

# Quick Guide to illness during the PhD studies

## - for supervisors and departments

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## 1. General information

- **Registration and notification of sick leave:** The department is responsible for registering sick leave in AUHRA for employed PhD students. The person responsible for the registration of sick leave at the department keeps an eye on absence due to illness amounting to more than twenty days or more than four short periods of sick leave within a year for PhD students with an MSc. GSST requests PhD students to report sick leave via e-mail to either the PhD partner responsible for sick leave or their own PhD Partner (see the [GSST contact list here](#)), with a Cc to the main supervisor and the department if the student is ill for more than twenty days. However, it is still the department's responsibility to ensure that GSST receives notification of the employed PhD student's illness. This is to make sure that GSST is notified of any sick leave in time to be able to make a timely report of the period of illness, which is actually important for the department as regards reimbursement for sick leave from the municipality. If the deadline for notification is exceeded, the department cannot be reimbursed retrospectively, but only from the date the period of illness is subsequently reported.

Please note that PhD students who do not have an MSc and/or PhD students who are not financed via Aarhus University are not obliged to notify absence due to illness. However, GSST requests PhD students to notify their supervisor.

- **Interview(s) in connection with sick leave:** The main supervisor or a person appointed by the main supervisor holds interview(s) in connection with sick leave, meeting about [statement of fitness for work](#) (PDF file in Danish only), and/or other matters in connection with sick leave. Please note that long-term sick leave can mean that the PhD student's plan needs to be reviewed.

- **If the sick leave continues beyond the period of employment,** and you have any questions in this regard, please contact GSST.

- **Reimbursement:** GSST is responsible for applying for reimbursement for employed PhD students.

- **Contact:** You are always welcome to contact GSST if you would like to discuss interviews in connection with sick leave, meetings about [statements of fitness for work](#) (PDF file in Danish only), or other matters in connection with sick leave: see the [GSST contact list here](#).

## 2. Illness if the PhD student is employed (i.e. PhD students who have an MSc and are employed at Aarhus University)

Please note that PhD students must have been ill for a minimum of thirty full-time and consecutive days altogether before GSST can grant an extension of study period.

### 2.1 How should a PhD student report sick leave?

If a PhD student is ill for more than twenty days, he or she should report their sick leave via e-mail to either the PhD partner responsible for sick leave or their own PhD Partner (see the [GSST contact](#)

[list here](#)), with a Cc to the main supervisor and the department.

The e-mail should include information about the date the PhD student's sick leave commenced, whether the student is on full-time or part-time sick leave, and – if possible – how long the student expects to be on sick leave.

If the PhD student is on part-time sick leave, it is important that he or she remember to send a report each month of the number of working hours per week to the PhD partner responsible for sick leave.

If the PhD student goes on holiday or out of the country when on sick-leave, it is important that he or she remembers to report this both to the municipality and to the PhD partner responsible for sick leave.

## **2.2 The department's responsibility in connection with sick leave**

The department is responsible for registering sick leave in AUHRA for employed PhD students. The person responsible for the registration of sick leave at the department keeps an eye on absence due to illness amounting to more than twenty days or more than four short periods of sick leave within a year for PhD students with an MSc. GSST requests PhD students to report sick leave via e-mail to either the PhD partner responsible for sick leave or their own PhD Partner (see the [GSST contact list here](#)), with a Cc to the main supervisor and the department if the student is ill for more than twenty days. However, it is still the department's responsibility to ensure that GSST receives notification of the employed PhD student's illness.

**IMPORTANT:** Please note that a timely report of the period of illness is important for the department in regards to reimbursement for sick leave from the municipality. It is therefore very important that GSST receive information about the reported illness. If the deadline for notification is exceeded, the department cannot be reimbursed retrospectively, but only from the date the period of illness is subsequently reported.

Please also note that the municipality only provides reimbursement after thirty days, which means that the department must pay for the first thirty days of sick leave.

## **2.3 Interview in connection with sick leave**

PhD students should be invited to an interview no later than four weeks after the first day of their sick leave, and the interview should be held before the end of the fifth week of sick leave.

The PhD student's main supervisor often holds the interview in connection with sick leave, but he or she can decide to get someone else to hold the interview instead. If requested, the PhD partner responsible for sick leave can hold the interview or assist at the meeting. One or both parties can also request a companion or observer to attend if they so wish.

During the interview, a [statement of fitness for work](#) (PDF file in Danish only) is drawn up, and the following points should be dealt with in this connection:

- Expected duration of absence due to illness
- Any consideration that should be taken so the PhD student can return to work
- Review of the PhD student's PhD plan
- Possible resumption on a part-time basis
- Setting a time for a follow-up meeting (this date is typically either around the final date for sick leave as determined by the doctor or before the end of the eighth week of sick leave)

The [statement of fitness for work](#) (PDF file in Danish only) must be sent as soon as possible to the PhD partner responsible for sick leave once the doctor has filled in the relevant part, as GSST needs to use it in connection with drawing up a case report and applying for reimbursement. The PhD student is responsible for forwarding the [statement of fitness for work](#) (PDF file in Danish only) to GSST once the doctor has certified it.

