

# PhD Handbook

- a student's guide to doctoral studies



**Doktorandnämnden  
at Uppsala University**

## Introduction

Research is fun! Doctoral studies are a time of creativity, development and freedom. Yet like all other forms of education and employment, doing a PhD also involves duties and rights.

The following handbook has been written to inform you on a wide range of common questions or issues that can be encountered during research training. Our aim has been to compile information and links that are applicable and relevant for all PhD students affiliated with Uppsala University.

More general information and guidance for **PhD students in Sweden** can be found in the national PhD handbook by SFS:

<https://phdhandbook.se/>

Good luck with your research!

Uppsala, summer 2022

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This document can be found electronically at:

<https://uudoctoralboard.se/>

If you feel something is missing from this handbook or if you have other questions, do not hesitate to contact us on [dn@uufs.se](mailto:dn@uufs.se)

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## PhD student influence and organization

### Student influence

As a PhD student, you have a right to influence your education: a right guaranteed by legislation. Student representation at Uppsala University is organized by the University's six **student unions** (*studentkårer*), with the Swedish names: Uppsala studentkår, Farmaceutiska studentkåren, Uppsala Teknolog- och Naturvetarkår, Uppsalaekonomerna, Juridiska föreningen, and Gotlands studentkår Rindi. Together they form Uppsala University's United Student Unions (*UUFS – Uppsala universitets förenade studentkårer*). Which of these particular unions that represents you depends on which faculty or campus you belong to. Membership in these organizations is entirely voluntary. For further information, including details on how to join, visit:

[www.uppsalastudent.com](http://www.uppsalastudent.com)

If you want to learn more about UUFS and student representation look here: <https://en.uufs.se/bra-att-veta-som-studentrepresentant>

Since 2022, Uppsala University have both guidelines (*riktlinjer*) and a guidance document (*vägledning*) for student influence: [UFV 2019/1792](#)

### The Doctoral Board

The Doctoral Board (*Doktorandnämnden - DN*) is a part of UUFS and the co-operative body for the representation of all doctoral students from across the University's faculties (irrespective of membership in the specific student unions). The Board deals with university-wide issues relating to PhD students, and is responsible for appointing PhD student representatives for various boards and committees at the university level, as well as arranging social activities to bring doctoral students from different parts of the University together. The Doctoral

Board consists of a Chair, two Vice-Chairs, a secretary, at least one event manager and representatives from each **Faculty Doctoral Councils** (*fakultetsdoktorandråden*).

## Faculty Doctoral Councils

These councils are concerned with monitoring the situation of doctoral students in their respective faculties, as well as with appointing PhD student representatives for the faculties' decision-making bodies and for the Doctoral Board. Within the area of Humanities and Social Sciences, there is a further body for cooperation between the various faculty-level councils, namely the Doctoral Committee for the Humanities and Social Sciences or *HSDU* (after the Swedish name *Humanistiska och samhällsvetenskapliga doktorandutskottet*), which discusses area-wide questions and selects representatives for the governing boards at this level (i.e. humsam), in particular the Board for the Disciplinary Domain (*Områdesnämnden*).

There are the following Faculty Doctoral Councils (*fakultetsdoktorandråd*) at Uppsala University:

- The Doctoral Council of Pharmacy (*Farmaceutiska doktorandrådet*; FDR)
- The Doctoral Council of the Humanities (*Humanistiska doktorandrådet*; HDR)
- The Doctoral Council of Law (*Juridiska doktorandrådet*; JDR)
- The Doctoral Council of Medical Sciences (*Medicinska doktorandrådet*; MDR)
- The Doctoral Council of the Social Sciences (*Samhällsvetenskapliga doktorandrådet*; SDR)
- The Doctoral Council of Theology (*Teologiska doktorand-rådet*; TDR)
- The Doctoral Council of Science and Technology (*Teknisknaturvetenskapliga doktorandrådet*; TNDR)

- The Doctoral Council of Educational Sciences  
(*Utbildningsvetenskapliga doktorandrådet*; UDR)

Contact information for the respective councils can be found at:

<https://uudoctoralboard.se/organization/>

For further information on the structure of Uppsala University, visit:

<https://www.uu.se/en/about-uu/organisation/>

## Departments

Many departments at the University also have their own particular organizations or associations for PhD students (*doktorandföreningar*), which serve to promote their member's interests. These organisations play a vital role in allowing PhD students to connect with their peers and in working towards the improvement of their working environments and employment conditions. For further information about how to get in touch with or start up such an organisation, contact your Faculty Doctoral Council or Chair of the Doctoral Board. If such an association exists at your department, it may be responsible for appointing PhD student representatives to serve in various department specific groups such as the department board.

