



# IMS PHD STUDENT HANDBOOK

2017

STOCKHOLM UNIVERSITY Department of Media Studies



Authors: This text was compiled by the 2017 IMS PhD Council Board. The text was largely borrowed from a text written at SU's Department of Social Anthropology but was modified considerably by Gert Jan Harkema, Martin Karlsson, and Jacob Sommer. Additional edits were provided by Chiara Faggella and Mats Carlsson.

This document is intended to provide a basic outline of the facts that new PhD students at the Department should receive when they begin their studies. It is also hoped that future PhD students and future boards of the IMS PhD Student Council will modify, update and expand the information that is provided in this document so that PhD students can be facilitated in their studies.

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## **Introduction**

First off, congratulations on becoming a PhD student and welcome to the Department of Media Studies, which consists of the three sections: Film Studies, Fashion Studies and Journalism and Communications Studies. We all know it can be difficult getting into the program, it is an achievement and your acceptance marks the start of a longer academic journey. As you will soon learn, graduating from the program, at least in time, is also an achievement. The work we do can be both rewarding and stressful, it can be draining but also energizing. Most of us work by ourselves, on our own projects, but that does not mean that we work alone. There is much support to be had among colleagues at the Department and at Stockholm University.

This handbook is intended to be a document that gathers relevant information from various sources. Bringing the different papers that instruct, regulate and guide our work into a handbook will hopefully provide a better overview of the conditions that apply to being a PhD student. That being said, the handbook will not cover everything. Informal and tacit knowledge, that play important roles in any workplace, are beyond the scope of this handbook and you will learn this in other ways. Furthermore, since the handbook depends on documents that are liable to change over time, certain things may become outdated. To mitigate some of these problems the handbook provides many links that may help the reader to search for answers. Even if some of these specific links become inactive over time, they still point in a general direction where answers might be found.

The handbook was written with the intention to clarify and help new PhD students in regards to two aspects. One aspect is our work, the relations that our work entails and the rights and responsibilities that come with our employment. The second aspect is related to our needs for a life outside of our workplace and seeks to give solutions to practical problems. This section may be especially relevant for PhD students that have little or no experience of Stockholm and/or Sweden.

As a start, feel free to look through and familiarize yourself with the following documents.

They provide much of the framing for our work conditions at the Department:

### **The general syllabus (Den allmänna studieplanen)**

This document contains the general content of our PhD programs. Among other things, it details how our education is structured, how many courses we are required to take and which ones that are mandatory.

#### *Cinema Studies*

[https://www.ims.su.se/polopoly\\_fs/1.399212.1536047630!/menu/standard/file/ASP%20FILM%20HT18.pdf](https://www.ims.su.se/polopoly_fs/1.399212.1536047630!/menu/standard/file/ASP%20FILM%20HT18.pdf)

[http://www.ims.su.se/polopoly\\_fs/1.299087.1474795217!/menu/standard/file/General%20Study%20Plan%20Doctoral\\_Studies.pdf](http://www.ims.su.se/polopoly_fs/1.299087.1474795217!/menu/standard/file/General%20Study%20Plan%20Doctoral_Studies.pdf)

#### *Journalism Studies*

[http://www.ims.su.se/polopoly\\_fs/1.228140.1426174602!/menu/standard/file/Syllabus%20Journalism.pdf](http://www.ims.su.se/polopoly_fs/1.228140.1426174602!/menu/standard/file/Syllabus%20Journalism.pdf)

#### *Media and Communication Studies*

[http://www.ims.su.se/polopoly\\_fs/1.228141.1426174618!/menu/standard/file/Syllabus%20Media%20and%20Communication.pdf](http://www.ims.su.se/polopoly_fs/1.228141.1426174618!/menu/standard/file/Syllabus%20Media%20and%20Communication.pdf)

#### *Fashion Studies*

<http://www.ims.su.se/english/education/courses-and-programmes/courses-and-programmes-in-fashion-studies/second-cycle-advanced-level/2.21519/phd-programme-in-fashion-studies-240-ects-1.80931>

### **Regulations for PhD Studies at the Faculty of the Humanities (Regelverk avseende utbildning på forskarnivå vid humanistiska fakulteten)**

This document contains additional regulations for the PhD program.

[http://www.hum.su.se/polopoly\\_fs/1.256500.1447771075!/menu/standard/file/Regulations%20for%20Doctoral%20Studies%20at%20the%20Faculty%20of%20Humanities%20.pdf](http://www.hum.su.se/polopoly_fs/1.256500.1447771075!/menu/standard/file/Regulations%20for%20Doctoral%20Studies%20at%20the%20Faculty%20of%20Humanities%20.pdf)

### **The Higher Education Ordinance (Högskoleförordningen)**

This is an ordinance made by the Swedish government to complement the Higher Education Law, made by the Swedish parliament. The ordinance regulates many of the rights and responsibilities that we have as PhD students.

<https://www.uhr.se/en/start/laws-and-regulations/Laws-and-regulations/The-Higher-Education-Ordinance/#chapter1>

### **You and your workplace (Du och din arbetsplats)**

This document applies to the university as a whole and it describes the employment conditions we find ourselves in. It contains information regarding vacation, illness, parental leave and insurance. It is important to consult this document in order to understand our rights and responsibilities.