#### **2.4 Follow-up meeting(s)**

Around the final date for sick leave as determined by the doctor or before the end of the eighth week of sick leave, a follow-up status meeting should be held. The person who held the first interview in connection with sick leave is responsible for the follow-up meetings.

Follow-up meetings should be held at suitable intervals.

#### **2.5 Illness beyond enrolment and employment**

In case of illness beyond the enrolment and employment period, there are two different scenarios depending on whether the PhD student is on part-time or full-time sick-leave.

If the PhD student is on part-time sick-leave, a plan must be made concerning his or her employment in the extension period. It is important that the PhD student and main supervisor make a realistic and concrete plan for the extension of the PhD student's enrolment and employment period on part-time. Following that, the PhD student's doctor must assess whether the plan is realistic before GSST can make the extension of the enrolment and employment period on part-time. The plan must contain an overview of working hours per week. These must be increasing. Please note that during the extension of the PhD student's enrolment and employment period on part-time, he or she will only be paid for those hours that he or she is actually able to work. The PhD student will not be paid for full-time employment.

If the PhD student is on full-time sick-leave, the extension cannot be made until he or she has been reported well again.

## **2.6 Fitness for duty report**

When the PhD student is well again, he or she must report this by sending an e-mail including the final date of illness to the PhD partner responsible for sick leave, with a Cc to the main supervisor and the department. GSST will subsequently prepare and send a letter to the PhD student regarding an extension of study period and containing a new completion date and possibly a new date for the qualifying examination. The main supervisor and the department are sent a copy of the letter via e-mail.

You are always welcome to contact GSST if you would like to discuss interviews in connection with absence due to illness, meetings about [statements of fitness for work](#) (PDF file in Danish only), or other matters in connection with sick leave: see the [GSST contact list here](#).

## **3. Illness if the PhD student is not employed (i.e. PhD students who do not have an MSc and/or PhD students who are not financed via Aarhus University)**

### **3.1 PhD students who do not have an MSc (i.e. 3+5/4+4 completing part A):**

PhD students who do not have an MSc are not obliged to notify absence due to illness. However, GSST requests PhD students to notify their supervisor.

Please note that PhD students must have been ill for a minimum of thirty full-time and consecutive days altogether before GSST can grant an extension of study period.

PhD students who do not have an MSc can get an extension of up to four months with PhD SU scholarship (in Danish this is called “ph.d.-SU-stipendium”) due to illness for twelve consecutive months. An extension can only be granted for whole months, and not weeks or days.

#### **3.1.1 How should a PhD student report sick leave?**

If a PhD student is ill for more than twenty days, he or she should report their sick leave via e-mail to either the PhD partner responsible for sick leave or their own PhD Partner (see the [GSST contact list here](#)), with a Cc to the main supervisor and the department.

The e-mail should include information about the date the PhD student’s sick leave commenced, and – if possible – how long the student expects to be on sick leave.

#### **3.1.2 Interview in connection with sick leave**

PhD students who do not have an MSc should personally notify GSST of long-term sick leave, with a Cc to their main supervisor. If a PhD student only contacts the department or main supervisor, it is important that these notify GSST about the long-term sick leave by sending an e-mail to the PhD partner responsible for sick leave or the programme’s PhD partner.

PhD students should be invited to an interview no later than four weeks after the first day of their sick leave, and the interview should be held before the end of the fifth week of sick leave.

The PhD student's main supervisor often holds the interview in connection with sick leave, but he or she can decide to get someone else to hold the interview instead. If requested, the PhD partner responsible for sick leave can hold the interview or assist at the meeting. One or both parties can also request a companion or observer to attend.

During the interview, a [statement of fitness for work](#) (PDF file in Danish only) is drawn up, and the following points should be dealt with in this connection:

- Expected duration of absence due to illness
- Consideration that should possibly be taken so the PhD student can return to work
- Review of the PhD student's PhD plan
- Setting a time for a follow-up meeting (this date is typically either around the final date for sick leave as determined by the doctor or before the end of the eighth week of sick leave)

Once the doctor has certified the [statement of fitness for work](#) (PDF file in Danish only) the PhD student is responsible for sending it to GSST as soon as possible, as GSST needs to use it in connection with drawing up a case report.

IMPORTANT: Please note that the municipality does not provide reimbursement in connection with PhD students who do not have an MSc. This means that the department pays for the entire period of sick leave.

### 3.1.3 Follow-up meeting(s)

Around the final date for sick leave as determined by the doctor or before the end of the eighth week of sick leave, a follow-up status meeting should be held. The person who held the first interview in connection with sick leave is responsible for the follow-up meetings.

Follow-up meetings should be held at suitable intervals.

### 3.1.4 Fitness for duty report

When the PhD student is well again, he or she must report this by sending an e-mail including the final date of illness to the PhD partner responsible for sick leave, with a Cc to the main supervisor and the department. GSST will subsequently prepare and send a letter to the PhD student regarding an extension of study period and containing a new completion date and a new date for the qualifying examination. The main supervisor and the department are sent a copy of the letter via e-mail.

