

Introduction for PhD students at CeGem

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1. What is CeGem

Cellular and Genetic Medicine (CeGem) is a graduate program within the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences in the University of Copenhagen. The host institute of this program is the Department of Cellular and Molecular Medicine (ICMM), so everyone who is set to be employed as a PhD student in ICMM is encouraged to enroll in CeGem.

In this document, you will find guidelines for the process of enrolling at the PhD school, being a PhD student in CeGem, and living in Copenhagen.

1.1. List of contacts

As a PhD student enrolled in CeGem, should you have any inquiries or issues, feel free to contact any of us. However, the PhD coordinator has the official role of being the go-to contact person for most academic and non-academic issues that you may have. Our contact information is found below.

- Head of CeGem: Lene Juel Rasmussen (lenera@sund.ku.dk)
- PhD coordinator: Hanne Cathrine Bisgaard (hcb@sund.ku.dk)
- PhD students in the CeGem committee:
 - o Andrina J. Stäubli (andrina@sund.ku.dk)
 - o Laura Ryder Tønnesen (laurart@sund.ku.dk)
 - o Lorenzo Povolò (lpovolò@sund.ku.dk)
 - o Maria Molano Fernández (molano@sund.ku.dk)
 - o Hannah Rebecca Schorle (hschorle@sund.ku.dk)
- Other members of the committee:
 - o Claus Desler Madsen (cdesler@sund.ku.dk)
 - o Daniel M. Messerschmidt (danielm@sund.ku.dk)
 - o Héctor Herranz (hherranz@sund.ku.dk)
 - o Jiyoung Kim (jkim@sund.ku.dk)
 - o Katrine Ter-Borch Gram Schjoldager (schjoldager@sund.ku.dk)
- CeGem website: <https://icmm.ku.dk/undervisning/cegem/>
- CeGem Facebook group (for students):
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/600541621571167/>

The members of the CeGem steering group would be very happy to welcome more people to the committee and hear new suggestions that help to improve the PhD program. Do not hesitate to contact us if you want to join us or if you have any helpful input!

2. What to do regarding your PhD

The attached website (<https://healthsciences.ku.dk/phd/>) has all the information regarding the PhD enrolment and other things that are relevant during your PhD, but we have also briefly summarized everything here to make the process smoother.

2.1. PhD application

Once you get the PhD position, you must submit a PhD application to the PhD school. This is necessary not only to be enrolled in the PhD program but also to get the employment contract/offer from HR.

Here is the link with all the information to submit the application: <https://healthsciences.ku.dk/phd/apply/applying/>.

First, you must register as an applicant in the application portal (see link above). Once you have done that, you must fill out several sections, such as:

- Personal and educational/professional information
- Information about the graduate program you are joining
 - o In your case, it is “Cellular and Genetic Medicine”.
- Information about the project
 - o Project description: A proposal of what you plan to do during your PhD. Your supervisor probably has a general idea of what they want you to do, but they may ask you to come up with your own ideas as well. This initial project description is only a starting point for your PhD work. Do not worry if, in the end, you do not exactly stick to your proposal.
 - o Applicants work: Which part of the proposal will be specifically carried out by you?
 - o Ethical considerations: Especially important if your work includes animal or human sample materials.
 - o Risk assessment: How likely is a successful outcome of the project? Are there any alternative approaches? Which ones?
 - o Time and activity schedule: Plan for the next three years in intervals of minimum 6 months.
- Budget information
 - o This includes, for example, the grant (and grant provider) that pays for the salary and other expenses, and the grant (and grant provider) that pays for the tuition fees.
 - o Grants usually have associated “sted” and “alias” numbers, and this is what you must write down on the PhD application. You need to ask your supervisor for these numbers.
- Principal supervisors
 - o You must have at least two principal supervisors, those being a primary supervisor and a primary co-supervisor. You may ask your supervisor if he has an appropriate co-supervisor in mind.

