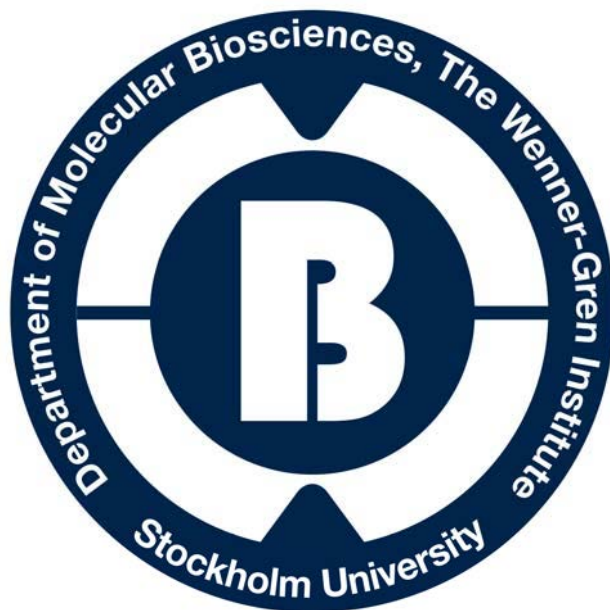




# PhD Guide

To new graduate students



Department of Molecular Biosciences,  
The Wenner-Gren Institute



## **PhD guide – To new graduate students**

Congratulations, you are now a PhD student at MBW (you should know by now the meaning of the acronym)! You should already have been introduced to the general rules and procedures at MBW. If not you can find them here: [MBW introduction documents](#)

In the next few pages you will find more information regarding specific aspects of the PhD program that you have just started. You can find further general information about doctoral studies in Sweden here: [Studera.nu/doctoralstudies](https://studera.nu/doctoralstudies).

This PhD guide reflects a combined MBW/PhD Council effort and was developed as a resource to help you (The graduate student) navigate through the various milestones that will lead to your PhD degree.

### **The PhD Program in Molecular Biosciences at MBW**

#### **The basics**

To obtain the degree of Doctor of Philosophy generally means that you have to undertake an extensive portion of original research, which has to be obtained and reported under proper academic supervision and in a research environment for a defined period.

More specifically, to receive a PhD in Molecular Biosciences at Stockholm University you need to successfully participate in a series of courses, produce a thesis that meets the quality standards required for publication in international journals and defend your work in a public dissertation, [Information to new PhD student](#).

MBW, being a heavy research oriented and highly interactive department provides a solid foundation for your PhD studies, giving you great opportunities for both personal and scientific development.



## The specifics

These are some of the points we consider important for you to realize from the beginning:

1. **Terms of employment and salary ladder for PhD students**
2. **The supervisor**
3. **Individual Study Plan (ISP)**
4. **PhD evaluations and ISP revision**
5. **Half time control and Licentiate degree**
6. **Credits**
7. **Courses**
8. **Doctoral thesis**
9. **Teaching at MBW**
10. **Prolongation**
11. **MBW PhD council and the Science Faculty (NFR)**
12. **Thesis timeline – when is it recommended/mandatory to do what?**
13. **Useful links for PhD students**

### 1. Terms of employment and salary ladder for PhD students

In the Swedish PhD system, PhD students are assigned to 4 years of full-time employment. At MBW, this period is extended by 20 per cent (1 additional year) by participating in extra activities including 5 per cent for mandatory teaching (at basic and master levels), and the rest 15 per cent distributed between research and administrative tasks.

[su.se/doctoral-level](https://su.se/doctoral-level)

The salary you get depends on how far you have come in your PhD program. For all doctoral students, with a doctoral studentship at Stockholm University, the first step of the salary ladder is SEK 26,500 per month. The second step of the salary ladder is SEK 28,400 per month and begins when you reach half time of the PhD program. The top step of the salary ladder is reached in the last year of your program when 80 per cent of the requirements for a doctoral degree is completed and consists of SEK 29,300 per month. The amounts are valid from October 1, 2018.

#### *Sickness benefits:*

When you have come to Sweden, it's important that you apply to be registered with [Försäkringskassan](https://www.forsakringskassan.se).



You should consider covering an *unemployment insurance* at least one year before defending your thesis. E.g. [stsakassa.se](https://stsakassa.se) or [aea.se](https://aea.se).

## 2. The Supervisor

According to the Higher Education Ordinance, on admission at least 2 supervisors shall be assigned to you as PhD student to provide you support, of which one is the principal supervisor. It is the supervisor's primary task to guide the PhD student throughout the PhD program, and reach the final public defense. It is also the supervisor's responsibility to ensure that the research project is feasible. It is good to clarify the demands and expectations that the PhD student and supervisor have of each other at an early stage. An agreement on obligations and guidelines for cooperation should be achieved and formalized in an individual study plan.

You can find more information using the following link: [studera.nu/the-supervisor](https://studera.nu/the-supervisor)

## 3. Individual Study Plan (ISP)

Before the official start of your PhD program an **individual study plan (ISP)** has to be agreed between the PhD student and his/her supervisor.