[http://www.su.se/polopoly\\_fs/1.107733.1460988004!/menu/standard/file/You\\_and\\_Your\\_Workplace\\_160407tk.pdf](http://www.su.se/polopoly_fs/1.107733.1460988004!/menu/standard/file/You_and_Your_Workplace_160407tk.pdf)

### **Getting started**

When you begin your employment, a number of things happen. According to the rules in the Higher Education Ordinance, and Stockholm University's interpretation of them, you are entitled to a workspace and to the tools needed to complete your work. It means that you should have a chair to sit on, a desk to work at and a computer to type on. This entitlement, however, does not guarantee that you will have these things in your own personal office. Getting a personal office room is dependent on the availability of rooms and it is a process that operates by seniority, meaning that PhD students that are closer to completion, and thus in a more intense writing period, are given priority over those who have just started.

Sitting down all day to type and read can have many negative effects over time. Having a healthy workspace and work environment is crucial to avoiding sickness and injury. As an employee of Stockholm University, you have the right to the occupational health care services provided by the company Feelgood on behalf of our employer. You may schedule, without any approval from a manager, three visits or consultation per year with physicians, therapists and physiotherapist at Feelgood. You may also request the assistance of our Ergonomics Ombud (Ergonomiombud) to see what improvements can be made with regards to your workspace. You are also entitled to up to 1500:- per year for fitness/gym membership (friskvårdsbidrag); additionally, as a member of the staff, you can attend some free courses at the Medley gym in Frescati, Stockholm Sports Center (<http://www.su.se/english/staff/personnel/working-environment-health/sports-facilities/frescatihallen-spring-2017-1.314442>).

Being a PhD student means being in two categories at once, because we are both students and employees. As employees, we can join a labor union, take up unemployment insurance and enjoy certain benefits, for instance the University's health program or the employee gym located beneath Allhuset. As students, we can join the Student Union and thus get useful discounts on things like SL, SJ, or lunch restaurants around campus and we can apply, if necessary, for student housing.

PhD students are expected to be independent and self motivated. Most of us formulate our own research projects and supply the labor to get the work done. Supervisors are important and provide help, but no one else will do the work for us. In contrast to many other occupations, if we are sick, the project will not move an inch forward. On the other hand, we have considerable freedom compared to other jobs. Compared to many other professions, we can often choose or influence where, when and how we work.

Working from the office has many advantages, especially for PhD students. It affords a certain structure, it brings proximity to the Department and the University's libraries and above all, you can ask and talk to colleagues that might be able to expand your intellectual horizons or

just make you laugh. The experiences of senior researchers at the Department also seem to suggest that those who regularly work from the office stand a better chance of finishing in time.

A number of other things also happen as you begin and continue your journey as a PhD student. These include the topics of individual study plans, supervision, working for the department, how our salaries work, how we extend our time and what we do if things go really wrong. All of these topics are covered in the following pages.

**Additional information on occupational health care:**

<http://www.su.se/english/staff/personnel/working-environment-health>

**Who does what at our Department**

Head of the Department (Prefekt)	John Sundholm
Deputy Head of the Department	Ester Pollack
Director of Doctoral Studies (JMK)	Anja Hirdman
Director of Doctoral Studies (Film)	Marina L. Dahlquist
Director of Doctoral Studies (Fashion)	Klas Nyberg
Chair of the IMS PhD Council	Olivia Eriksson (2018)
SU Phd Student Ombudsman	Sara Elg

**The different ombudsman positions**

Gender Equality Ombudsman	Emelie Jamieson
Environmental Ombudsman for PhD students	Mats Carlsson
Equal treatment Ombudsman	Emelie Jamieson

**Supervision (Handledning)**



At least two supervisors will be appointed for a PhD student at the beginning of their program. It is common but not necessary that one supervisor takes more responsibility than the other. The Department is required to ensure that PhD student have adequate supervision and that two supervisors are appointed, however the process of finding and assigning supervisors can be eased by the PhD student taking an active stance in the process.

Since the ways in which people prefer to work can be quite diverging, it will be up to the supervisors and the PhD student to agree on how often they will meet. As 4 years pass quite quickly, it is much better to discuss and address problems with the dissertation work early on.

Supervision is a core concern for PhD students and it is one of the most talked about topics in the PhD council. As all relationships, the one between PhD student and supervisor can deteriorate and move in a problematic direction. If you feel that the relationship is not working properly, you could first try to discuss it directly with your supervisors. This is probably the best first step, as it is possible that the supervisors and the PhD student can overcome some issue and perhaps move to a better relationship. If such a step proves difficult or irrelevant, much support can be had from other PhD students and in the PhD council. If talking with supervisors and fellow PhD students does not help in addressing the problem, you can first turn to the Director of Doctoral Studies (Studierektor för forskarutbildningen), and secondly to the Head of the Department (Prefekten). You can also get support and help from the PhD Student Ombudsman (Doktorandombudet) at the Stockholm University Student Union (Stockholms Universitets studentkår).

It is important to remember that as a PhD Student, you have the right to change supervisors. This is a right that cannot be denied, as it is a part of the Higher Education Ordinance (Högskoleförordningen). The University and the Department have an obligation to help you change supervisor. It is, however, a right that should be exercised as a last resort, if other options have been exhausted, as a number of practical issues may follow on changing supervisors.

