



**December 1, 2011**

### **Important information for foreign doctoral candidates regarding social insurance**

The rules regarding social insurance when a person comes to Sweden are highly complex. In order to be eligible for residence-based benefits, you must normally intend to live in Sweden for more than one year. Exceptions from the 'one-year requirement' may be obtained for EU/EEA (incl. Switzerland) citizens who come to Sweden to work (that is, who are employed here) and, in certain cases, for citizens of other countries who have previously worked within the EU/EEA region.

However, according to this law, a person coming to Sweden to study, does not have a right to these benefits, even if he/she is judged to have been residing in Sweden for more than one year, unless the person has a grant for doctoral studies (utbildningsbidrag) or is a Nordic citizen. (The Nordic Convention supersedes Swedish legislation in some cases). If you are a salaried doctoral student, (or a post-doctoral fellow or have another position as a researcher/teacher), you are to be treated like any other employee. Some uncertainty has arisen here, primarily regarding doctoral students from non-EU/EEA countries. After SULF took a case to the Stockholm Administrative Court of Appeal, (in September 2008), it has now been established that foreign doctoral candidates holding positions are entitled to residency-based benefits in Sweden if they satisfy the requirement of spending more than one year in Sweden.

Despite this, SULF understands that the Social Insurance Office (Försäkringskassan) in some cases still questions the rights of foreign doctoral candidates with employment or grant for doctoral studies to receive residency-based benefits such as child benefit ([barnbidrag](#)) and housing benefit ([bostadsbidrag](#)).

SULF maintains that the Social Insurance Office has misinterpreted the regulations, and we have informed their central office, requesting that they clarify their internal information.

Anyone who is or may in future be affected by this or who would like to know more is welcome to contact Robert Andersson, [ra@sulf.se](mailto:ra@sulf.se). It is normally possible to apply for benefits retroactively even if the application has previously been denied.