

New migration policy affecting researchers and doctoral students as of June 2026

Migration policy is a central part of the current Government's Tidö Agreement. This Government aims to implement long-term, sustainable changes to migration-related regulations. The changes will result in both improvements and limitations for higher education institutions.

The changes from June 2026 relevant to researchers and doctoral students have been compiled below. The compilation also includes information regarding staff with work permits and other information relevant to students and staff covered by the Temporary Protection Directive.

This document is an unofficial translation of the Swedish, created by SLU. The content of the original document (in Swedish) has been revised by legal officers at the Swedish Migration Agency and the Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions–Swedish Migration Agency cooperation group. Thus, the English translation is only advisory and not an official EURAXESS document.

Researchers

Before 11 June 2026	After 11 June 2026
After having held a residence permit for research for four years, a person may apply for a permanent residence permit. This also applies to those who have held residence permits for work, the EU Blue Card, ICT Permit, permanent residence permit for doctoral studies or seasonal work.	After having held a residence permit for research, research with mobility for longer stays, residence permit for doctoral studies, or an EU Blue Card issued by Sweden for three consecutive years, the holder will be able to apply for a permanent residence permit. The previous application process after four years remains an option.
When a residence permit is close to expiring, a permanent residence permit application can be submitted in conjunction with an extension application.	Upon the foreign citizen's request, a temporary residence permit can be recalled in favour of a permanent residence permit. This means a person does not need to wait until their existing permit expires.
Researchers and their family members cannot leave the country while their application to extend their permit is being processed as they risk being denied re-entry if they do not have a valid permit.	Before departure, researchers and their family members may apply for a D-visa (national visa) to be able to re-enter Sweden following travel abroad linked to the foreign citizen's research, or if special circumstances exist.
Residence permit to look for work or start a business after completing research are valid for 12 months.	Residence permit to look for work or start a business after completing research are valid for a minimum of 12 months and maximum of 18 months.
Researchers' family members cannot apply for a residence permit for research, or residence permit for higher education from inside Sweden.	Researchers' family members can apply for a residence permit for research, or residence permit for third-cycle studies from inside Sweden

Before 1 June 2026	After 1 June 2026
If a person has a permit to look for work after completing studies, they cannot stay in Sweden when applying for a residence permit for research.	If a person has a permit to look for work after completing studies, they may remain in Sweden while applying for a residence permit for research.
If a person has a permit to look for work after completing research, they cannot stay in Sweden when applying for a residence permit for research.	If a person has a permit to look for work after completing research, they may remain in Sweden while applying for a residence permit for research.

Doctoral students

One major change as of 11 June 2026 involves doctoral students being able to choose between either applying for a residence permit for research, or a residence permit for higher education (doctoral studies). A comparison of the various permits has been included with this document. Other changes affecting doctoral students are given below.

Before 11 June 2026	After 11 June 2026
Doctoral students needs to apply for a residence permit for higher education studies (doctoral studies).	Doctoral students can apply for a residence permit for higher education studies (doctoral studies) <i>or</i> a residence permit to conduct research*.
It is possible to apply for a permanent residence permit for doctoral studies and/or employment for a total of four of the past seven years.	A person may apply for a permanent residence permit after having held a residence permit for doctoral studies, research, research with mobility for longer stays, or an EU Blue Card issued by Sweden for three consecutive years. The previous option of applying after four years remains possible.
Permanent residence permit applications are submitted when the applicant's current residence permit is close to expiring.	Upon the foreign citizen's request, a temporary residence permit can be recalled in favour of a permanent residence permit. This means a person does not need to wait until their existing permit expires.
Doctoral students and their family members cannot leave the country while their application to extend their permit is being processed as they risk being denied re-entry if they do not have a valid permit.	Before departure, researchers and their family members can apply for a D-visa (national visa) to be able to re-enter Sweden following travel abroad linked to the foreign citizen's education or if there are special circumstances.
Permit to look for work after completing studies, are valid for 12 months.	Permit to look for work after completing studies, are valid for a minimum of 12 months and maximum of 18 months.
A doctoral student's family members cannot apply for a residence permit for higher education or residence permit for research from within Sweden.	A doctoral student's family members can apply for a residence permit for third-cycle courses and study programmes or residence permit for research from inside Sweden, if the doctoral student has completed one semester of their doctoral studies.
Requirement for approved credits awarded – studies going as planned.	Requirement for approved credits awarded – to have successfully completed 62.5 per cent of studies scheduled for the first academic year. 75 per cent of the studies to have subsequently taken place.