Union reflections on being supervised and supervising:

[http://www.sulf.se/Documents/Pdfer/%C3%96vriga%20rapporter%20o%20skrifter/A5\\_SDF\\_rapport\\_Om%20att%20bli%20handledd%20och%20handleda\\_eng.pdf](http://www.sulf.se/Documents/Pdfer/%C3%96vriga%20rapporter%20o%20skrifter/A5_SDF_rapport_Om%20att%20bli%20handledd%20och%20handleda_eng.pdf)

### **Wage increases (Doktorandlönestegen)**

Special regulations apply to the wage increases of PhD students. There are three levels of salaries that a PhD student can reach, which are usually re-negotiated on yearly basis. As of October 10, 2018, the first level is 26,500 SEK, the second level is 28,400 SEK and the third level is 29,300 SEK before tax. Check Primula (the HR intranet) for your wage statement: <https://hr.su.se/primula>

These levels are based upon where the PhD student is in regards to the completion of their doctoral degree. In order to advance, the PhD student discuss with its supervisors, who, if they agree that the PhD has reached 50%, contact the Director of Doctoral Studies. If the Director of Doctoral Studies agree with the assessment that the PhD student has reached 50%, she/he contacts the prefect and Human Resources officer, who adjust the paygrade of the PhD student.

Should the supervisors not take the appropriate action regarding the salary level, the PhD student should bring this subject to the supervisors' attention and the Director of Doctoral Studies. If an error has been made, that is, if a PhD student have qualified for the next level yet not been moved to that level until a later date, the PhD student can receive retroactive payments.

The first level is the entry level and it is the pay which a PhD student receives upon beginning their employment. The second level is reached when the PhD student has completed 50% of their credits, including both course credits and credits from writing. Ideally this level will be reached when the PhD student has come halfway through their graduate training, around the time when the PhD student is supposed to give their 50% seminar. However, advancement in paygrade does not hinge on giving the 50 % seminar. The third and last level is reached when the PhD student reaches 80% completion of credits.

Dealing with the differing levels of wage increase can often be an exercise in uncertainty on behalf of the PhD student. Although the system operates with specific quantities, 50% and 80%

of 240 credits, the qualitative judgment of the supervisors is necessary to assess when the PhD student has accumulated a certain quantity of credits, especially for dissertation writing. It is thus important that supervisors and PhD students discuss the issue and that whatever is agreed up also becomes visible in the individual study plan and communicated to the department's head of administration (Administrativ chef).

About the wage levels at Stockholm University:

<https://www.su.se/medarbetare/r%C3%A5d-st%C3%B6d/hr-guiden/underanst%C3%A4llningen/l%C3%B6nebildning/l%C3%B6nestege-f%C3%B6r-doktorander-fr-o-m-2018-10-01-och-2019-10-01-1.414271>

About the Union Agreement (kollektivavtal) at Stockholm University:

[https://www.su.se/polopoly\\_fs/1.137102.1529914579!/menu/standard/file/Villkorsavtal\\_SU\\_180601.pdf](https://www.su.se/polopoly_fs/1.137102.1529914579!/menu/standard/file/Villkorsavtal_SU_180601.pdf)

About PhD Student employment:

<http://studera.nu/startpage/doctoral-studies/funding/doctoral-studentships/>

### **About Unions and Unemployment Insurance (A-kassa)**

Please be advised that as a PhD student you are entitled to join a labor union and/or to sign up for unemployment insurance. You can read more about these possibilities here:

<http://studera.nu/startpage/doctoral-studies/rights-and-support/unions-and-unemployment-funds/>

One of the larger unions at the university, organizing both administrative staff, teachers and researchers, is ST. You can read more about them and what they have to offer here:

<https://st.org/medlemskap/doktorand/welcome-phd-students> There is also SULF, The Swedish Association of University Teachers and Researchers, that organizes university teachers, researchers and doctoral candidates: <https://sulf.se/en/>

### **The Swedish Social Insurance Agency (Försäkringskassan)**

At this webpage you will find useful information about regulations that include PhD students,

especially concerning sick pay.

[https://www.forsakringskassan.se/arbetsgivare/sjukfranvaro/sjuk\\_1\\_14/om\\_sjuklon!/ut/p/a0/04\\_Sj9CPykyssy0xPLMnMz0vMAfGjzOIjAx8nZwMHQ0sgg0sDDwtPSxd3SyN3C3NTPWDU\\_P0C7IdFQFwAeGA/](https://www.forsakringskassan.se/arbetsgivare/sjukfranvaro/sjuk_1_14/om_sjuklon!/ut/p/a0/04_Sj9CPykyssy0xPLMnMz0vMAfGjzOIjAx8nZwMHQ0sgg0sDDwtPSxd3SyN3C3NTPWDU_P0C7IdFQFwAeGA/)

### **The individual study plan (ISP or Den individuella studieplanen)**

The individual study plan (ISP) is described in section 9 of the [Regulations for doctoral studies at the Faculty of Humanities](#). The individual study plan is a contract that regulates what and when things are to be done during a PhD students employment. The supervisor and the PhD student should regularly check whether the studies are proceeding according, as well as discuss whether necessary revisions must be made to the plan. The ISP form (available at the Faculty of Humanities website) is completed by the student and then signed by the supervisors and the student in the presence of the Director of Doctoral Studies. The document keeps track of your planned coursework, departmental duties, and research. The plan must be revised regularly throughout the year, or it should be updated at least once every year.

