



/SULF/

Starter Kit for Doctoral Candidates

/The SULF Association of Doctoral Candidates

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Congratulations on becoming a doctoral candidate!

Doctoral education is an exciting and rewarding journey, and we hope it will feel that way to you. It is rather unique in that you are a student at a university, but at the same time an employee in a workplace. This can sometimes be difficult to navigate: what can you expect of others, and what may they expect of you? This document is intended to provide a brief overview of your rights as a doctoral candidate and important issues related to PhD studies in Sweden.

This document is divided into two parts. The first part covers aspects of the doctoral candidate working environment – rules, regulations, rights of doctoral candidates etc. – and the second part looks at life outside the workplace. This second part will be especially helpful to people who are new to living in Sweden and will need to navigate the government’s occasionally confusing bureaucracy.

We who write this are doctoral candidates and members of the SULF Doctoral Candidate Association. We hope that this kit will serve as a road map for new colleagues to navigate doctoral education and employment in Sweden and provide crucial guidelines for commonly occurring issues.

We wish you a great time here! And by the way: the association is run by doctoral candidates, for doctoral candidates. If you feel like helping out, get in touch any time you like!

*Mohamed Al-Sabri,
Chair of the Board of the SULF Doctoral Candidate Association
October 2024*

The information in this document has been verified to be true and accurate, as best we can determine, as of October 2024. We recommend that you check with your local trade union representatives (see the section Whom to contact) for up-to-date information, and for local regulations specific to your university, before you take any action based on the information contained in this document.



Working environment

Admission to PhD Studies and Contracts

In Sweden, all doctoral candidates are admitted as students to a PhD program, and the vast majority are employed by their university as doctoral candidates. This means that you are both a student and an employee. While there is no limit on how long you can remain a student in a PhD program, your employment as a doctoral candidate is capped at a maximum of four years with full-time studies. However, your employment can be extended indefinitely due to factors like parental leave or illness. For PhD programs involving additional departmental duties (such as teaching),

the maximum employment period is five years. The initial employment may not be for longer than one year. Employment may be renewed for no more than two years at a time. Employment as a doctoral candidate is usually full-time. However, you can choose to be employed at a lower rate, the minimum being 50%. Employment as a doctoral candidate is regulated in Chapter 5 of the Higher Education Ordinance, (Högskoleförordningen).

Contractual terms of employment are negotiated in the form of collective agreements between your university and the trade unions.

Financing

In most cases, doctoral candidates in Sweden are employed as doctoral candidates, meaning you receive a

salary from the university. Remember that salaries should increase in accordance with local collective agreements (lokala kollektivavtal), and other local policies. Check your university website for the relevant information, or contact your administration office or local trade union representatives for details about the salary system.

Some doctoral candidates receive their income from a scholarship. Having a scholarship is not the same as being employed, because these doctoral candidates work under different rules, with fewer protections. For example, if you are a scholarship recipient, you do not earn a pension and are not covered by collective agreements. For these reasons, SULF has long campaigned for all doctoral candidates to be funded in the form of employment, not stipends.

Yet other doctoral candidates are employed by some organisation other than the university itself. This commonly applies in healthcare, with clinic-based doctoral candidates often employed by the local region, or industry-based doctoral candidates in science and engineering. In this case, your employer has entered into an agreement with your university, in which the employer agrees to allocate paid working time in your employment for you to pursue your doctoral education. Salaries for clinical and industry PhDs should be at least equal to university-employed doctoral salaries, and are often higher. Even if you are employed by a different organisation, you are a student at your university, and have the same education-

nal rights as other doctoral candidates there. Your employment conditions, however, may be different.

Supervision

According to the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance, (högskoleförordningen), you have the right to at least two supervisors, with one of these having the role of principal supervisor. Some universities specify how many hours of supervision you should receive. However, you still have a right to supervision even once these hours have been exhausted, so these should be taken as a guideline only.

Conflicts with supervisors

You are entitled to change supervisor(s) if you wish (see Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 28). This can sometimes be a solution to conflicts or work environment-related issues, but should be seen as a last resort. If you wish to change supervisor(s) because you find it difficult to work together, we recommend that you first have a serious discussion with the supervisor(s). If this does not result in constructive proposals for change, you should discuss the situation with your department head, or someone else at the institution who is responsible for third-cycle education. Changes in supervision can be initiated by you or your current supervisor.