Once everything has been filled out and before submitting, you must ask for approval by different people. These are basically all your supervisors, the head of the PhD program, the head of the department, the head of the workplace, and the guarantor of tuition fees (whoever pays for your tuition fees).

When all these people have approved the application, you can finally submit it. It takes around 2-3 weeks to get approved by the PhD school.

2.2. Requirements to get a PhD

The PhD takes 3 years, but you can either submit before or ask for extensions. The contract is terminated when you submit the thesis, and the defense occurs about 3 months after submitting. People can sometime get a 3-month-long contract for that time if the group/center or ICMM itself can/will pay for the funding, but this happens outside of the PhD agreement.

Teaching or dissemination activities

You must teach or do some sort of dissemination activity (e.g. teaching, poster or oral presentations) a certain amount of hours every year. The number of dissemination hours is decided by the department of your employment. In ICMM, PhD students teach 50 hours per semester for the first 2 years (around 200 hours in total).

When you teach courses to Master or Bachelor students, you must register the hours you have taught. For this, you must fill out a document that is linked in the monthly ICMM Newsletter that you get in your e-mail.

Courses

To be able to graduate, you need to obtain 28-35 ECTS during your PhD. The PhD school offers some courses, but you can also take them elsewhere or online and later ask for approval of external ECTS. It is also possible to get ECTS for attending the ICMM Annual Meeting/Retreat and the CeGem Annual Meeting/Retreat (see section 2.3).

You can choose which courses you take throughout your PhD, but there are two that are compulsory. These are Responsible Conduct of Research 1 and 2. You must take the first one within your first year and the second one within your last year.

Aside from this, ICMM regularly organizes some high-quality PhD courses that you can sign up for. You can check them out on the website below.

The PhD course catalogue of our Graduate School is here: <https://phdcourses.ku.dk/Default.aspx?sitepath=sund&guid=7079483d-8091-4321-bac1-383d2c374ed9>

Here is the website with all the information on courses: <https://healthsciences.ku.dk/phd/phd-courses/>

Aside from the regular PhD courses, employees at UCPH must take a compulsory GDPR course once a year about handling personal data. The course is free, online and takes about an hour. Learn more at <https://kunet.ku.dk/employee-guide/Pages/Safety-and-Emergency-Preparedness/GDPR-course.aspx> (note that the site is only accessible with KU login).

Change of research environment

It is a requirement that you do a change of research environment where you go to a different laboratory, preferably abroad, during at least one month of your PhD. This is something that you discuss with your supervisor(s).

More information here: <https://healthsciences.ku.dk/phd/studyabroad/>

2.3. ICMM and CeGem Annual Meetings

As a PhD student from the CeGem program that works in ICMM, you will be invited to the ICMM and CeGem Annual Meetings. They usually take place back-to-back (from Wednesday to Friday) in late November in Helsingør.

The CeGem Annual Meeting lasts one day (Wednesday) and is compulsory for all PhD students in the CeGem program. The ICMM Annual Meeting lasts two days (Thursday and Friday) and everyone in ICMM is invited.

You get free meals and accommodation during these days and they are great to interact with other PhD students and employees at ICMM. Besides, you get ECTS points for “just” attending, so that is great!

3. Living in Copenhagen

3.1. Housing

The University uses the “Housing Foundation Copenhagen” (<https://housingfoundation.dk/>) to offer some residence options to international students and researchers. Note that PhD students are considered to be “staff” rather than “students”. The Housing Foundation offers rooms or studios in several areas within Copenhagen. Some options are more expensive than others. The rental contracts can last for up to one year.

As an alternative to the Housing Foundation, a lot of people choose to first move to BaseCamp (<https://www.basecampstudent.com/locations/denmark/copenhagen-city/>). BaseCamp has residence halls located in the center of Copenhagen, at the South Campus, and in Lyngby. Most people choose the one in the center of Copenhagen. BaseCamp offers from single or shared rooms to studios. Everything is quite expensive, but the place has nice additions such as a gym or cinema room that you do not have to pay extra for.