In accordance with the Higher Education ordinance, everyone admitted to a doctoral program must draw up an ISP with his or her supervisor. This plan must include:

- The institution's and doctoral student's commitments
- A time schedule for the doctoral student's program

The ISP **must be regularly followed-up and**, if necessary, revised by the ISP follow-up committee. Members of the committee are the doctoral student, the main supervisor, the co-supervisor, one more teacher from MBW, and a PhD student from a different research group (optional).

The length of the program can be extended only if there are special circumstances requiring an extension. Examples of these special circumstances are leave of absence because of illness, leave of absence for service in the defense forces or an elected position in a trade union or student organization or parental leave.



#### 4. PhD evaluations and ISP revision

PhD evaluations occur yearly. The first update approximately six months after start. The goal is to follow up the progress of the PhD students and, if necessary, to update the ISP. You should consider these evaluations as a **critical quality control** step that will help keeping you in the right direction towards your PhD degree. Regardless of small executional differences, all PhD students at MBW should be evaluated under the same standards. You can find the PhD student's evaluation form using the following link: [su.se/mbw/phd-studies](https://su.se/mbw/phd-studies)

#### 5. Half time control and Licentiate degree

When half of your PhD program is achieved (during year 3 of the program), the yearly evaluation includes a major checkpoint in your progress towards graduation, the **half time control**. In this checkpoint you should write a report including an extensive literature background and the results obtained during the 2 first years of the program. Additionally, you should give a seminar. This checkpoint can further assume the format of a **Licentiate degree**. At MBW, to get the Licentiate degree you should have obtained half of the credits needed to graduate (25 out of 50) and write a thesis. This thesis should include a comprehensive introduction to the research subject and the results should be presented in the form of one or several manuscripts or published papers.

You can find MBW's instructions for half time control and licentiate examination using the following links:

[Instructions half time control](#)

[Instructions for licentiate examination](#)

A Licentiate is a degree in its own right, but in the context of the PhD, the Licentiate is also a stage in the program leading to award of a PhD. For students who do not complete their doctoral studies for some reason, the Licentiate degree is a valuable proof of what they have achieved. The Licentiate degree is also well known and recognized in the private sector.

Adapted from: [studera.se/licentiate-degree](https://studera.se/licentiate-degree)



## 6. Credits

To obtain a PhD degree you need to get 50 credits (50 HP).

You get credits by attending **courses**, **seminars**, giving a **talk**, presenting a **poster**, go to a **conference**, etc. To achieve 1.5 credits (1.5 HP) the activity that you attended should represent the equivalent to one week's full-time study. If you have an oral presentation or present a poster you will have an extra credit point.

Your supervisor needs to approve these activities and you need to report them to the **Head of Research Subject** (Neus Visa) in order to be registered in **LADOK**. You should use the following template to submit your credits: [Registration of credits for phd-studies](#)

For more information about credits contact the Head of Research Subject.

## 7. Courses

Attending courses is part of your training as a PhD student and as such you should choose wisely, together with your supervisor, and attend the courses that will benefit you the most.

There are three mandatory courses in the MBW PhD program in Molecular Biosciences:

1) "Introduction to research studies in biology", 3 credits, is given twice per year by the Stockholm University BioResearch School. The BioResearch School organizes PhD courses for students in all biology departments. As a PhD student at MBW you will belong to the research school in molecular life sciences. Find more details about this course in the following link: [Introduction to Research studies in Biology](#)

2) "Writing a research proposal", 3 credits, is obligatory for PhD students registered at MBW after 1st June 2016. The writing of the research proposal shall normally take place within the initial three months of PhD studies.

Find more details about this course in the following link: [Writing a research proposal](#)

3) "Topics in molecular biosciences", 10 credits, is obligatory for PhD students registered at MBW after 1st July 2017. MBW recommends doctoral students to start this course during the second year of PhD studies. The course must be completed before the end of the third year of doctoral studies.

Find more details about this course in the following link: [Topics in molecular biosciences](#)



It is worth mentioning that if a student or group of students considers the need for a course on a subject not yet covered by the available courses, it is possible (and appreciated) to contact the coordinators of the BioResearch School and evaluate the possibilities for organizing such a course.

You can find more about the BioResearch School at:

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

More information about courses for graduate students, including courses that you can take outside SU, can be found at:

[Bioresschool.su.se/courses](http://Bioresschool.su.se/courses)

[Bioresschool.su.se/courses-outside-su](http://Bioresschool.su.se/courses-outside-su)

#### **Coordinators for BioResearch School:**

Karl Gotthard, [karl.gotthard@zoologi.su.se](mailto:karl.gotthard@zoologi.su.se) and Claes Andréasson, [claes.andreasson@su.se](mailto:claes.andreasson@su.se).

## **8. Doctoral thesis**

As mentioned before one of the requirements to obtain a PhD degree is to produce a thesis. In the thesis the PhD student should exhibit the contribution made to knowledge and research development. This should be done based on original approach and/or interpretation of the findings produced during the PhD. Furthermore it should demonstrate the student's ability to communicate research findings effectively.

