to appoint a representative. The representative has the right to represent the doctoral student and has the right to attend meetings, etc. At Karolinska Institutet there is a doctoral student ombudsman who is employed by the Medical Students' Association. A doctoral student whose resources may be withdrawn shall be informed about this independent support function at an early stage. Doctoral students who are members of a trade union also have the possibility of contacting their respective trade union for support and representation.

If the matter concerns a doctoral student who is unable to speak Swedish, written document and statement shall be translated into English at their request. An interpreter shall be hired if needed.

As in all administrative processes the question of impartiality and bias shall be taken into consideration during the processing of the matter regarding the withdrawal of resources for doctoral students.⁶

9. Request to regain supervision and other resources

According to Chapter 6, Section 31 of the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100) a doctoral student who has had supervision and other resources withdrawn (Section 30) can apply to the Vice-Chancellor to regain the right to supervision and other resources.

The application shall be addressed to the Vice-Chancellor. The Vice-Chancellor will have the matter investigated. The purpose of the investigation is to find out whether the doctoral student's subsequent study results are of noticeable quality and scope or if the doctoral student has shown that it is probable that he or she can complete their remaining studies and undertakings as specified in the individual study plan. During the processing period the Vice-Chancellor can

⁵See Scholarship Regulations at Karolinska Institutet

⁶See Sections 11-12 Administrative Procedure Act (1986:223)

appoint an independent specialist with competence in the research field to perform the above-mentioned investigation.

10. Appeal

The decision to withdraw resources for a doctoral student (Section 30) can be appealed to the Higher Education Appeals Board. The decision to reject the application to regain the resources (Section 31) can also be appealed to the Higher Education Appeals Board. Notice of appeal must be received no later than three weeks after the student has been notified about the decision.

Notice of appeal shall be addressed to the Higher Education Appeals Board, but sent to Karolinska Institutet for a review of the timing of the notice's arrival and (if applicable) for a review of its decision.

The decision of the Board of Appeals cannot be overturned.