To change your supervisor, you must submit a written request to the head of your department or another responsible individual for third-cycle education at your institution. No justification is required for the request. You can

suggest a new supervisor, but the appointment is ultimately at the discretion of the head of the department or designated official.

The change must be documented in your individual study plan (ISP) and monitored by the department to prevent delays in your research. Changing supervisors should not, in principle, affect the funding for your salary or scholarship, but there can be disagreements on this, particularly when research projects are externally funded through grants or contracts linked to a specific supervisor. For instance, the new supervisor may not have access to the same funding or resources as the previous one. Therefore, it is advisable to discuss potential funding impacts with both your current and prospective supervisors before making a change.

Reporting channels

Typically, in Sweden, universities are organized into departments, and the Vice-Chancellor (rektor) delegates employer responsibility (arbetsledningsansvar) to the Head of Department (prefekt). You can find specific details about your university's policies in its internal documents, called delegation orders (delegationsordning). These documents explain how employer responsibility is distributed within the organization. However, the Vice-Chancellor of each university holds the ultimate responsibility for doctoral candidates. If you feel unsafe or uncomfortable reporting to the Head of the Department, you can seek support from your local Saco-S representatives or the students' union doctoral candidate re-

presentative who can offer support and advice in such situations.

For more information visit “Contact your union representative” at sulf.se/en/about-sulf/contact.

SULF, through Saco-S, can represent your case and negotiate with the university to improve the situation, in case of harassment or other working environment-related issues, provided that you have been a member since before the issues began. Your trade union representatives can then represent you, if you wish, in formal proceedings against the university, such as an employment tribunal. If issues started before you were a SULF member, then Saco-S can provide advice, but not representation. Nevertheless, get in touch: we try our best to help everyone, even if you only joined very recently as a member.

Student unions can also support you even if you are not a SULF member, but they cannot demand negotiation of your employment terms or represent you at an employment tribunal. That said, student union ombudsmen frequently assist PhD students in various situations, such as meetings with heads of department, supervisor changes, and academic misconduct processes. In any case, you are always welcome to contact SULF's members' support service.

If you feel there are health and well-being risks at your workplace, then you can report them to the health and safety representative (skyddsombud) at your department.

If you experience any harassment, verbal or otherwise, we strongly recommend that you document this as best you can. For oral harassment, to keep track of the events, you can have a table for incidents with date, time, title and description of the incidents. In Sweden, it is also legal to secretly record a conversation if you are a participant in it, which can help you gather further evidence. For written harassment, it is also possible to save emails and then use them as a way to document this. Having witnesses is always recommended.

If you have been subjected to offensive treatment that falls within the Discrimination Act 2008:567, “associated with sex, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation or age”, then you can report this formally to the Vice-Chancellor, the police or the Equality Ombudsman (DO). Read more about

the Discrimination Act at do.se/choose-language/english/discrimination-act-2008567.

General Study Plan (ASP)/Syllabus

In line with national university guidelines, each PhD or licentiate program must have a General Study Plan, also known as a syllabus (allmän studieplan or ASP). This document should outline the core content of the study program, compulsory courses, specific entry requirements, and any other necessary regulations.

The ASP is the same for all doctoral candidates within your subject area, and does not change during the course of the program. For each individual doctoral candidate, there must be an individual study plan (individuellt studieplan, ISP). This is the all-important core



document of your doctoral education, and will be described in greater depth below.

You can find the ISP best practices at sulf.se/en/work-salary-and-benefits/doctoral-candidate-doctoral-studies/individual-study-plan. Furthermore, the university is required to provide you with access to mandatory and additional courses specified in the ASP and your Individual Study Plan. You should not be required to pay tuition fees for courses specified in your ISP.

It is advised to read the ASP thoroughly to be informed about the requirements to obtain a PhD degree.

Individual study plans (ISPs)

All doctoral candidates at Swedish universities are required to have an individual study plan (ISP), which is a binding document that should “contain the undertakings made by the doctoral candidate and the higher education institution and a timetable for the doctoral candidate’s study programme.” (See Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 29). The ISP typically documents dissertation work, educational activities, prolongation work, supervision obligations, and other requirements such as project financing. The format of the ISP varies between different universities and institutions within Sweden. The ISP should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis, with revisions made as needed in consultation with you and your supervisors, at least once per year. Since the

ISP is considered a formal agreement between you, your supervisors, and the institution, it is important to review the document carefully and revise periodically, as each party’s obligations may be scrutinized in relation to its contents should a conflict arise regarding the work/study plan.