## PhD representatives

There are normally PhD representatives in the different councils and boards at the respective levels. The Doctoral Board elects representatives at the University level, and the different Doctoral Council or their joint committees (e.g. HSDU) elect representatives at the Faculty and Disciplinary Domain levels.

Also, the PhD students are normally represented in the different Forums, Centres and Networks located at or tied to the University.

All student and PhD student representatives are appointed for a mandate period of one year at a time. The elections generally take place every spring around April - May.

## **PhD students are employees**

The dual role of PhD students as both students and employees can sometimes be confusing. The staff portal (*Medarbetarportalen, MP*) is a good place to find information relevant for all employees of Uppsala University. There is also a specific PhD student section that can be useful to check: <https://mp.uu.se/web/info/anstallning>

## **Research training at Uppsala University**

Guidelines for Third-cycle Education at Uppsala University: [UFV 2019/641](#) (under revision 2022)

The responsibility for the PhD education (research training) at Uppsala University lies with the faculty and/or disciplinary domain. Consequently, it's important to know which information is relevant for your research training.

MedFarm and HumSam have collected their information on MP: <https://mp.uu.se/en/web/info/forska/forskarutbildning>

TekNat have summarised their information on the external webb: <https://teknat.uu.se/education/postgraduate/>

If you can't find an answer in your faculty / domain specific pages or in the guidelines for third-cycle education at Uppsala University, then we once again direct you to the excellent SFS handbook to get an idea of how things are on a national level: <https://phdhandbook.se/>



## Ombudspersons for PhD students

If a study related problem occurs during your time as a PhD student you can contact the Student- and PhD Student Ombudspersons, employed by the student unions, for advice and support. Such issues can for example regard questions about your rights when it comes to parental leave, occupational healthcare or a change of supervisors. The ombudspersons never pursue a matter or share information on your situation with a third party without your consent to specifically do so.

For further information or to fill in the contact form, visit:

<https://www.uskar.se/ombuden-english>

## Student-id and nations

All students at the University, including PhD students, are eligible to apply for a student identification card at the beginning of each term. The student identification card entitles the holder to student discounts on items ranging from books and computers to train and bus tickets and much more (further details can be found at [mecenat.com](http://mecenat.com) or [www.studentkortet.se](http://www.studentkortet.se)). Membership of either a student union or a nation is also printed on the cards. However, you are entitled to a student identification card even if you are not a member of a student union or nation. If you are a member of a student nation, the card can be used, together with a valid proof of identification, to gain entry to Uppsala's 13 student nations.

These nations play an important role in student life in Uppsala, both socially and for your studies. Besides being an excellent place to meet people studying a diverse range of subjects, nations also offer student accommodation, scholarships, libraries, pubs, food, cafes, student parties (*gasquer*), sports associations, choirs, theatre societies, orchestras and many other things that can enrich your time as a

student in Uppsala. The funding scholarships available through nations can also provide a valuable extra form of financial support for research-related travel, purchases of equipment, fieldwork etc. More information about these organizations, how to join, forthcoming events and scholarships can be found at: [www.uppsalastudent.com](http://www.uppsalastudent.com).

## **Pedagogical training for teaching**

PhD students who teach undergraduate courses should normally have completed introductory teacher training or have attained equivalent skills via other means. It should be noted that all doctoral students at Uppsala University have the right to attend the shared, university-wide course in pedagogical training:

<https://mp.uu.se/en/web/info/undervisa/kurser-och-seminarier/kurser>

Different faculties have different models in place for how they compensate for the time that PhD students spend in completing this course. If you are unsure how it works at your department then reach out to the Director of Studies or Head of Department, they will also need to approve your registration to the pedagogical training courses.

Some general information about teaching and educational training at Uppsala University can be found in the document Teaching and Learning at Uppsala University (*Pedagogiskt program för Uppsala universitet*): <https://regler.uu.se/document/?contentId=14251>

## Career development

There are some central resources within career development that you can benefit from as a PhD student:

<https://mp.uu.se/en/web/info/anstallning/akademisk-karriar/karriarstod>

The online career programme for doctoral students can help you prepare and plan for your life after thesis defending:

<https://mp.uu.se/en/web/info/anstallning/akademisk-karriar/karriarstod/career-pgm-doctoral-students>

If you are interested in developing a research idea further, then UU Innovation have both courses and mentorship programmes:

<https://www.uuinnovation.uu.se/>

## Salary ladder

Employment as a PhD student shall normally relate to work full-time. If a PhD student so requests, the employment may relate to work part-time, however no less than 50 percent of full-time (the Higher Education Ordinance, chapter 5 § 3 a). The salary for this position is to follow a development curve that is negotiated annually by the trade union, see: <https://www.saco.fackorg.uu.se/doctoral-students/doctoral-student-salaries/>

As an employee, you are provided with a range of benefits, including paid holiday, sickness benefits and paid parental leave. You are also entitled to paid leave in connection with funerals of relatives, moving accommodation and medical appointments. SACO have summarised it nicely here: <https://www.saco.fackorg.uu.se/doctoral-students/working-hours/>

There are different systems in use for the practicalities of taking holiday depending on the department; speak to your particular Personnel administrator to find out what applies for your department.

## **Prolongation (extension of education time)**

A PhD student's net study time shall correspond to four years of full-time studies (240 ECTS credits) and should normally be completed within 8 years. If a PhD student spends time on other things than the student's own studies the education time can often be extended (prolongation), if there is adequate reason for extension. Such reasons might include sick leave, teaching and administrative duties, leave for service in the armed forces or leave for commissioned assignments of trust in trade unions and student organizations, or parental leave. Research delays due to external circumstances such as delays by partner institutions or the university being unable to fulfil its duties to the student might also be relevant and the student should document everything relevant to prolongation in the individual study plan.

Issues with different types of prolongation are unfortunately not uncommon and that is why DN, in 2021, wrote a policy on how we believe prolongation should be handled at Uppsala University:

<https://uudoctoralboard.se/docs/doctoral-candidates-right-to-prolongation/>

## Positions of trust (*förtroendeuppdrag*)

A quick guide on how to apply for prolongation for positions of trust (*förtroendeuppdrag*) from *Universitetsgemensamma medel* (from University wide funds, relevant for all DN elected positions) is available on our website: <https://uudoctoralboard.se/docs/>

How to apply for prolongation at the **faculty/ domain** or **department** level may differ, contact your faculty doctoral council for advice if needed.

## Sickness and sick leave

If you get sick you should report it in Primula. If you go on sick leave, your study time will be extended with a time equivalent to that of the sick leave. It is important to report being sick from the first day, since you cannot go on sick leave retroactively.

Make sure to follow the guide available on MP for how to report sick if you are employed by Uppsala University :  
<https://mp.uu.se/en/web/info/anstallning/sjuk-och-friskanmalan>

Scholarship funded PhD students get compensation through the Health and parental insurance for doctoral students with stipends, where The Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency (*Kammarkollegiet*), is the insurer. For further information on the insurance and on how to claim compensation, visit:  
<https://www.kammarkollegiet.se/engelska/start/all-services/insurance-for-foreign-visitors/student-insurance/health-and-parental-insurance>

## **Leave of absence and 'study leave'**

Leave of absence can be granted when the PhD student, supervisors and Head of Department are in agreement, and it is documented in the individual study plan. If a student is scholarship funded, the application for leave works in the same way regardless of whether it is regarded as a question of 'leave of absence' (*tjänstledighet*) or a 'study leave' (*studieuppehåll*). Whichever form of absence it may concern, it is important that the conditions surrounding it (the most important of which being the extent of it) are documented. There is some brief information on leaves for study on MP:

<https://mp.uu.se/en/web/info/anstallning/ovriga-ledigheter-sok/studieledigheter>

## **Parental leave**

You have a right to parental leave, and are not required to perform work assignments during the time of leave. The rules governing benefits for parental leave can often seem complicated and hard to interpret. If you need to apply for parental leave, you are advised to contact both the National Social Security Department (*Försäkringskassan*), and your local HR person at the department to establish what applies for you. It is important to do so as soon as possible in these circumstances, since you might be required to have worked a certain amount of time to be eligible for full parental leave benefits.

In addition to the extension which should be given directly equivalent to the time of the parental leave, the respective faculty board may extend a PhD student's time with up to 3 months if the leave has caused particular difficulties for the resumption of gathering of materials, experiments or similar things, so called start up-months (*uppstartsmånader*). A condition is that the PhD student has been on leave for at least 4 months. See the Parental Policy of Uppsala University:

<https://regler.uu.se/document/?contentId=14389>

## **Occupational health care (*Företagshälsovård*)**

Uppsala University uses occupational health services to prevent work-related illness, physical as well as psychological, poor health, injuries and disease, and to help individuals to return to work and to start work adaptation and rehabilitation as soon as possible. Following the first of January 2019, the University's health care provider is Previa (changing name to Falck in 2023). All PhD students, regardless of their source of funding, have a right to use the services of the occupational health services, provided that they have any degree of activity. Previa's services are divided into basic services and supplementary services where the basic services are covered by HR and supplementary services by the budget of the department. Of special relevance to PhD students are the two anonymous visits a year to a psychologist/behavioural scientist as well as the Stress management for doctoral students courses.

