

# Quick Guide to illness during the PhD studies

## – for PhD students

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## 1. Illness if you are employed (i.e. PhD students who have an MSc and are employed at Aarhus University)

Remember to notify your department every time you are absent due to illness. You must report this on your first sick day. Please note that you must notify GSST if you take long-term sick leave, i.e. more than twenty full-time and consecutive days altogether.

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

### 1.1 How should I report sick leave?

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

The e-mail should include information about the date your sick leave commenced, whether you are on full-time or part-time sick leave, and – if possible – how long you expect to be on sick leave.

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

If you go on holiday or out of the country when you are on sick-leave, it is important that you remember to report this both to the municipality and to the PhD partner responsible for sick leave.

### 1.2 Interview in connection with sick leave

You will be invited to an interview no later than four weeks after the first day of your 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 you can return to work
- Review of your 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)

Your main supervisor often holds the interview in connection with sick leave. However, the PhD partner responsible for sick leave can hold the interview or assist at the meeting, and you can also request a companion or observer to attend if you so wish. Follow-up meetings will be held at suitable intervals.

Please note that once your doctor has certified the [statement of fitness for work](#) (PDF file in Danish only), you are responsible for sending it to GSST as soon as possible after your interview, as GSST needs to use it in connection with drawing up a case report and applying for reimbursement. When you get salary during your sick leave, please note that it is very important that you follow up on enquiries from your municipality, as we will otherwise lose the right to reimbursement for your period of absence due to illness. The same goes for leaving Denmark. If you want or plan to leave Denmark, you need to make an agreement with your social worker and let us know.

Please note that the municipality will send all enquiries to you electronically via e-Boks, and that the law regulating sick pay includes an obligatory requirement stating that all citizens must use the “Digitale selvbetjening” system (in English: the digital self-service system). This means that the information sheet that you receive electronically from your municipality must be filled in electronically and answered electronically as well.

The digital self-service in connection with your sick leave must be carried out in the digital system “Mit sygefravær”, which can be found at the following link: [www.mitsygefravaer.dk](http://www.mitsygefravaer.dk).

### **1.3 Illness beyond enrolment and employment**

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

If you are on part-time sick-leave, a plan must be made concerning your employment in the extension period. It is important that you and your main supervisor make a realistic and concrete plan for the extension of your enrolment and employment period on part-time. Following that, your doctor must assess whether the plan is realistic before GSST can make the extension of your 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 your enrolment and employment period on part-time, you will only be paid for those hours that you are actually able to work. You will not be paid for full-time employment.

If you are on full-time sick-leave, the extension cannot be made until you have been reported well again.

### **1.4 Fitness for duty report**

When you are well again, you 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 your main supervisor and the department. GSST will subsequently prepare and send a letter to you regarding an extension of study period and containing a new completion date and possibly a new date for the qualifying examination.

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

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

If you are a PhD student and do not have an MSc, you are not obliged to notify absence due to illness. However, GSST requests you to notify your supervisor.

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

As a PhD student who does not have an MSc, you 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. Please note that an extension can only be granted for whole months, and not weeks or days.

### 2.1.1 How should I report sick leave?

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

The e-mail should include information about the date your sick leave commenced, and – if possible – how long you expect to be on sick leave.

### 2.1.2 Interview in connection with sick leave

You will be invited to an interview no later than four weeks after the first day of your 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 you can return to work
- Review of your 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)

Your main supervisor often holds the interview in connection with sick leave. However, the PhD partner responsible for sick leave can hold the interview or assist at the meeting, and you can also request a companion or observer to attend if you so wish. Follow-up meetings will be held at suitable intervals.

Please note that once your doctor has certified the [statement of fitness for work](#) (PDF file in Danish only) you are responsible for sending it to GSST as soon as possible after your interview, as GSST needs to use it in connection with drawing up a case report.

### **2.1.3. Fitness for duty report**

When you are well again, you 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 your main supervisor and the department. GSST will subsequently prepare and send a letter to you regarding an extension of study period and containing a new completion date and a new date for the qualifying examination.

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

If you are a PhD student and not financed via Aarhus University, you are not obliged to notify absence due to illness. However, GSST requests you to notify your supervisor.

Please note that you 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 you are not financed via Aarhus University (and are thereby not employed by Aarhus University), GSST only grants an extension of the study period. This also means that GSST does not finance the period of sick leave.

Regarding Industrial PhD students specifically: If you are an Industrial PhD student, you must comply with the applicable rules and regulations at the company where you are employed. You should also therefore be aware that you 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 you to notify your supervisor. GSST also recommends that Industrial PhD students contact the PhD partner responsible for sick leave, with 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.

### **2.2.1. How should I report sick leave?**

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

The e-mail should include information about the date your sick leave commenced, whether you are on full-time or part-time sick leave, and – if possible – how long you expect to be on sick leave.

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

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

You 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 you can return to work
- Review of your 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)

Your main supervisor often holds the interview in connection with sick leave. However, the PhD partner responsible for sick leave can hold the interview or assist at the meeting, and you can also request a companion or observer to attend if you so wish. Follow-up meetings will be held at suitable intervals.

Please note that once your doctor has certified the [statement of fitness for work](#) (PDF file in Danish only) you are responsible for sending it to GSST as soon as possible after your interview, as GSST needs to use it in connection with drawing up a case report.

### **2.2.3 Fitness for duty report**

When you are well again, you 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 your main supervisor and the department. We will subsequently prepare and send a letter to you regarding an extension of study period and containing a new completion date and possibly a new date for the qualifying examination.

## **3. Psychological help**

All PhD students are entitled to psychological help for up to five hours, provided there are good reasons to justify this. Please note, however, that Aarhus University has a contract with Dansk Krisekorps. This means that you are referred to Dansk Krisekorps and are unable to personally choose another psychologist. To get a referral, you should contact the PhD partner responsible for sick leave. Dansk Krisekorps will then contact you 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 your work.

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

Please note that it might be necessary to apply for an extension of your work and residence permit if you take long-term sick leave and are granted an extension of study period. You should therefore check the expiry date of your work and residence permit, and contact GSST if you need help in applying for an extension of your work and residence permit.