Routines for follow-up and revision of the ISP vary between universities, and sometimes between departments within a university. These inconsistencies led us at SULF to produce a best practice guide for the individual study plan, which you can access at sulf.se/en/work-salary-and-benefits/doctoral-candidate-doctoral-studies/individual-study-plan.



Teaching and departmental duties

If you are employed as a doctoral candidate, you may be required to dedicate up to 20% of your time to departmental work (teaching, supervision,

administrative, or research tasks) in which case, your contract shall be prolonged by an equivalent amount of time, up to a maximum of five years.

Dissertation, defence and the doctoral degree

Each university in Sweden may have specific guidelines for structuring a doctoral thesis, but the three most common formats are: the monograph, the compilation thesis and the artistic portfolio. Monographs are a self-contained, in-depth exploration of your entire research journey during the PhD program. Essentially, it is a single, unified scientific work that encapsulates your findings. The compilation thesis brings together your published research, typically presented as a collection of academic articles. These articles are accompanied by a crucial introductory chapter called "kappa." This kappa serves two purposes: firstly, it provides a comprehensive summary of your research, and secondly, it weaves all the separate articles into a cohesive narrative, highlighting the connections between them. Artistic portfolios are for students in fields like the arts or design. This format includes a combination of artistic work (such as exhibitions, performances, or creative projects) and a written component that reflects on and analyzes the research process and the artistic outcomes.

The thesis defense process varies by department. While some departments require only supervisor approval, others may involve the head of research education. Remember, only examiners

can determine thesis adequacy. Pre-defense checks by others can violate examination regulations (see the guideline Rättsäker examination from the Higher Education Authority, UKÄ). Academic freedom supports your right to submit a thesis, even if your supervisor disagrees.

One key point to remember: your thesis needs to be publicly accessible before your defense. The exact deadlines for making your thesis available and submitting it to the evaluation committee will be established once a defense date is set. The defense itself is a public event, typically hosted by your department or university. It involves an examination committee with at least one external examiner who is not affiliated with the institution, ensuring an impartial evaluation. It also involves an opponent, who plays a crucial role in questioning and discussing the thesis with the candidate, in front of the examiners. Don't forget that a degree certificate isn't issued automatically upon graduation. You'll need to submit a separate application to receive your doctorate.

Trade unions in Sweden

In Sweden, working conditions are regulated to a greater extent through collective agreements than by legislation. These agreements are negotiated by unions and individual employers. Therefore approximately 70% of all Swedish employees are members of a union, and these numbers are even higher for state employees. Unions are open to all, regardless of nationality or type

of employment. Union membership can facilitate access to many kinds of assistance (e.g. information related to doctoral studies and legal assistance). SULF, similar to most unions in Sweden, operates independently, with no ties to any political party, the government, or universities.

Doctoral candidates who are members of SULF gain access to a central information helpline and other online resources but are also able to seek help from local Saco-S union negotiators who are based at each university in Sweden. However, members do not have the right to individual service from the Association in union matters arising from a period prior to joining the Association or that have occurred within three months of joining the Association unless there are extraordinary reasons

for such representation. Decisions are taken by the Executive Committee of the Association Board in each individual case. If a conflict arises in the work environment, these Saco-S negotiators can advocate on your behalf, provided you are a union member. Furthermore, SULF members who become unemployed are eligible to apply for SULF Income Insurance if they are also members of Akademikernas a-kassa. Please consider that union membership and a-kassa (unemployment insurance fund) membership are separate. In a-kassa, membership is required for a minimum period in order to receive this benefit. For further details, see sulf.se/en/work-salary-and-benefits/unemployment.



Special legislation for higher education institutes

The working conditions and terms of employment at Swedish universities are regulated by legislation to some extent. The Higher Education Ordinance (Högskoleförordningen), is one important law governing Swedish universities. However, local conditions are also regulated by collective agreements, (kollektivavtal), at national and local levels. These are negotiated by unions and employers. Please read your local and central agreement to find out what regulations/terms and conditions apply in your case. Your local Saco-s representatives can help you find and interpret these documents.