To learn more about Previa's services, look here:

<https://mp.uu.se/en/web/info/anstallning/stod-arbetsmiljo/arbetsmiljo-ao/foretagshalsovard>

## **Wellness subsidy (*Friskvårdsbidrag*)**

Uppsala university offers employees a 'Wellness subsidy' (*friskvårdsbidrag*), to promote well-being and physical activity. As a PhD student with an employment position (*doktorandanställning*) you are currently (2022) entitled to claim up to 2000 kr per year (or 1000 kr per term) for expenses concerning, for example, gym memberships. For more information, visit:

<https://mp.uu.se/web/info/anstallning/friskvard>

Remember that many training- and sport-centers offer student discounts open to PhD students! Campus1477 ([www.campus1477.se](http://www.campus1477.se)), located next to Blåsenhus campus, is owned and run by the student unions, and offers student discounts.

## **International Faculty and Staff Services**

Support for internationals is shared between the departments and the International Faculty and Staff Services. Your host department is your first hand contact at Uppsala University. They will assist you with many of the practical arrangements before and upon arrival in Uppsala or Gotland.

The International Faculty and Staff Services provide complementary and in-depth support and information to international researchers, lecturers, doctoral students and administrative staff.

Some useful links are: <https://www.uu.se/en/about-uu/join-us/plan-your-stay/>

<https://mp.uu.se/en/web/info/anstallning/nyanstallda-startsida>

## **Academic English**

The university offers academic English courses through the Unit for Professional English (UPE), a service of the Department of English: <https://www.engelska.uu.se/upe>

Courses generally have a fee. Consult your supervisor and director of studies about funding for these courses with your department or Faculty.



## Learning Swedish

If you are going to stay in Sweden for several years, you probably want to learn some Swedish. Much of the University's activities are held in Swedish, and there are of course many more reasons to learn the language.

The University provides courses in Swedish for Foreign Students and Academics, Preparatory and Introductory as well as Advanced Courses. For information on these courses you can contact the Study Counsellors at the Department of Scandinavian Languages:

<https://nordiska.uu.se/admissions/courses/swedish/>

You can also find some useful information here:

<http://www.uu.se/en/about-uu/join-us/language-courses/> and here:

<http://navet.uppsala.se/>

You can also study Swedish, free of charge, through the SFI programme. SFI stands for *Svenska för invandrare* which means Swedish for Immigrants, and is an education programme offered by Swedish municipalities (*kommuner*) to newly arrived immigrants. For more information on SFI see e.g.

<http://www.folkuniversitetet.se/Skolor/Svenska-for-invandraresfi/Sfi-Uppsala/information-in-english/> which also provide SFI courses.

Summer courses are offered by private schools in Uppsala and other places in Sweden:

<https://www.folkuniversitetet.se/in-english/swedish-courses/swedish-in-uppsala/summer-swedish-in-uppsala/>

<https://si.se/svenskan-i-varlden/sommarkurser-i-svenska/>

In case you want to take private courses, such as intensive summer courses, you may apply for funding with your department. Talk to your supervisor or director of studies about it. In certain department, the *Handledarkollegiet* may have available funds for paying for your language education.

## Finding accommodation

It can be hard to find accommodation having newly arrived in Uppsala. As a PhD student you are entitled to rent student accommodation. Since the housing market in Uppsala can be a challenge its important to start looking for accomodation early. The University has general information and lists with some landlords that rent out student apartments, which can be found here:

- for Uppsala: <https://www.uu.se/en/admissions/study-and-live-in- uppsala/>
- for Campus Gotland: <https://www.uu.se/en/admissions/study-and-live-in-visby/>

The Uppsala student union, *Uppsala studentkår*, has, together with the University and local council (*Uppsala kommun*), formed a housing association: [www.studentboet.se](http://www.studentboet.se). The site also offers some useful tips and advice on finding a place to live. Several of Uppsala's larger housing companies have a joint housing queue: <https://bostad.uppsala.se/>

There are also additional housing companies that focus on Student accommodation for students that may be worth looking into (e.g. [Heimstaden](#))

Many departments at the University also have some form of accommodation to be rented for shorter periods of time to visiting

researchers, newly arrived PhD students etc., so do check with your department if you are struggling to find somewhere to live.