*Please note that there are certain limitations with residence permits for higher education for doctoral students. See Euraxess and SUHF letter (attached).

Before 1 June 2026	After 1 June 2026
If a person has a permit to look for work after completing studies, they cannot stay in Sweden when applying for a residence permit for higher education.	If a person has a permit to look for work after completing studies, they may remain in Sweden while applying for a residence permit for higher education if the applicant will be studying at third-cycle level (doctoral studies).

If a person has a permit to look for work after completing research, they cannot stay in Sweden when applying for a residence permit for higher education.	If a person has a permit to look for work after completing research, they may remain in Sweden while applying for a residence permit for higher education if the applicant will be studying at third-cycle level (doctoral studies).
--	--

Employees with work permits

Before 1 June 2026	After 1 June 2026
Salary requirement of 80 per cent of median salary.	Salary requirement of 90 per cent of median salary*
No health insurance requirements for stays of up to one year.	Fully-comprehensive health insurance is required for stays of up to one year.
Employers are under no obligation to notify the relevant authorities should a foreign citizen not begin working.	Employers of foreign citizens granted work permits must notify the Migration Agency if the foreign citizen has not begun working within four months of the start date of their work permit.
Employers risk fines or a prison sentence of up to one year.	Two new crimes introduced: exploiting foreign workers and trade with work permits.
Fines for employers of 1 x price base amount.	Fines for employers of 2 x price base amount**

* Not applicable to staff who were previously covered by the Temporary Protection Directive, *students, researchers or students on placement who may apply after arrival, as per Chapter 5, Section 18, Second Paragraph, Point 9 of the Alien's Act*, and certain exempt professions. In these cases, 75 per cent of the median salary is required, as per Chapter 5, Section 6 of the Alien's Ordinance (2006:97).

Salary requirement of 80 per cent for extension applications submitted on or before 1 December 2026.

** For infringements of three months or more, the fine will be increased from 2 to 4 times the price base amount.

Additional information

- Staff covered by the Temporary Protection Directive have the option to change for more permits from inside Sweden.
- First and second-cycle students may not work more than 15 hours per week. Certain exceptions are in place.
Exceptions for work:
 - 1) During June, July and August
 - 2) Students may work unlimited hours in addition to their studies if the work relates to their studies, involves student representation, administration, internships, research or artistic research. In such cases, the work must take place at the higher education institution to which the student has been admitted or have ties to the student's programme.
- Students face higher demands regarding what are considered to be approved studies.
- It is harder for students to change their permit type.
- First and second-cycle students must register their Swedish address with the Swedish Migration Agency (if they cannot register on the population register)

Links

[The Swedish Aliens Act \(2005:716\) | The Riksdag](#)

[The Swedish Aliens Ordinance \(2006:97\) | The Riksdag](#)

[New rules for researchers and doctoral students – Migration Agency](#)

[New rules for applying for another residence permit from within Sweden – Migration Agency](#)

[New rules for residence permits for studies in higher education – Migration Agency](#)

[Residence permits for higher education – Migration Agency](#)

[Apply for a residence permit to conduct research in Sweden – Migration Agency](#)

[Apply for a work permit or a residence permit to work in Sweden – Migration Agency](#)

[Support for higher education institutions, education providers and entities responsible for advanced research groups –](#)

[form \(in Swedish\) – Migration Agency](#)

Possibility for doctoral students to obtain a residence permit as of 11 June 2026 – a comparison between residence permits for research and residence permits for third-cycle courses and programmes (doctoral studies)

Government proposal

A doctoral student should be able to enter into a hosting agreement with an entity responsible for research and apply for and be granted a residence permit for research or, in the case of longer stays, research with mobility. A doctoral student who has not enter into a hosting agreement will still be able to apply for and be granted a residence permit for higher education.

