



Karolinska Institutet arranges a doctoral course on:

**Sickness absence research: theories, methods,
and concepts** (4.5 ECTs, equivalent to 3 weeks full-time studies)
(course number 2641)

For PhD students pursuing a PhD thesis that includes aspects such as sickness absence, work disability, disability pension.

Dates: 5 February – 18 April 2018 (5-7 February + 16-18 April 2018 are course days in Stockholm, individual work in the weeks between).

You can apply for the course electronically between 16 October and 15 November 2017, here: <http://kiwas.ki.se/katalog/apply/loginInfo>

In order to apply, you will be asked to create a personal account for this at the KI website.

Course management group

Course leader: Professor Kristina Alexanderson, Division of Insurance Medicine, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden; +46 8 524 83200, kristina.alexanderson@ki.se www.ki.se/im

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Course plan (also available here: <http://kiwas.ki.se/katalog/kursplan/show/1158>)

The course aims to provide participants with basic and wide competence of the current research on sickness absence. The scope includes different types of study designs, data, and analytical approaches from different scientific disciplines, as a bases for own research on sickness absence/disability pension.

Learning goals

After successfully completing this course the doctoral student will be able to:

- show knowledge about the area of sickness absence, in terms of what research that is conducted in various scientific disciplines (e.g. economics, sociology, medicine, management, psychology, law, philosophy,

public health) and to be able to relate own research project to this, according to a classification presented at the course.

- show basic knowledge about different scientific methods used in research on sickness absence, with respect to study design, data collection, and data analysis.
- show knowledge about risk factors for sickness absence, consequences of being sickness absent, and factors that hinder or promote return to work.
- show basic knowledge on international as well as historical aspects of sickness insurance systems.
- search for relevant studies in literature databases.
- participate in scientific discussions, verbally and in writing, regarding sickness absence and issues in the research area, with regard to perspectives, theories, explanatory models, and concepts.

Course content

This multidisciplinary course covers knowledge of sickness absence/disability pension with a focus on theories, methods, and concepts used in such research. Among other things, the theories and methods used in research in medicine, sociology, economics, psychology, law, and management will be presented. Furthermore, the different perspectives within the research area will be considered, such as a gender perspective and a social class perspective.

The course begins with three full, mandatory days + evenings of lectures by national and international well known researchers in the field and of group work. Thereafter, nine weeks with individual work (studying literature, a written assignment (with focus on own project), logbook, etcetera) and group meetings with discussions of central scientific articles within the research area. Group discussion will take place either at face-to-face meetings, Skype, or discussion platforms via KIs' web-based forum. After that, the whole course meets again, for three additional mandatory days of lectures, group work, and seminars about the papers the students have written.

To pass the course, active participation in all course days in Stockholm is required, in addition to taking an active part in the group work and discussions in between the course days, completion of a written summary of the individual logbook, and the individual paper submitted in due time. Any absence is to be compensated by arrangement with the course leader and tasks may vary depending on which course sections have been missed.

Examination

Examination will take place at the seminars on all the papers during the three last days of the course. Each participant is to actively demonstrate that he/she has acquired the above knowledge, skills and attitudes in all the roles as respondent, opponent, and seminar participant. Students who do not obtain a passing grade in the first

examination will be offered a second examination within two months of the final day of the course

Literature

One of the learning outcomes of the course is to be able to find and evaluate relevant information in the literature. Therefore, participants are encouraged to search and evaluate the literature, e.g., relevant systematic reviews, websites, scientific articles, and other publications which should be added to the suggestions mentioned below.

Alexanderson K, Norlund A. Sickness absence - causes, consequences, and physicians' certification practice. A systematic literature review by the Swedish Council on Technology Assessment in Health Care. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*. 2004; 32 (Supplement 63):1-263 (available at the course)

Järnholm, B; Mannelqvist, R, Olofsson, C, Torén, K, Försäkringsmedicin, Lund : Studentlitteratur, 2013.

Löfgren A. Physician´s sickness certification practices. *Doktorsavhandling Stockholm: Karolinska Institutet; 2010.*

Loisel P, Anema J, Editors, *Handbook of Work Disability. Prevention and Management.* Springer 2013.

Sickness, Disability and Work. Breaking the Barriers, Paris: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD 2010

Talmage JB, Melhorn JM. *A physician´s guide to return to work.* USA: AMA press; 2005.

Pestieau P. *The Welfare State in the European Union - economic and social perspectives.* Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2006.

Esping-Andersen G. *Why we need a new welfare state.* Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2002.

Waddell, G; Burton, K: *Is work good for your health and well-being?* London: TSO, 2006

Acceptance to participate in the course is based in the relevance of the course for the PhD project (based on given motivation when applying for participation)