Being a binding agreement, the individual study plan is a document that PhD students, supervisors and the Department may refer to if any disagreement should emerge between these parties. As a result of the potential influence of the individual study plan, it is recommended that the PhD student exercise care while writing their study plans. Although sometimes regarded as a moot exercise in bureaucracy, by both PhD students and supervisors, the document should not be taken lightly.

That being said, it is also important to recognize that the individual study plan is a flexible document and that, for most PhD students, it will have to be revised. It can be quite difficult to have a complete understanding of how a dissertation project will evolve, especially at an early stage, before fieldwork has commenced. Thus the individual study plan is open to change if such changes are deemed necessary by the PhD student and their supervisors.

The individual study plan can also be an opportunity for PhD students to keep track of their project and to measure their progress. If you find yourself falling behind in the implementation of the plan, it is important that you and your supervisor begin to discuss the reasons for that in time for you to get back on track. If you plan to spend part of your PhD studies abroad and/or to take courses abroad, make sure in advance that you can use those credits as PhD study credits.

### **Coursework**

Part of the educational program of your doctoral studies is coursework. Each student needs to complete at least 60 ECTS worth of coursework to be completed before the end of your doctoral studies. Out of these, 37.5 points are mandatory. A PhD student must complete 30 ECTS of theory and method within their main subject (Film, Fashion, Journalism or Media studies). Furthermore, 7.5 ECTS of Philosophy of science (Vetenskapsteori) is mandatory.

Next to these mandatory courses, the PhD student is free to compile her/his own 22.5 ECTS course list, albeit in dialogue with the supervisor. According to the ASP, courses suggested by PhD students can be of both general and more specific character, in relation to the PhD student's own research. A PhD student can also compile individual reading courses in dialogue with its supervisors. These reading courses are assessed by the Director of Doctoral Studies, not the PhD student's supervisors.

Courses on a PhD level are offered by the department and the [Research school for Humanities](#). At the Research school for Humanities you can also subscribe to themes that include a series of individual courses. The PhD student is also encouraged to search for relevant courses at other institutions, in Sweden and abroad. Before enrolling it is advised to check with the supervisor and the Director of Doctoral Studies if courses are applicable for credits.

### **Departmental work (Institutionstjänstgöring)**

In your ISP there is a section titled "actual activity rate of doctoral studies": there are 850 hours per semester. You should keep track of how many hours you spend working on different tasks and you

will need to convert percent allocation of time for departmental work into hours (e.g. 5% departmental work for 1 semester equal 42,5 hours). It is very common for PhD students to do some form of work for the department, outside of studying for their doctoral degree. The most common type of work is teaching, but work for the department can also take the form of some elected position, administrative work within a research project, or helping organize a conference. You should be told in advance, before starting your duties, the hour or percentage allocation of your 20%. Otherwise ask!

The way departmental work functions is that it adds time to your employment. Your contract is therefore extended by the percentage of work you have performed for the department. The usual arrangement is 20% of departmental work within a full-time employment as a PhD student. Working more than 20% is not allowed. However, bear in mind that it is allowed to do more than 20% any given semester as long as the number of hours during your PhD period does not exceed a total of 20%. In total this could result in a fifth year of employment, however teaching and other departmental duties are *not* guaranteed. There might be fewer teaching opportunities if you do not speak Swedish since many of the department's undergraduate courses are offered in Swedish. Departmental duties are calculated by the director of studies in percentages of full-time work. For example, teaching one series of seminars during a semester could get you 13% of departmental duties.

To avoid any misunderstandings the PhD student is recommended to record departmental work in an individual/private document. Make sure that you get the right percentages or hours/days so that you receive the right amount of extended time. Also, whenever changes occur, don't forget to revise the planning in your Individual study plan. Don't forget to double-check that you receive the right amount of compensation for your work!

### **Prolongation of PhD studies**

This type of extension is not to be confused with the extensions that results from departmental

work. Departmental work is contractual, you either have it as part of your employment or you don't. Prolongation of PhD studies, in contrast, depends on your level of participation in, for example, union work. You will receive an extension of your studies for these activities. This work must be documented in the Individual Study Plan (ISP). You cannot receive more than 40 work days worth of compensation per year. The extension is to be calculated after you have provided verification of your participation. Verification is to be supplied in the form of meeting minutes that demonstrates attendance, and/or the testimony of the chair of the association in question. It is your responsibility to keep track of and document your participation, no one else will do it for you. If you do not document your participation you run the risk of not getting compensated for your efforts. Similar to teaching, work in unions, committees and boards gives experiences that can come in handy later in your professional life.

**About extensions (prolongation) and the model of calculation:**

[http://www.su.se/regelboken/bok-2/forskarutbildning-och-forskning/prolongation-av-doktorandanst%C3%A4llning-och-utbildningsbidrag-1.59566#\\_ftn2](http://www.su.se/regelboken/bok-2/forskarutbildning-och-forskning/prolongation-av-doktorandanst%C3%A4llning-och-utbildningsbidrag-1.59566#_ftn2)

**Dissertation defense and the doctoral degree**

Your PhD studies will likely end in a defense of your dissertation. The process is slightly more complicated than simply handing in a manuscript, getting the approval of others, and then sending it to the printers. Certain responsibilities fall on the PhD student and his or her supervisors, other responsibilities lay on the faculty level and with the central bureaucracy at the university. Since a dissertation defense involves a number of practical concerns that spans across the domains of several actors, it is important for the PhD student to review and be aware of who does what and when. Information concerning this process can be found in the links below.