There are two kinds of doctoral thesis: monographs and compilation theses. Compilation theses are the most common at MBW and consist of a number of articles, usually between 3 and 6. These theses should, however, contain a general introduction and a summary that should be formulated in a way that can be accessible to non-specialists in the field of the thesis.

The doctoral thesis must be defended orally and publically. For each thesis defense, the Faculty of Science appoints an opponent and an examination committee. Usually, at MBW, the public defense consists of a presentation of about 35 min preceded by an introduction to the research field offered by the opponent, and followed by a thorough discussion with the opponent and committee. In the end, the discussion is opened to the audience.



Don't forget that the public notification process, the nailing, must occur at least 3 weeks before the public defense and that the thesis has to be printed and delivered no later than 12:00 in the noon of the day prior to the nailing (check with the printer).

**You can find more information following the links:**

<http://studera.nu/startpage/doctoral-studies/third-cycle-studies/thesis>

<http://studera.nu/startpage/doctoral-studies/degrees/public-defence-of-doctoral-thesis/>

<https://www.su.se/english/research/phd-studies/dissertation-defence>

## **9. Teaching**

As part of your duties as a PhD student at MBW you are expected to undertake teaching assignments, usually in the form of a lab assistant.

Following, you can find the answer to some of the questions that might cross your mind:

### ***How much do you have to teach during your PhD?***

As a PhD student at MBW, you are expected to teach 5% out of 20% departmental duties. You should teach a maximum of 15 working days per year during your PhD time.

### ***What are your duties?***

If you are assigned as a lab assistant, you will be responsible for the preparation and conduction of practical classes. Preparation can include: inventory, material ordering, elaboration/update of lab compendium and further confirmation of experiments to be performed by the students, laboratory equipment, laboratory safety, etc. The lab assistant is also responsible for the correction and classification of student report(s). In case you are assigned to give a lecture, first discuss the content of your talk with the course responsible in order to prepare a suitable lecture for the course in question. You might be asked to formulate exam questions related to your experimental/lecture class and further correction. Be aware that "invigilator" (exam watcher) is part of your duties as a lab assistant/lecturer.





### ***How is teaching counted?***

Teaching duty is recorded as the number of working days that you are scheduled to teach.

### ***What happens if you teach more or less?***

If you are assigned to teach more or less hours than what you are expected then you should contact the director of studies Dr. Ann-Christin Lindås.

### **Director of studies:**

Dr. Ann-Christin Lindås, [ann.christin.lindas@su.se](mailto:ann.christin.lindas@su.se)

Room: F450, Tel: 08-16 1998

## **10. Prolongation**

Every non-profit assignment gives you the right to a prolongation of the student grant and paid service employment. If you choose to represent your fellow students you should not lose any study time. You can read how many extra days per year different assignments give you, [here](#).

Remember that it is calculated on the working week, so in reality five days of prolonging actually means one week of extra time. The prolongation is compiled and is added to your contract time in the end of the period/PhD.

Read more about the routines for prolongation: [Routines for prolongation of study time for PhD students](#).

## **11. MBW PhD Council and the Science Faculty (NFR)**

The PhD Council at MBW consists of all PhD students that attend the PhD Council meetings. The PhD Council Board organizes the PhD Council. This Board consists of one chairman, one vice chairman, one secretary/treasurer (these 3 positions needs to be filled for the board to be approved by the SU union) and up to three board members. The main aim of the PhD Council is to be responsive and put forward the



issues rose by the PhD students, to bear influence on all decisions concerning PhD studies and to contribute to a stronger PhD student community at MBW. The PhD Council is responsible for electing PhD positions at the department. These are 3 representatives (plus substitutes) to the Departmental Board, one MBW representative in the Science Faculty (NFR), one representative in the steering committee for the BioResearch School. The PhD Council also elects PhD student security and equality officers. The PhD Council is responsible for organizing the Monthly Seminar Series, MOSS, given by PhD students and Post Docs.

The PhD board needs to organize a minimum of 2 council meetings per term.

Elected PhD positions should be reported to Fredrik Charpentier Ljungqvist ([fredrik.c.l@sus.su.se](mailto:fredrik.c.l@sus.su.se)).

Contact the PhD council board: [phdboard.mbw@su.se](mailto:phdboard.mbw@su.se)

## **12. Thesis timeline – when is it recommended/mandatory to do what?**

You can find the thesis timeline using the following link: [Thesis timeline](#).

## **13. Useful links for PhD students**

**Scholarships Stockholm University:**

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

**Stockholm University student union:**

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

<http://www.sus.su.se/vrigt?category=FAQ>

**Study at Stockholm University – Handbook for international and exchange students:**

[http://issuu.com/stockholmsuniversitet/docs/study\\_at\\_stockholm\\_university\\_ht14?e=7263136/8824277](http://issuu.com/stockholmsuniversitet/docs/study_at_stockholm_university_ht14?e=7263136/8824277)

**Handbook for graduate students:**

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