After 6 months or 1 year in a residence, people tend to move to a shared apartment. You can find an apartment through Facebook or several websites (see list below), but you must be aware of scams.

- <https://www.boligportal.dk/en/>
- <https://www.lejebolig.dk/>
- <https://www.findroommate.dk/rent-a-room-in-copenhagen>
- <https://www.dba.dk/boliger/lejebolig> - DBA is a very good website (only in Danish) where people sell all sorts of things. This can also be used to find a room.

Extra tip when applying for rooms in shared flats: Many young Danish people live in a so-called kollektiv, which basically means having roommates who are also your friends. Most of them spend quite some time together, that is, they might eat together and do activities as a group. Therefore, they appreciate a personalized application with lots of pictures that show them with whom they would be living with. However, getting a spot in a Kollektiv can be challenging, especially if you do not speak Danish.

Lastly, just note that before moving in you usually have to pay a substantial amount of money as a deposit (around 1-3 months worth of rent), so you should take this into account when deciding on a place to live.

3.2. Opening a bank account

Opening a bank account is somewhat easy when you already have a job. Most banks require a valid photo ID, a CPR number (see section 4.2 if you come from abroad), a proof of address (e.g. electricity bills, rental contract) and an employment contract.

Some of the most common banks in Denmark are Danske Bank, Nordea Bank and Arbejdernes Landsbank. Registration and all communication with banks is usually done online here.

International staff mobility (<https://ism.ku.dk/>) can give you a fast track link to open a bank account at Danske Bank, because sometimes it takes a while for foreigners to be processed by the banks.

3.3. Transportation

Bikes

People usually move around the city with bikes. You can choose to either use a rental bike or buy a new/second-hand bike.

- Rental bikes: Swapfiets (<https://swapfiets.dk/en-DK>) is a good option to get a rental bike when you first arrive to Copenhagen.
- Second-hand bikes: There are plenty of bike shops around Copenhagen where you can get a second-hand (or even new) bike. Buddha Bikes is a nice option. You can also check DBA (<https://www.dba.dk/>) for used bikes. However, make sure you do not buy a stolen bike. You can use this link to check this: <https://politi.dk/cykler-og-koeretoer/tjek-om-en-cykel-eller-et-koeretoer-er-efterlyst/tjek-om-en-cykel-er-efterlyst>.

Public transport

To use buses, trains or metro in Denmark, you can buy tickets at the stations, on the DOT app, or you can also get a Rejsekort (https://www.rejsekort.dk/?sc_lang=en). Getting a Rejsekort is recommended, as you get a discount for every trip. Besides, a personal Rejsekort allows you to have automatic money refill, so you do not need to refill manually when you are low on balance.

3.4. Learning Danish

People in Denmark are usually fluent in English, so you can get around the city without any Danish knowledge. However, it is nice to attempt to learn the language anyway. There are several language schools here, such as Clavis,, Speak, Studieskolen, UCplus...

- Some of these schools are private and have a fee (e.g. Studieskolen).
- Other schools are paid for by the government, meaning that they are free (e.g. Clavis, Speak, UCplus). You just need to pay a deposit that is returned to you after completing a module or exam.
 - Speak, for example, offers free courses at the university, including Panum, so you do not have to commute (<https://speakpeak.dk/danish-courses/danish-courses-at-ucph/>).

3.5. Places to eat and/or drink

Copenhagen has many cool places to eat and drink, even though they can get quite expensive. Below there is a list with some recommendations:

Drinks

- BRUS – Large selection of beers. Close to Panum.
- Nørrebro Bryghus – Beers. Close to Panum.
- Léanowski Bar – Beers and Shots. Close to Panum.
- Sorte Frikant – Cocktails and other drinks. Close to Panum and the Lakes.
- Taphouse - Really good selection of beers. Close to City Hall.