[DEPARTMENTAL REGULATIONS DOCUMENT]

**About the dissertation defense in English:**

<http://www.su.se/english/research/phd-studies/dissertation-defence-and-doctoral-degree>

**About the dissertation defense in Swedish:**

<http://www.su.se/medarbetare/studieadmin/disputationsprocess>

**A spreadsheet of the various responsibilities at hand:**

[http://www.su.se/polopoly\\_fs/1.275044.1458033247!/menu/standard/file/Ansvarsf%C3%B6rdelning%20disputationsprocessen.pdf](http://www.su.se/polopoly_fs/1.275044.1458033247!/menu/standard/file/Ansvarsf%C3%B6rdelning%20disputationsprocessen.pdf)

**Systems of Support**

A number of overlapping support systems exist that can provide you with help if you have been treated badly, if your rights have been violated, or if there occur other problems. If a problem occurred or if you want to improve something within our program, you could first try to reach out to your supervisor, secondly to the director of doctoral studies, and thirdly to the head of the department. Should none of these paths lead to a desired outcome, or perhaps be irrelevant to your concerns, a variety of options remain:

*The PhD Council (Doktorandrådet)*

The PhD council at our department represents a space where we as PhD students can discuss, inform and decide on issues that we find relevant. Within the council, we share our experiences of supervision, our thoughts and ideas of what can be improved, and plan for how to achieve these improvements. The council is also the body that elects representatives to the Department board (Institutionsstyrelsen) and to the Humfak. The PhD council exists of two representatives and a deputy from each section (JMK, Fashion, and Cinema). These representatives are elected annually. If there is trouble or if you want to talk, then the PhD council wants to listen and help. We are all in this boat together and we have everything to gain from supporting each other.

The council is also the organizer of social events.



### *The PhD Student Ombudsman (Doktorandombudet)*

The PhD student Ombudsman is a full-time employee at the Stockholm University Student Union (Studenkår). The Ombudsman works for PhD students interest and rights and has an independent function within the University. The Ombudsman can provide information, guidance, support and help with your issue. All that come to the Ombudsman's attention are treated with strict confidentiality. More about the PhD Student Ombudsman:

<http://www.sus.su.se/en/doctoral-candidate-ombudsman-supports-postgraduate-students>

### *The Central PhD Student Council (Centrala Doktorandrådet/CDR)*

Like the Ombudsman, the Central PhD Student Council is a part of the Stockholm University Student Union. They form the highest preparatory and advisory body on matters relating to PhD students and PhD studies at Stockholm University. CDR is a forum for information, discussion, and coordination, and represents the university's PhD students, both within the university and at the national level. Centrala doktorandrådet nominates a doctoral student representative for Universitetsstyrelsen (the University Board) and also has representatives in a number of other organs at the faculty level and above. More information about Centrala doktorandrådet:

<http://www.sus.su.se/en/central-phd-student-council-cdr>

### *SAMIR; Safety/Work/Environment Reporting System (Säkerhet-Arbetsmiljö-Miljö-Inrapportering)*

In *SAMIR* students and employees of Stockholm university can report work related health issues, injuries, illness, and work environmental deviations of all sorts. A login is not required, the system could be likened to a conventional “whistle blower” reporting system supporting anonymous reports when preferred or required.