Sick leave

It is important to report sick leave. Typically, this is done through PRIMULA or a similar HR system. As an employee, you will receive sick pay, (approximately 80% of your salary, 90 % if on long-term sick leave), for the period that you report sick. Special rules apply to the first sick day. If you are employed as a doctoral candidate, your contract should be extended for any days missed due to sickness. In cases where your sick leave lasts for longer than 7 calendar days, you will need a doctor's note. After 14 calendar days, you will need to report this to the Social Insurance Agency, (Försäkringskassan) – the employer helps you with this.

When you receive a medical certificate after 14 days, the healthcare provider

sends it directly to 1177 or Försäkringskassan. As an employee, it is your responsibility to forward the sickness certificate to your employer. A representative for your employer, typically the HR person in charge at the department, will then register your sick leave with Försäkringskassan. Once the university has registered it, you will need to log into Försäkringskassan and apply to receive compensation for the sick leave days.

When you apply to Försäkringskassan, you will be asked to complete forms where you provide details such as your current salary, the number of sick leave days, and whether you are paid by the hour or on a daily basis. The payment decision process at Försäkringskassan occurs in two steps:

Salary Base Decision: Försäkringskassan first decides the salary base on which they will calculate your sick leave payment. You will receive a letter informing you of their decision regarding the salary base, which is usually your current salary.

Sick Leave Payment Decision: In the second step, Försäkringskassan determines the actual payment based on the number of sick leave days.

Included in the membership is a health insurance that gives compensation for two months if you are sick more than three months, see folksam.se/forbund/sulf/member-health-insurance. This insurance also covers if you are in need of preventive care or need to be at home from work to take care of a close

relative or a seriously ill child. Additional health insurance can be purchased from Folksam with membership discount.

Keep in mind that the first time you go through this process, it can take around a month and a half, so it is important to factor in this time.

If you are employed by your university as a doctoral candidate, your employer should extend your employment if you have been on sick leave so that you are granted a total of 4 years of PhD studies. Talk to your union if you would like to find out more. If you are new in Sweden, it may be a good idea to contact the Social Insurance Agency even before you get sick, to check that you are registered as being entitled to social security benefits, in order to avoid any delays in the payment of your sick pay in future. We recommend you contact them as soon as you have a personal ID number (personnummer), issued by the Tax Agency (Skatteverket). For more information, visit the Social Insurance Agency website, forsakringskassan.se.

Parental leave

Parental leave benefits are complex, but employed doctoral candidates have the right to access the same benefits as other employees. The Parental Leave Act entitles you to take time away from work and stay home to provide childcare for a certain number of days, depending on specifics such as the age of the child. If you are planning to have a child or apply for parental leave, even if you already have a child, you should contact your union, the HR department at your

university and the Social Insurance Agency (Försäkringskassan), to ask about your specific case. SULF offers a parental leave manual to members, and you can find this when you login at sulf.se/en/log-in or scan the QR code below. For a short overview, see sulf.se/en/work-salary-and-benefits/parental-leave/parental-leave-for-doctoral-candidates.



For more information, see forsakringskassan.se.

Higher Education Ordinance & Local Rules

The Higher Education Ordinance is the Swedish national regulation stipulating the general legal framework and standards for universities and higher education institutions across Sweden. It covers aspects such as admission, degree structures, qualifications, and the responsibilities of academic staff and students. Local regulations (in Swedish: “Lokala regler”), on the other hand,



refers to the specific policies and guidelines established by individual universities or faculties within the framework provided by the Higher Education Ordinance. These local regulations can cover a wide range of topics, including specific admission criteria for programs, internal departmental roles, and specific codes of conduct. The main difference lies in their scope and applicability: the Higher Education Ordinance provides a broad, national framework applicable to all higher education institutions in Sweden, while local regulations are specific to each university. Local regulations determined by each university may not overrule any provisions in the Higher Education Ordinance or in collective agreements.

Whom to contact

There are many people who are involved in your PhD education beyond your supervisor. Below is an inconclusive list with some of these people and their role in your PhD studies.

Head of department or Prefekt: the head of department, known in Swedish

as prefekt, often a senior academic, oversees departmental operations and is responsible for overall management. This includes making budgetary decisions and ensuring a supportive environment for doctoral candidates, including their employment and working conditions.

Dean: the dean has similar responsibilities to the head of department, but generally on a faculty rather than departmental level. It is uncommon for doctoral candidates to deal with a faculty dean directly, but your doctoral education will be affected by policies that are decided at the faculty level.