Food

- Bæst – Great pizzas. Close to Panum.
- Mæxico - Mexican food. There is one close to Panum but there are others around the city.
- Ramen To Biiru - Ramen. There is one in Nørrebro close to Panum but there are others around the city.
- Mosob Restaurant - Ethiopian food. Close to Panum.
- Bahn-Mi - Vietnamese sandwiches. Close to Panum.
- Gaza Grill - Arabic food. Close to Panum.
- Durum Symfoni - In Nørrebro, close to Panum.
- Sund Sult - Healthy food. In Nørrebro, close to Panum

3.6. Gym and sports

Gym at Panum

There is a small gym in Panum, in building 22.6 (building 22, 6th floor). They have machines and free weights, as well as some classes like yoga, strength or circle training. The gym is open 24/7 and there is a changing room with showers.

The gym is available for all employees at Panum, and you just have to contact them by e-mail to sign up and gain access to the facilities. It only costs 90 DKK per month, paid directly every trimester (270 DKK every 3 months) from your salary.

The website for the gym is this one (note that the site is only accessible with KU login): <https://kunet.ku.dk/medarbejderguide/lokalinfo/undersider/Sider/SUND/HR/Motionsforeninge.aspx?fbclid=IwAR37jGFkxtQmheKWH3RRxbksM-NHc6sChtxuEBwYCtsiFfG5CL9h5sexEY>

They also have a Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/125522488092147>

Normally you can contact Michael Sørensen (mso@sund.ku.dk) for more information on how to sign up.

KU Student Sport Activities (KSI)

The university has a sports association that offers more than 65 different sport disciplines to all students at KU. Check <https://www.kustudenteridraet.dk/> for more information.

These activities are offered during the main season (August - April) or the summer season (April - August), and training is usually on a weekly basis.

The yearly membership (September - August) costs 180 DKK, while a summer membership costs 80 DKK (April - August). As previously mentioned, PhD students are considered to be staff, not students, and therefore we have to pay an additional non-student fee. There is also a sign-up fee for each specific activity that you want to join (maximum 1000 DKK).

Other fitness centers

The University of Copenhagen staff and students can obtain discounts at a number of fitness centers in and around Copenhagen (Loop Fitness, SATS and ARCA). Check <https://kunet.ku.dk/employee-guide/Pages/HR/Fitness.aspx> (note that the site is only accessible with KU login) for more information.

Alternatively, you can just sign up to other fitness centers without a KU discount, such as Fitness Center.

3.7. KU and CeGem social events

Studenterhuset

Studenterhuset (<https://studenterhuset.com/>) is a “house” for students that organizes many different activities and parties for students. They are located in central Copenhagen and you can also go there to have coffee, a drink or a snack, aside from attending their events.

KU Festival

The university organizes a yearly outdoor festival in late May or early June (<https://kufestival.dk/en/>). They organize several concerts and there are bars and food trucks for eating and drinking. Note that only students and employees at the university are allowed and you must bring your KU card to access.

CeGem Friday Beers

The PhD students from the committee organize Friday Beers on Friday afternoons that consist of a short talk followed by beer and pizza. This is a nice event to connect with other fellow PhD students from the program and get free food and drinks, so consider joining!

4. What to do if you come from abroad

4.1. Obtaining a residence permit

INTERNATIONAL STAFF MOBILITY

Upon finalization of your employment offer you will be contacted by some from International Staff Mobility (<https://ism.ku.dk/>) at the University who will guide you through the registration process in Denmark. We recommend signing up to their introduction meeting for new KU employees where they tell you everything about registration, taxation, insurance, banking, the Danish language, and more.

NORDIC CITIZENS

Nordic citizens have it easier. They can enter, live, study and work in Denmark without a visa or residence permit.

EU/EEA/SWISS CITIZENS

EU/EEA citizens can live in Denmark according to special regulations and they must apply for EU residence document when they first arrive to Denmark.

To get the EU residence document, you must book an in-person appointment at one of the SIRI offices. You will have to:

1. Bring your passport or national ID card
2. Fill out the so-called OD1 form
3. Bring documentation relevant for the grounds of residence (i.e. your employment contract or a declaration by your employer).