You are always welcome to contact GSST if you would like to discuss interviews in connection with absence due to illness, meetings about [statements of fitness for work](#) (PDF file in Danish only), or other options in connection with sick leave: see the [GSST contact list here](#).

### **3.2 PhD students who are not financed via Aarhus University (e.g. China Scholarship Council, Science without Borders, Industrial PhD students):**

Please note that PhD students who are not financed via Aarhus University are not obliged to notify absence due to illness. However, GSST requests PhD students to notify their supervisor.

Please note that PhD students must have been ill for a minimum of thirty full-time and consecutive days altogether before GSST can grant an extension of study period.

Please also note that because the PhD student is not financed via Aarhus University (and is thereby not employed by Aarhus University), GSST only grants an extension of the study period. At the same time, this means that GSST does not finance the period of illness.

Regarding Industrial PhD students specifically: Industrial PhD students must comply with the applicable rules and regulations at the company where they are employed. Industrial PhD students should also therefore be aware that they need to report sick leave to the relevant person in the company, and this person is, in principle, not obliged to notify anyone else of the sick leave. However, GSST requests Industrial PhD students to notify their supervisor. GSST also recommends that Industrial PhD students contact the PhD partner responsible for sick leave, with a Cc to the PhD partner responsible for Industrial PhD students (see the [GSST contact list here](#)), in connection with notification of sick leave for a minimum of thirty full-time and consecutive days altogether. This is important with regard to any extension of study period due to illness. Interviews in connection with sick leave are held in accordance with company guidelines.

#### **3.2.1 How should a PhD student report sick leave?**

If a PhD student is ill for more than twenty days, he or she should report their sick leave via e-mail to either the PhD partner responsible for sick leave or their own PhD Partner (see the [GSST contact list here](#)), with a Cc to the main supervisor and the department.

The e-mail should include information about the date the PhD student's sick leave commenced, whether the student is on full-time or part-time sick leave, and – if possible – how long the student expects to be on sick leave.

If the PhD student is on part-time sick leave, it is important that he or she remember to send a report each month of the number of working hours per week to the PhD partner responsible for sick leave.

#### **3.2.2 Interview in connection with sick leave**

The PhD student will be invited to an interview no later than four weeks after the first day of sick leave, and the interview should be held before the end of the fifth week of sick leave. During the interview, a [statement of fitness for work](#) (PDF file in Danish only) is drawn up, and the following points should be dealt with in this connection:

- Expected duration of absence due to illness
- Any consideration that should be taken so the PhD student can return to work

- Review of the PhD student's PhD plan
- Possible resumption on a part-time basis
- Setting a time for a follow-up meeting (this date is typically either around the final date for sick leave as determined by the doctor or before the end of the eighth week of sick leave)

The PhD student's main supervisor often holds the interview in connection with sick leave, but he or she can decide to get someone else to hold the interview instead. If requested, the PhD partner responsible for sick leave can hold the interview or assist at the meeting. Follow-up meetings will be held at suitable intervals.

The statement of fitness for work must be sent as soon as possible to the PhD partner responsible for sick leave. Once the doctor has certified the statement of fitness for work, the PhD student is responsible for sending it to GSST, as GSST needs to use it in connection with drawing up a case report.

IMPORTANT: Please note that the municipality does not provide reimbursement in connection with non-employees. This also means that Aarhus University does not finance the period of sick leave.

### **3.2.3 Follow-up meeting(s)**

Around the final date for sick leave as determined by the doctor or before the end of the eighth week of sick leave, a follow-up status meeting should be held. The person who held the first interview in connection with sick leave is responsible for the follow-up meetings.

Follow-up meetings should be held at suitable intervals.

### **3.2.4 Fitness for duty report**

When the PhD student is well again, he or she must report this by sending an e-mail including the final date of illness to the PhD partner responsible for sick leave, with a Cc to the main supervisor and the department. GSST will subsequently prepare and send a letter to the PhD student regarding an extension of study period and containing a new completion date and possibly a new date for the qualifying examination. The main supervisor and the department are sent a copy of the letter via e-mail.

You are always welcome to contact GSST if you would like to discuss interviews in connection with absence due to illness, meetings about [statements of fitness for work](#) (PDF file in Danish only), or other options in connection with sick leave: see the [GSST contact list here](#).

## **4. Psychological help**

All PhD students are entitled to psychological help for up to five hours. Please note, however, that Aarhus University has a contract with Dansk Krisekorps. This means that PhD students are referred to Dansk Krisekorps and are unable to personally choose another psychologist. To get a referral, PhD students should

contact the PhD partner responsible for sick leave. Dansk Krisekorps will then contact the PhD student within 24 hours to identify the problem.

Dansk Krisekorps can provide psychological counselling in connection with stress, working relationships or similar matters that have an influence on the PhD student's work.

### **5. Work and residence permit for international PhD students**

GSST is responsible for helping PhD students if it is necessary to apply for an extension of their work and residence permit because of a long-term sick leave and extension of study period.