Vice Chancellor: the Vice Chancellor is the university's chief executive, overseeing its entire operation, including academic direction, financial management, and strategic planning. For doctoral candidates, the Vice Chancellor is a figurehead whose decisions on university policies, research priorities, and educational standards can indirectly shape your academic experience and



opportunities, but one you seldom have direct contact with. Complaints against the university are often formally directed at the Vice-Chancellor, even though they will be handled by faculty or department leaders in practice.

Safety representative (in Swedish, “skyddsombud”): The Safety Representative plays a vital role in ensuring a safe and healthy work environment within the university. They are responsible for monitoring workplace conditions, representing doctoral candidates (and other employees) in matters related to occupational health and safety, and liaising with university administration to address concerns. The Safety Representative is a crucial contact for reporting unsafe conditions, ergonomic issues in the workspace, or stress-related problems. They advocate for the employees’ well-being, ensure that safety regulations are followed and that any risks are promptly addressed.

Doktorandombud/Studentombud: many universities offer doctoral students support through an Ombudsperson. An Ombudsperson provides guidance and support to doctoral students navigating potential violations of their rights by the university or its officials. They are often employed by the student union and act as an independent advisor. If you face a situation where you believe the university or its officials have violated your rights, the Studentombud/Doktorandombud can clarify your rights, advise on the best course of action, and help frame your issue within the relevant legal framework. If your concern falls outside their expertise, they can direct you to more appropriate resources, such as labor unions or occupational health services.

Discussions with the Ombudsperson are typically confidential, with details only shared with your consent. Specific terms can be found on their webpage or by directly contacting them. If your

university lacks an Ombudsperson, don't hesitate to seek guidance from the student union, trade union, or administrative staff.

Saco-S: Saco-S refers to the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations for academics in the public sector, and is a negotiating organisation representing a collective of various unions. A Saco-S representative acts as a liaison and advocate for issues such as employment terms, working conditions, and contractual matters. This role is critical for doctoral candidates who are also employees of the university, providing guidance on labor rights and any disputes that may arise concerning their employment.

At some private universities in Sweden, the equivalent of Saco-S is called an Akademikerförening (academics' association).

Practical information for international students

Personal ID number

Anyone planning to stay in Sweden for at least one year should apply to the Tax Agency (Skatteverket) for a personal ID number (personnummer). It can be very difficult in practice to access subsidised health care, get a mobile sim card and phone number, or open a bank account without a personal ID

number, even though this is not legally a requirement.

Unfortunately, everyday life in Sweden can be significantly more difficult without these things so it is extremely important to obtain a Swedish personal ID number as soon as possible.

Once you receive your personnummer, you will automatically be enrolled in the public health insurance system, which provides comprehensive coverage for most healthcare needs at minimal cost.

Students from EU/EEA countries can also, if you are not already entitled to access health care which you usually are, access some healthcare services with the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), which they apply for in their home country.

While it may be difficult to open a bank account without a personnummer, you have the right to do so, and banks are required to assist you, often by providing a provisional ID number.

For more information on how to apply for a personal ID number, visit the Tax Agency's website [skatteverket.se](https://www.skatteverket.se).

ID card

After receiving your personal ID number, you can apply for an ID card (identitetskort), from the Swedish Tax Agency (Skatteverket). The ID card can be used as proof of your age and identity at places such as pharmacies, banks or shops. This ID is not free of charge and is also not compulsory, but there are circumstances when ID issued by

other countries is not accepted because you are required to prove not only your name but also your personal ID number (which is not recorded on foreign ID). More information at skatteverket.se.

Housing

Housing is often scarce in Swedish cities. The well-regulated social housing system provides too few homes, meaning that you may have to wait in a queue for years before you are offered a home. Unlike many other countries, it is uncommon in Sweden for universities to provide housing to employees or students directly. This means many have to find housing in the poorly regulated private market, often as “second-hand” tenants, meaning that you are not renting from the owner of the property, but from someone who is renting.

Blocket.se is the largest online housing market in Sweden and can be used to find accommodation. Due to the high demand for housing, scams are increasingly common, and it is always important to exercise caution when making online transactions. It is not advisable to make any payment before you have signed a contract and personally visited the apartment that you are planning to rent. In university cities, local companies provide student housing, which can vary significantly in price. All Swedish universities have an international student office, and you should contact them if you would like additional information regarding local housing. Some student unions also have information about housing options near their universities.

