

Sick leave protocol for PhD candidates Institute of Psychology

This document provides guidance on how to deal with long-term illness of a PhD candidates. It describes the steps to be taken when a PhD candidates reports sick for a prolonged period (more than 4 consecutive weeks), and the considerations involved. Here, we distinguish between remunerated PhD candidates (with an appointment financed from the 1st/2nd/3rd flow of funds), and unpaid PhD candidates (grant or external PhD candidates).

What to do in case of (long-term) illness?

Roadmap for remunerated PhD candidates (the roadmap for unpaid/external PhD candidates see below):

The following applies to all employees: if you become ill and cannot work, you will be subject to Leiden University's sick leave policy and the *Wet verbetering poortwachter* (Gatekeeper Improvement Act). This therefore also applies to paid PhD candidates.

Step 1:

Report your absence to your department head as soon as possible. Paid PhD candidates are subject to the same procedure as all other university employees. They must officially call in sick. The PhD candidate can report himself/herself sick in the SAP system, or ask the secretariat to do this for him/her. It is important that it is clearly recorded from which moment the PhD candidates has called in sick.

It is also important that if it looks like the leave is going to last longer, the PhD candidate (in addition to his/her supervisor) informs his/her supervisor and co-supervisor(s) as soon as possible.

If the PhD candidate has to write hours on a research project financed from the second flow of funds, the PhD candidate should stop writing hours from the same day of reporting his/her sick leave. No time may be written on the project during the PhD candidates sick leave.

Important to know! Similar to other employees, a supervisor, promoter and co-promoter(s) may not ask about the nature or cause of the illness (this is prohibited by law).

Step 2:

Within the first week of reporting sick, the PhD candidate should have a discussion with his/her supervisor, about the following aspects:

- How long does he/she expect to be absent?
- Are there any appointments to cancel or take over?
- Can he/she still do certain tasks?
- Where can she/he be reached, when contact again?
- Who from the supervisory team will be the case manager, and thus the contact person for the PhD candidate?

Each PhD candidate is expected to actively cooperate in recovery and reintegration (return to work).

In the case of a salaried position, he/she may seek advice from the company doctor (via the online Request for Advice form company doctor on the Employee website). It is the PhD candidates

responsibility to keep the appointed case manager informed of his/her illness, recovery and potential employability.

Step 3:

In week 4, the salaried PhD candidate receives a letter about a consultation with the company doctor. The company doctor assesses what the possibilities and limitations are and advises the PhD candidate and the supervisor on reintegration. If the sickleave lasts longer, the company doctor also makes a problem analysis. In the case of a paid appointment, this and subsequent steps are properly supervised by the sickleave team of FSW.

Important to know! Due to privacy regulations, the company doctor is NEVER allowed to pass on medical information about the employee/PhD candidate to the supervisor, promoter, co-supervisor and/or daily supervisor. In addition, the employee/ PhD candidate always has the right to read his/her medical file.

Step 4:

In week 8, the salaried PhD candidate, together with the supervisor and co-promoter(s), makes an action plan for reintegration. In the case of long-term absence from paid employment, this is done on the basis of the problem analysis. The action plan states, for example: when someone will return to work (fully or partially), what work (own work or temporarily other tasks) he/she will do, what adjustments are needed, the amount of hours and tasks and responsibilities he/she will take on- until the date on which the PhD candidate returns to full employment.

The salaried PhD candidate has regular meetings with supervisor and co-supervisor(s) to check whether the action plan is still working well. Please be sure to make clear agreements on this too.

Important to know! In case of sick leave of more than 8 weeks, the supervisor and/or co-supervisor should inform the PhD coordinator of the institute. This applies regardless of the type of appointment. The PhD coordinator will not ask for this - so it is advisable for supervisors themselves to keep an eye on the timeline and take the appropriate actions.

Action points regarding accounting for salary costs for PhD students in case of long-term illness

Step 5:

In the case of a salaried appointment, the supervisor and (co)promoter(s) have the responsibility to inform the unit chair, the Institute Manager Finance and Project Control in the event of a PhD candidates **sick leave lasting longer than 4 weeks**.

It is the responsibility of the supervisor and (co)promoter(s) to request the unit chair to change the salary costs of the long-term sick PhD candidate to the section's 1st cash flow, starting from the first day of illness. Subsequent settlement of salary costs through matching is also possible, see below under Note.

NOTE: Due to long-term illness, fewer hours will be written on the project. To still complete the project, the PhD candidates appointment may be extended (budget neutral extension on the project). Booking the salary costs of the PhD candidate during his/her sick leave to the units first money flow will usually be done afterwards. At first instance it appears that the project has gone over budget, but this is then allowed. A shortfall is charged to the unit to match it again. This way the settlement of salary costs is then solved.