Check this website for more information on how to get the EU residence document:
<https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB/You-want-to-apply/Residence-as-a-Nordic-citizen-or-EU-or-EEA-citizen/EU-employee?anchor=canyouapply>

NON-EU/EEA/SWISS CITIZENS

Non-EU/EEA/Swiss citizens must apply for a residence permit to stay in Denmark. The process is a bit different for people who are coming already employed as a PhD student.

For this, you must first create a case order ID and pay the fee (1890 DKK). Then, you can proceed to the application for the residence permit. Both you and the educational institution will need to fill out the PHD1 application form, but in any case, you will have to provide:

1. Documentation of paid fee
2. Copy of all pages of your passport
3. Documentation that you have been enrolled in a Danish educational institution
4. Employment contract or employment offer

Check this website for more information on how to get the residence permit as a PhD student:
<https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB/You-want-to-apply/Phd>

4.2. CPR number and health insurance (“yellow” card)

CPR number

Everyone living in Denmark must have a civil registration number, also known as CPR number. It is required for pretty much everything: opening a bank account, accessing health insurance, paying taxes, receiving a salary...

To have a CPR number, you must plan to live in Denmark for more than 3 months, have an EU residence document or residence permit, and have a place to live (valid address) in Denmark. Note that you will have to find a place to live that allows you to register the address in the CPR system. A student accommodation or apartment (with a contract that clearly states that you can register the address for your CPR number) is best, but in some cases AirBnBs work as well (ask your landlord about CPR registration).

For more information on the CPR number, including the website to apply for it, visit <https://international.kk.dk/cpr-number>.

Health insurance (“yellow”) card

About 2-3 weeks after applying for the CPR number, you will receive your health insurance card (also called yellow card). Note that you will receive a “temporary” yellow card already when meeting the authorities to use while you wait for the other one. In any case, you need this yellow card to go to the doctor, dentist, hospital, and even to borrow books from the library. It is pretty much used as an ID in Denmark.

The yellow card is assigned to your general practitioner. This one is assigned to you according to the address of residence, but there is so much demand that you could have the GP at the other side of Copenhagen. You can change it whenever you want but you must pay a fee. Alternatively, you can change it for free every time you move to another place.

Furthermore, the app “Sundhedskortet” has been introduced as an alternative to the physical card and should be able to replace it in most places.

4.3. MitID

A MitID is a secure log-in solution for mostly Danish online banks and government websites. You can obtain your MitID from home with your passport or in a citizen service center. Check this website for more information: <https://www.mitid.dk/en-gb/>.

5. Other useful apps and websites

Denmark is a really digitalized country. You can find an app or a website for almost everything you might need. Here is a list of some useful apps or websites you might want to download:

- MitID - Mentioned in section 4.3.
- <https://www.e-boks.com/danmark/da> - To read official mail. Almost all physical mail has been replaced with digital solutions, unless you specifically opt out of it.
- <https://www.borger.dk/> - Here you will find all useful forms and information about your life in DK (e.g. moving, health insurance).
- <https://www.skat.dk/> - Here you will be able to adjust your taxes and see your current status.
- Betalingsservice - You can pay most bills through this service, which you can also access through your online banking.
- MobilePay - Super smart money transfer system that absolutely everyone uses. It requires a Danish telephone number and a bank account.
- Sundhedskortet - Your yellow card, but digital.
- MinSundhed - App that contains all your data on health.
- Medicinkortet - Here you can see medical prescriptions from your GP or specialized doctors
- DOT Tickets - Public transport ticket app for the Capital area
- Rejseplanen - Very accurate app on current status of public transportation and timetables.
- PostNord - If you are waiting for parcels or letters, you can see them coming here
- DBA - As mentioned above, DBA is a sort of thrift shop where everything can be on sale
- Free Your Stuff Copenhagen, on Facebook - Really cool Facebook group where people give away furniture, clothes and other things for free.