Banking

In recent years, Sweden has become a largely cashless society where it can be difficult to make purchases without a bank card or the “Swish” mobile payment app. It is therefore advisable to open a Swedish bank account as soon as possible so that you can receive your salary and make day-to-day purchases. To open a Swedish bank account, however, most banks require that applicants first purchase an ID card from the Swedish Tax Agency, (Skatteverket), in addition to providing copies of their passport, residence visa and employment contract. Unfortunately, it will likely take at least several weeks to obtain all these documents after you have moved to Sweden.

You should start receiving your salary from the beginning of your employment, even if you do not have a Swedish bank account. Universities can pay salaries to foreign bank accounts or issue credit notes that you can redeem at a local bank without opening an account. However, this is not a common practice, and salary administrators may not always be familiar with these procedures.

It is important to note that if you don't have a Swedish bank account at the time of salary payment, you might not receive your salary immediately. Therefore, it's highly recommended to have a backup plan in place, just in case. If you need assistance, don't hesitate to reach out your local trade union representatives for support.



Local transportation

Public transport in Sweden is widely available, and is organised at the level of regions (regioner), meaning that each region has its own public transport administration. Buses, trains, trams and the underground in Stockholm provide a convenient and relatively inexpensive way to get around. Monthly travel cards are usually valid for unlimited travel on the regional network, and as a doctoral candidate you are entitled to purchase a student ticket as long as you have a valid student ID/Mecenat card.

Long-distance trains are not included in the regional public transport system, and therefore require separate tickets. Some regions do offer commuter trains as part of the regional public transport system, or offer combined tickets (marketed as Movingo) for certain sections of long-distance rail. It has also become

increasingly common for neighbouring regions to have agreements with each other about travel cards for interregional commuters.

Swedish courses

Besides Duolingo, there are different options for learning and taking Swedish courses.

Swedish for immigrants (SFI): arbetsformedlingen.se/other-languages/english-engelska/additional-support/support-a-z/svenska-for-invandrare-sfi

Folkuniversitetet: folkuniversitetet.se/in-english/swedish-courses

Medborgarskolan: medborgarskolan.se/kurser-och-evenemang/sprak

Residence permits

If you have been a doctoral candidate with a residence permit for research

studies for at least 4 years during the last 7 years and you are planning to stay in Sweden, you may be eligible to apply for a permanent residence permit. To obtain a permanent residence permit, you must be able to support yourself through income from employment, self-employment, or a combination of both. If you have multiple part-time jobs, you can combine these incomes, as long as all employment meets the necessary conditions.

Read more at:

migrationsverket.se/English/Private-individuals/Permanent-residence-permit.html and migrationsverket.se/English/Private-individuals/Studying-in-Sweden/Permanent-residence-permits-for-doctoral-students.html.

Permits, particularly permanent residence permits, have been at the centre of political debate in Sweden for some time, and regulations have been changing rapidly in recent years. Make sure that you have up-to-date informa-

tion before applying. The best source of information is usually the Migration Agency itself, which has a duty to assist you with your application.

Long-term resident status

If you are a citizen of a country outside the EU and have lived in Sweden for five years without interruption, you can be granted the status of long-term resident in Sweden. This is not the same as a permanent residence permit: long-term resident status is regulated by EU law, whereas permanent residence permits are regulated by Swedish law. If you have been granted long-term resident status, you must by law also be granted a permanent residence permit. No further examination of the conditions for a permanent residence permit are therefore required after a decision to grant long-term resident status.

More information at sulf.se/en/work-salary-and-benefits/residence-permit.



Read more about long-term resident status at migrationsverket.se/English/Private-individuals/Long-term-residents/Long-term-residents-in-Sweden.html.

Insurance

As an employed doctoral candidate, you are insured by your university for various work-related risks, but you may want to purchase additional forms of insurance. A-kassas are the unemployment insurance funds that normally provide unemployment compensation to their members who lose their jobs. In order to be able to receive unemployment compensation, you need to be a member of an a-kassa and to have paid a small monthly fee for at least 12 months before the end of your employment. You cannot receive compensation from the a-kassa before you have handed in your thesis to be printed, even if you have run out of funding. This is because you are regarded as an active student in this situation and not a job seeker. If you are a member of the union, contact the local union representatives at your university if you are in this situation. For more information, see the Akademikernas a-kassas website, akademikernasakassa.se/en.