However, the PI may see other solutions for spending the funds in order to complete the project as best as possible. In case of long-term sick leave, for example, a replacement may have been found. This of course depends on the design of and possibilities within the project. It is therefore not a given that a PhD trajectory is extended for the time a PhD candidate is ill.

In addition, it should be considered whether the extension of the (PhD) project might involve other additional costs that will ultimately also have to be paid by the unit. It is therefore very important that supervisor, co-promoter(s) and unit chairs keep in constant contact with each other to keep the funding balanced.

Step 6:

As mentioned earlier, it is the responsibility of the supervisor and co-supervisor(s) to guide a PhD candidate in completing his/her PhD trajectory and, in case of long-term illness, to look for the best solution. It is important to discuss the associated obligations, such as the reintegration process, and possible solutions (extension and/or termination of the contract) with the PhD candidate.

Action points regarding T&S plan

Step 7:

It is the responsibility of the (co)supervisor(s) to stay in dialogue with the PhD candidate and monitor how recovery is progressing. Only when the PhD candidate has fully recovered and reintegrated will the Training and Supervision Plan (OBP/ T&S plan) need to be reviewed. This review should focus on the feasibility of the drawn up T&S plan. Revising the planning of the PhD trajectory on the basis of the T&S plan while ensuring feasibility is the responsibility of both the PhD candidate and the supervisor and co-supervisor(s). The PhD mentor can support this. The adapted T&S plan does not have to pass the Science Committee, but must be uploaded in LUCRIS/Converis (LUCRIS offers the possibility to upload several T&S plans).

Step 8:

It is the responsibility of the supervisor and co-supervisor(s) to inform the unit chair, Institutes Manager Finance and PhD coordinator of the PhD candidates return.

Sick leave protocol for unpaid and external PhD candidates

Step 1:

Have you fallen ill? Please report your absence to your supervisor, co-supervisor and daily supervisor as soon as possible.

Important to know! Even though unpaid/external PhD candidates are not employees of the university, it also applies to them that a supervisor, supervisor and co-supervisor(s) cannot ask about the nature or cause of the illness (this is prohibited by law).

Step 2:

Within the first week of reporting sick, the unpaid/external PhD candidate should have a discussion with his/her PhD team about the following aspects:

- How long does he/she expect to be absent?

- Are there any appointments to cancel or take over?
- Can he/she still do certain tasks?
- Where can he/she be reached, when will you make contact again?
- Which member of the supervisory team will be the case manager, and thus the contact person for the PhD candidate?

Each PhD candidate is expected to actively participate in recovery and reintegration (return to work).

It is the PhD candidates responsibility to keep the appointed case manager informed of his/her illness, recovery and potential employability.

Step 3:

If the sick leave lasts longer than four weeks, we recommend timely discussions with the supervising team on how the team can best support the unpaid/external PhD candidate during his/her sick leave. The unpaid/external PhD candidate has regular meetings with his/her supervisor and (co)promoter(s) to check whether the action plan is still feasible and working well. Please make sure to make clear agreements about this.

Important to know! In case of sick leave of more than 8 weeks, the supervisor and/or co-supervisor should inform the PhD coordinator of the institute. This applies regardless of the type of appointment. This is not automatically requested - so it is important to keep an eye on this yourself when applicable.

Step 4:

As mentioned earlier, it is the responsibility of the supervisor and co-supervisor(s) to guide a PhD candidate in completing his/her PhD trajectory and, in case of a long-term absence due to sick leave, to look for the best solution. It is important to discuss the associated obligations and possible solutions with the PhD candidate.

Steps to be taken regarding the T&S plan

Step 5:

It is the responsibility of the (co)supervisor(s) to stay in dialogue with the PhD candidate and monitor how the recovery is progressing. Only when and after the PhD candidate has fully recovered will the Training and Supervision Plan (OBP/ T&S plan) need to be revised. This revision should focus on the feasibility of the drafted T&S plan. Revising the planning of the PhD trajectory based on the T&S plan while ensuring feasibility is the responsibility of both the PhD candidate and the supervisor and co-supervisor(s). The PhD mentor can support this. The adapted T&S plan does not have to be reviewed again by the Science Committee, but must be uploaded in LUCRIS/Converis (LUCRIS offers the possibility to upload several T&S plans).

Step 6:

It is the responsibility of the supervisor and co-supervisor(s) to inform the PhD coordinator of the PhD candidates return.

More information:

- Leiden University:
 - [Sick leave and counselling](#)
 - [Sick leave? This you need to know & do](#)
 - [Company doctor and 'Request advice from company doctor' form](#)
- CAO's (Collective Wage Agreements):
 - [CAO-NU](#): Article 7.2: Illness and incapacity for work, redirects to [ZANU](#)
 - [CAO-OI](#): Article 7.2: Illness and incapacity for work
 - [CAO-UMC](#): Chapter 8: Illness and disability to work
- [Employee Insurance Agency \(UWV\)](#), that pays for various forms of leave