Grounds for the proposal for doctoral students

The proposal is based on the assessment that doctoral students are currently treated as students, despite the fact they conduct research. Consequently, they face greater problems in terms of freedom of movement, establishment and family rights, especially visiting doctoral students whose rights are limited. Residence permits for research enable more appropriate regulations that are better suited to the actual needs of doctoral students. These permits are also in line with the EU students and researchers directive.

<u>Doctoral students</u>	Residence permit for research	Residence permit for studies in higher education (doctoral studies)
Study requirements	No explicit requirements beyond studies continuing as planned.	62.5 per cent of their studies must have been completed during the first year, and 75 per cent of their studies for each subsequent year*
EU mobility	Greater freedom of movement, e.g. 180 days per 360-day period per member state	Limited freedom of movement
Family members' freedom of movement within Europe	Article 30 of the EU students and researchers directive (2016/801) entitles family members to enter and stay in one or more member state to accompany the researcher as part of their freedom of movement.	Limited freedom of movement
Maintenance requirements	SEK 9 700/month (May 2026**)	SEK 10 656/month + SEK 4 400 for accompanying adult + SEK 2 664 per accompanying child (May 2026).
Possibility to change permit type (e.g. work permit non-researcher)	No requirement to have completed two semesters of third-cycle courses and study programmes.	Must have completed two semesters of their third-cycle courses and study programmes.
Possibility for family member to change permit for research or doctoral studies	No requirement for the researcher to have completed any part of their research	Doctoral student must have completed one semester of their third-cycle courses/study programme
Application documents	Hosting agreement + admission decision (procedures not yet established) +	Admission decision + transcripts and certificates.

	transcripts and certificates.	
Length of permit	Up to 4 years	Up to 4 years
Permit type's validity period	Valid hosting agreement and continuing research career	includes the public defence of doctoral thesis
Processing time***	60 days per Alien's Ordinance	60 days per Alien's Ordinance
Permanent residence permit	Three consecutive years of residency	Three consecutive years of residency
Possibility to apply for "permit to look for work"	Possible for a minimum of one year and a maximum of 18 months. Must provide proof of completed research.	Possible for a minimum of one year and a maximum of 18 months. Must provide proof of completed third-cycle study programme.

* Not applied to residence permits issued before new regulations enter into force. However, the new regulations will be applied if the permit is extended following the implementation.

**The SOU 2025:95 Government report examining tighter restrictions on family reunification proposes a maintenance requirement for family reunification with researchers.

*** The Migration Agency has promised improved services for residence permits for research and residence permits for doctoral studies and for co-applicants: maximum 30-day processing time for fully completed applications.

Changes for visiting doctoral students

- Visiting doctoral students can apply for a residence permit for research.
- This will enable visiting doctoral students to include their time in Sweden on this permit when they apply for a permanent residence permit.
- Makes it easier for visiting doctoral students to change their permit type from inside Sweden at a later date.
- It will still be possible to apply for a visitor's residence permit for activities that are not part of the holder's research, such as conferences.

Links

[The Swedish Aliens Act \(2005:716\) | The Riksdag](#)

[The Swedish Aliens Ordinance \(2006:97\) | The Riksdag](#)

[New rules for researchers and doctoral students – Migration Agency](#)

[New rules for residence permits for studies in higher education – Migration Agency](#)

[Residence permits for higher education – Migration Agency](#)

[Apply for a residence permit to conduct research in Sweden – Migration Agency](#)

[Support for higher education institutions, education providers and entities responsible for advanced research groups – form \(in Swedish\) – Migration Agency](#)