The benefits paid out by the a-kassa income insurance system are lower than salaries and are supposed to cover about 80 percent of your previous salary. However, there is also a ceiling which means that you cannot get more than 80 percent of 33 000 SEK/month before tax no matter which salary you have had. SULF has therefore introdu-

ced a top-up income insurance, which pays out extra money if you have a higher salary while you are unemployed and receiving a-kassa benefits. When you are a member of SULF, you are automatically enrolled in this income insurance at no additional cost. However, keep in mind that you still need to be enrolled with a-kassa, separately from your SULF membership.

You should also consider purchasing home insurance. In Sweden, “home insurance” refers to a basic personal insurance package that typically includes insurance for your house, your belongings (also outside the house), liability for damages to third parties, legal expenses and travel insurance.

SULF negotiates discounts on common insurance products (home insurance, car insurance, life insurance etc.) on behalf of its members. These insurances are not (apart from the health insurance mentioned above) included in your SULF membership fee (unlike the top-up income insurance, see above). Instead, SULF has an agreement with the insurance company Folksam entailing that SULF members can purchase insurance from Folksam at heavily discounted prices. For new members in SULF a number of insurances are, however, included for free the first three months. For more details on this, contact Folksam or visit folksam.se/forbund/sulf/new-member.

SULF

SULF, the Swedish Association of University Teachers and Researchers, is

the union and professional organisation with the most members in academia. We are the only trade union in Sweden that focuses entirely on university issues and are experts on the regulations in this field. SULF is a non-politically, non-religiously affiliated union. SULF has local boards at most universities and a national office.

As a member you can always receive information and support whenever you need it. We know the special regulations that apply to academia, and social insurance systems and residence permit rules for our members working at universities. SULF's income insurance in case of unemployment is included in your membership fee. Please note that you have to have been a member of both SULF and the unemployment insurance fund for at least 12 months before becoming unemployed in order to be eligible for the income insurance. The unemployment benefit + the income insurance gives you up to 80 % of your previous income if you become

unemployed. Find out more about SULF at sulf.se/en/phdcandidate.

Healthcare

If you need medical attention, but not in a medical emergency, you should first visit your local healthcare centre, (vårdcentral). You need to register with a specific healthcare centre before you can use it. If you only need medical advice, you can call 1177 to speak with a nurse or go to the website 1177.se.

Dental care in Sweden is not included in the general healthcare system, but there is a cost ceiling (högstkostnadsskydd) that limits the amount you pay for treatments. While there are options to sign up for dental care plans—such as those offered by Folktandvården, which provides fixed-price care—whether this is beneficial depends on individual circumstances. It is not common for Swedes to have dental insurance, as the cost ceiling system often makes it unnecessary for most people.

All universities are required to have an occupational healthcare provider. This is typically a private company or an in-house service that provides work-related healthcare services. Check with your department's administration to find out who provides occupational healthcare at your workplace and how you can access it.

If you are employed by the university (and not holding a scholarship), you can order the European Health Insurance Card from Försäkringskassan. This card allows you to access medical or dental



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care when traveling within other EU countries, at the same conditions as residents of those countries.

For more information on maintaining your overall health and wellbeing during your PhD, we highly recommend reading the *Wellbeing – Tools to Thrive During Your PhD* booklet. It offers valuable tips and resources to help manage stress and promote a healthy work-life balance. You can find the booklet at drive.google.com/file/d/10kK8IBJ-L_k8CU3mZXhwEzMQL5-l8y7M.

Some Swedish authorities

The Swedish Migration Agency, Migrationsverket: makes decisions on residence permits.

The Tax Agency, Skatteverket: issues personal ID numbers and handles tax related matters.

The Social Insurance Agency, Försäkringskassan: is responsible for social welfare services, such as parental leave benefits, sickness benefits and child allowances.

Emergencies & SOS numbers

In case of emergency, dial 112 to contact the police, fire department or medical services. Emergency calls are free.

The SULF Doctoral Candidate Association (SULF–DCA) is SULF’s doctoral candidate section. SULF-DCA has around 3 300 members and is one of the most rapidly growing sections within SULF.

The Association organises doctoral candidate days, information days for researchers, and training inputs workshops and much more. SULF’s doctoral candidate section has its own Board, which monitors safeguards and promotes the interests of doctoral candidates within the organisation.

SULF-DCA issues a regular newsletter to all its members. To find out more about SULF-DCA, please see sulf.se/SDF.