You may also join the Uppsala Akademiförvaltning housing queue as a university employe (which gives you priority in the queue):

<https://www.uaf.se>

PhD students can also find temporary accommodation with the Uppsala University Housing Office: <https://housingoffice.se>

Join the housing queues as soon as possible (you do not need to wait having moved to Uppsala to join the queues). Several facebook groups for housing in Uppsala exist, for example "Bostad Uppsala", "Boende i Uppsala" and "Kollektiv i Uppsala" (flatshares).

## **Funding for courses, conferences and research trips**

Certain departments may offer “backpack money” (*ryggsäck*) for each PhD student to spend on courses, conferences and research trips. The nations in Uppsala also have grants / stipends for this purpose. For example, Smålands Nations Anna Maria Lunding Travel Grants are very popular among PhD students: from all fields: <https://smalands.nu/stipendier/anna-maria-lundins-stipendiefond/>

Make sure to check what professional membership organisations or societies are available in your specific field of research. Some may have grants targeted towards PhD students.

## Unemployment benefits

If you have been a member of an unemployment fund (*a-kassa*) and meet certain conditions you are entitled to claim unemployment benefits while you apply for jobs after graduation. It is generally the case that membership in such a fund is connected to trade union membership, though there are exceptions. The most important condition in order to receive unemployment benefits is to have been a **member in an unemployment fund for at least 12 months**. You cannot claim benefits during the time you are studying, even at doctoral level, since you must be applying for jobs and prepared to take available work. Note that receiving a study grant, even including a 20 percent commission as assistant, does not entitle you to benefits. Part-time studies with, for instance, a half-time employment as a PhD student reduces the level of unemployment benefits you may claim. Contact these unemployment funds and the trade unions for more detailed information about the rules and regulations relating to unemployment benefit.

There are several to choose from but [Akademikernas A-kassa](#) is one of the more common ones for PhD Students.

## Trade union

As a PhD student, you can choose to join a trade union. There are several unions that represent doctoral students, both within SACO and TCO. Salary levels are negotiated locally by the SACO-S council, in which SULF is the dominant union. The trade unions are not affiliated with any political party. To be assisted by a trade union you generally need to be a member of it.

SACO have some very useful information here:

<https://www.saco.fackorg.uu.se/doctoral-students/>

## Permanent residence permits for doctoral students

If you have lived in Sweden and had a residence permit for doctoral studies for a total of four years over the past seven years, you may be able to get a permanent residence permit. For more information, visit: <https://mp.uu.se/web/info/stod/kompetens-rekrytering/internationell-personal/langt-innan-ankomst/arbets-uppehallstillstand>

<https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/Private-individuals/Studying-and-researching-in-Sweden/Permanent-residence-permits-for-doctoral-students.html>

## Harassment & sexual harassment

On the staff portal (*medarbetarportalen*) you can find information on how the University deals with cases of harassment, sexual harassment and/or reprisals. (<https://mp.uu.se/en/web/info/anstallning/stod-arbetsmiljo/krankande-sarbehandling/trakasserier>)

Here are some key points:

-“A head of the department/equivalent who becomes aware of a potential case of harassment, sexual harassment, or reprisals within their sphere of responsibility must, without delay, make an initial assessment of the need for measures and the need to investigate the matter further and take any measures that are needed.”

- It is against the law to be subjected to reprisals for reporting misconduct, participating in an investigating, or “refusing” or complying when harassment and sexual harassment.

## **When you witness harassment and sexual harassment**

Information about what to do when you witness someone subjected to harassment or sexual harassment:

<https://mp.uu.se/web/info/vart-uu/mal-och-strategier/lika-villkor/information-trakasserier/arbetstagare>

## **Contact**

You can always contact the PhD student ombudspersons at the student unions (<https://www.uskar.se/ombuden-english>) for confidential advice, whether you are a member of a student union or not. The service is free of charge. They can represent and/or guide you through the process.

As an employee you can also contact the occupational health service, a safety representative, or your trade union for support.

## **Whistleblowing**

Whistleblowing function is also available for reporting suspected wrongdoings of general interest. Read more here:

(<https://mp.uu.se/en/web/info/anstallning/stod-arbetsmiljo/meddelnde-om-missforhallande>)

**NB: What you report in writing to the University generally becomes a public document. The same is true, with some exceptions, for emails sent to and from University email addresses.**