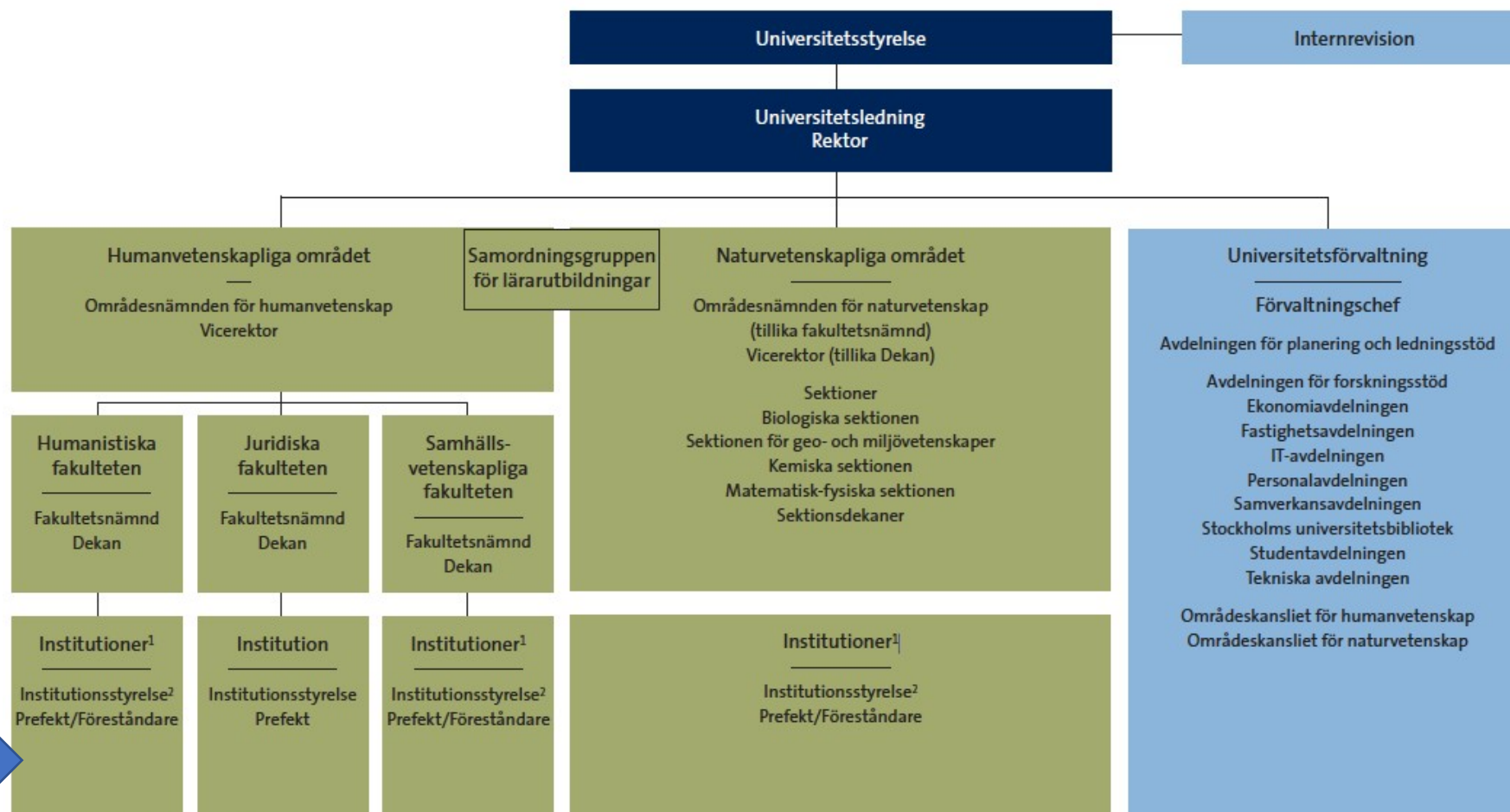
<http://www.su.se/samir>

*Book recommendation!*

Åsa Burman's (fil dr. in philosophy) *Bli klar i tid* (in Swedish) is a handbook for PhD students, focusing on academic productivity and stress management. Burman also gives regular workshops and lectures about the topic. You can read more on this website, part of which is in English:

<http://finishontime.se>

# Organization of Stockholm University



IMS



1 eller motsvarande centrum eller Institut  
2 eller motsvarande styrelse

Though Stockholm University can be considered a rather decentralized workplace, since many decisions are made at the level of Departments, it is nonetheless important to recognize that working for the Department also means working for Stockholm University. As the figures illustrate, the University has two broad subject boards (områdesnämnder) and four faculties. Our department belongs to the Faculty of Humanities (Humanistiska fakulteten), which in turn belongs to the subject board of Human Sciences (Områdesnämnden för humanvetenskap). If one wishes to influence the University, or understand how it works, it is useful to understand its formal structure. More information on how Stockholm university is organized:

<http://www.su.se/english/about/organisation>

### **Top decision making bodies**

At the very top of the University, there is the University Board (Universitetsstyrelsen). This is the highest decision making body of the University. Half of its members are supposed to represent the public interest and are appointed by the government, among them the president of the board. The remaining members represent the university and its students. One of these members represents the PhD students' interest and is elected by the Central PhD council.

The University's senior management team (Universitetsledningen) is made up of Vice-Chancellor, the Pro Vice-Chancellor, two Deputy Vice-Chancellors and the University Director. There is no student representative on this level.

The subject boards (Områdesnämnderna) do strategic planning, coordinate activities across faculties and deal with a range of hiring and promotion issues. PhD students have a representation on the board through the Central PhD council.

### **Faculty of Humanities**

The Faculty of Humanities is one of four faculties at Stockholm University and comprises 19 departments and centres. It provides education and conducts research in about 50 different subjects.

The Faculty has more than 10,000 students and 1,000 members of staff, which makes the Faculty of Humanities at Stockholm University the largest faculty of humanities in Sweden. The Faculty of Humanities currently has about 300 PhD students. The Faculty Board (Fakultetsnämnden) is the governing body of Faculty of Humanities. The Board makes decisions on many matters, including the policies that apply to PhD students. Representatives on the board include researchers and teaching staff, as well as PhD students and students from the undergraduate level. It is the PhD Humanities Student Council that appoints the PhD representative to the Faculty Board. Our PhD council in turn elects representatives to the Faculty Council of the Social Sciences. Elections are held at the IMS PhD Council once a year (normally in January) to elect one representative to the Humanities Student Council. The January election is also when two members of each section of IMS (Fashion, Film and Communication and Journalism) are elected to the IMS PhD Council. Participation in the Councils is highly encouraged and is compensated with prolongation (see section above).

Additional information on the Student Faculty Councils can be found at:

<http://www.sus.su.se/en/councils-and-networks/#studentcouncils>

### **The Department of Media Studies**

In our department, the decision-making body is the Department Board (Institutionsstyrelsen or “IS”). Teachers, researchers, students and PhD students are all allocated voting positions on this board. The board is usually chaired by the head of the department (Prefekten), who is appointed to lead the department. Elections are held at the IMS PhD Council once a year (normally in December/January) for electing one PhD student to this position. The PhD student is compensated with prolongation for their involvement in IS.

### **Life outside of Academia**

Life and establishing the proper work-life balance is essential for successfully completing

your doctoral studies. Doctoral studies are by no means easy and stress can be a major cause of mental health and other health related illnesses. It is therefore generally good practice not to over extend yourself and to take regular breaks from your work and studies. This can be as simple as not sending emails on weekends, planning after-works with colleagues and ensuring that you take out a certain number of vacation days per-year.

If you are new to Stockholm, or to Sweden in general, don't hesitate to ask questions to your fellow PhD students. Nevertheless, as many PhD students have come from abroad in the past, it seems backwards to let every new PhD student reinvent the wheel. Navigating Swedish life and Swedish bureaucracy can be daunting even for natives, let alone for those who do not yet speak Swedish and simultaneously have to work full-time and figure out where to live, shop, bank, commute, study, and relax, on top of solving the mysteries of life in a 4 year PhD program.

### **Registration for Social Security, and compensated leaves of Absence**

<http://www.thenewbieguide.se/just-arrived/register-for-welfare/general-information-about-the-swedish-welfare-system/> (This website provides links to the agencies where EVERYONE MUST REGISTER for social security if they wish to be compensated for unemployment, health related absence from work, parental leave and a variety of other paid forms of leave. This is IMPORTANT and will not be done for you!)

### **Bureaucracy**

#### **Visas and Permits for non-EU citizens**

If you are coming to Sweden from a country not in the European Union and plan to stay for more than 90 days you will need an official resident permit card before you move to Sweden. You can apply for resident permit in a Swedish Embassy or consulate in your country. The embassy will ask you, among other documents, for an official letter of acceptance that must state the duration of your studies and your monthly salary. You can get this letter from the head of the department. If

you are intending to bring your family members (spouse or children) they are also expected to apply together with you and will be issued their own visas. It is the Swedish Migration Board (*Migrationsverket*) that makes all decisions regarding visa applications. The Swedish Migration Board will issue the resident permit card and send the card to the embassy where you applied. This process can take between 1 month and 4 months so be sure to apply as soon as possible after you have been accepted to study in Sweden and no later than 4 months before your permits expires in order to renew your visa. If you do not have a valid visa at any time while in Sweden, you will not be able to leave the country and reenter Sweden so it is essential that you apply early when renewing your visa. It is good practice to bring your acceptance letter when traveling to Sweden since sometimes border agencies may ask for this.

Additional information regarding migration:

[www.migrationsverket.se/info/start\\_en.html](http://www.migrationsverket.se/info/start_en.html)

### **Visas and Permits for EU citizens**

Even if you are coming from an EU country you should register your residency within three months after entering Sweden. You can fill out the form online and attach a copy of your passport and a proof of employment (a copy of your contract). Once you have been registered, you will receive proof of registration of right of residence in Sweden by mail. This will facilitate your applications for social service in Sweden and access to things like banking and public housing.

Additional information regarding EU citizen residency:

[http://www.migrationsverket.se/info/5979\\_en.html](http://www.migrationsverket.se/info/5979_en.html)

Additional sites that might be helpful:

<http://www.doktorandhandboken.nu/engelska/english/practicalinfo/visaandresidencepermits.4.24c9d95134182bfa4a80001540.html>

<http://www.studyinsweden.se/Living-in-Sweden/Do-I-need-a-visa/>

<http://www.su.se/english/study/application-admissions/costs-and-funding>

## **Swedish Tax Agency (Skatteverket)**

When you move to Stockholm, you **MUST** register your new address with the Swedish Tax Authority (Skatteverket). If you have never been a resident in Sweden you will get a Swedish personal number when you make your registration. This is a very very important number since it is used in many kinds of transactions and relations with authorities in Sweden. Not having a personal number is close to being non-existent in the eyes of the Swedish state.

The easiest way of registering is by visiting one of the Tax Authorities offices in Stockholm, where the staff can help you fill out the right forms (you should budget at least half a day for this process). Once you have received your personal number in the mail, you will need to return to the Tax Office and get an ID card for an additional fee of approximately SEK 400. This official ID card is seldom required, but can be nice to have, especially when trying to open a bank account as most banks require this card for foreigners if they wish to have a Visa card which will allow you to make purchases online.

On your first visit to the Tax Authority, you will need to bring your passport and certain documents according to your national affiliation, for instance your housing contract and acceptance letter/contract from the university. If you don't have a housing contract you need to have appropriate mailing address or contact details of the place you are living. Later on the tax office communicates with you and sends documents to your mailing address. For addresses and instructions, please consult the Tax Authority's webpage:

[www.skatteverket.se](http://www.skatteverket.se)

## **Banking**

It is probably a good idea to open a bank account in Sweden if you plan to stay in Sweden during your studies. It is however possible for SU to transfer your salary to a bank account abroad. Having a Swedish bank account certainly makes paying for things in Sweden easier as foreign



cards often don't work and the Swedish government and banking institutions have taken steps towards phasing out cash payments through the use of online banking app like "BankID." Having a Swedish bank account will also undoubtedly make it easier for you to get paid by the Department and it will make it easier for you to pay any bills you might have.

Opening a Swedish Bank account might be difficult, especially for those from outside the EU. SU uses DNB Bank for its banking and saying that you are an SU employee might make opening an account there easier. In order to open a bank account in Sweden you will need your contract from the Department and your Swedish Personal Number, you will also need to provide identification, so bring a passport or valid ID-card with you. As getting a valid Swedish ID-card may take a month or two (if not more), it's important that you have sufficient funding to cover preliminary expenses while awaiting this. Also, Swedish banks typically charge monthly fees for banking with them so be sure to ask around to see what options are available.

If you are a non EU citizen you would need a Swedish ID in order to open a bank account, therefore make sure to start this process as soon as possible. If you do not have a bank account, the department will process your payment automatically as a "payment voucher" which you will receive in the mail. Keep an eye on the expiry date of these "payment vouchers" and make sure to contact the department in case you didn't receive them. You can also contact the administrators for additional information on where to cash the money. Usually, banks will refuse to liquidize your "payment voucher" and they would recommend opening a temporary account where your money will be deposited, in this case you will need to present your passport. However, some passports are not accepted on the basis that they are from "dangerous countries" and banks will refuse to cash the "payment voucher" or open a temporary account and they will require a Swedish ID. Since the process of acquiring a Swedish ID can take more than two months sometimes, we recommend you inform the department about your case. One of the recommendations the administrators might give you is to visit the main offices of S.E.B. in Hamngatan. You can do that and request that they open a temporary and limited bank account just for you to deposit your "payment check". Having a

Swedish friend or colleague with you can help a lot with this process. This process will require the bank to request certain information from you, such as the places you visited or you lived in, if you will be transferring money outside of Sweden, if you pay taxes in other countries etc. In addition they will do a “security investigation” or a background check and they should get back to you within two or three weeks with a response. Once they grant you a limited account, you can go back and deposit your payment voucher. If you receive your Swedish ID at any point during this process, make sure to inform S.E.B. right away which will make the process faster and easier. If you are granted the Swedish ID after you open your bank account, you should also inform the bank. In this case, you have the right to request turning your limited bank account into a normal account and you can benefit from services such as online payment, Bank ID, online banking, etc...

### **Finding a place to live**

Finding adequate housing will likely present itself as a major problem for you. Stockholm has been suffering though a major housing shortage for years and this has driven prices steadily up since the mid 1990s. To have the best chance possible of getting a place to live it is essential that you start looking for place as soon as possible and signing up for housing queues as soon as possible (SSSB, [sssb.se](http://sssb.se), is the student housing queue for dormitory housing at Stockholm University). Finding a place to live often involves networking and asking friends and social media to help you out. However, there are organizations that specialize in housing for students, and it is sometimes possible to find an apartment of your own via waiting lists or last minute offers. Be sure to register in SSSB’s housing queue as soon as possible as it normally requires around 200-300 days in the queue before it is possible to get any form of accommodation.

If you plan to spend 4-5 years living in Stockholm buying an apartment might also be worthwhile. Housing costs for 4-5 years in Stockholm typically range between 200,000-500,000 SEK depending on the size of the accommodation and one bedroom apartments can be purchased for anywhere from 1.5/2 million SEK to 5 million SEK. As of May, 2017, various tax benefits and

incentives are available to those who purchase property in Sweden.

There are laws and regulations about subletting in Sweden. If you suspect that your landlord is charging you too much for the rent, it might be an idea to contact hyresnämnden, as you may be able to claim back your money and stop them from exploiting others in future. See: <http://www.hyresnamnden.se/Skalig-hyra/> .

### **Blocket**

Sweden's largest online market for just about anything, including subletting, and probably your best bet. Be careful of scammers on Blocket, rule thumb: never pay money without seeing the apartment and having a contract (and key). You are probably more likely to get a response if you put up an ad of your own.

[www.blocket.se](http://www.blocket.se)

### **Stiftelsen Stockholms Student Bostäder:**

Waiting list and last minute offers.

<http://www.ssb.se/>

### **Akademisk Kvart**

Private housing directly aimed at students

<http://akademiskkvart.se/>

### **University information regarding housing:**

<http://www.su.se/english/study/student-life/housing>

### **Scholarships and additional funding**

Scholarships can be good source of extra money. In addition to the 10,000 SEK in discretionary

funding that IMS PhD. students receive annually, 10,000 SEK in additional funding can be applied for through the Department twice during the course of the PhD. studies. Various additional grants and scholarships are available to PhD. students. Applying for grants requires foresight, additional work and patience.

Paying for travels and fieldwork out of your own salary is not ideal, although many have to do so. Getting others to pay for your research expenses can thus improve your private economy. Always remember that paid PhD. positions are relatively rare so don't expect your colleagues outside of the Nordic countries to have similar arrangements.

Stockholm University also facilitates applying to a number of scholarships, more information can be sought out here:

<http://www.su.se/english/study/fees-scholarships/scholarships>

<http://www.su.se/utbildning/studentervice/stipendier>

Scholarships for PhD. students under 33 years-old who live in Stockholm Municipality and wish to attend courses or conferences abroad.

<http://www.galostiftelsen.se/Studieresa>

Additional information on costs and funding at Stockholm University:

<http://www.su.se/english/study/student-life/costs-funding>

Additional options for scholarships for foreign students:

<https://studyinsweden.se/Scholarships/>