

New PhDs,
WELCOME TO
THE UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

NYE STIPENDIATER,
ELKOMMEN TIL
UNIVERSITETET I OSLO



UiO • **Department of Biosciences**
University of Oslo



UiO • **Department of Biosciences**
University of Oslo

Dear new PhD candidate,

We are so glad to have you with us at the Department of Biosciences! We want to make your transition as easy as possible, so here is some information to help you get settled as a UiO employee, as a PhD candidate, and as a newcomer in Norway for those of you who are not Norwegian. If you have any questions about anything, please visit me, the PhD Student Advisor, in office 1134.

Best from,

Anna Mazzarella
PhD student Advisor
Department of Biosciences
University of Oslo

Tel.: +47 22 85 72 67

Room no.: 1134

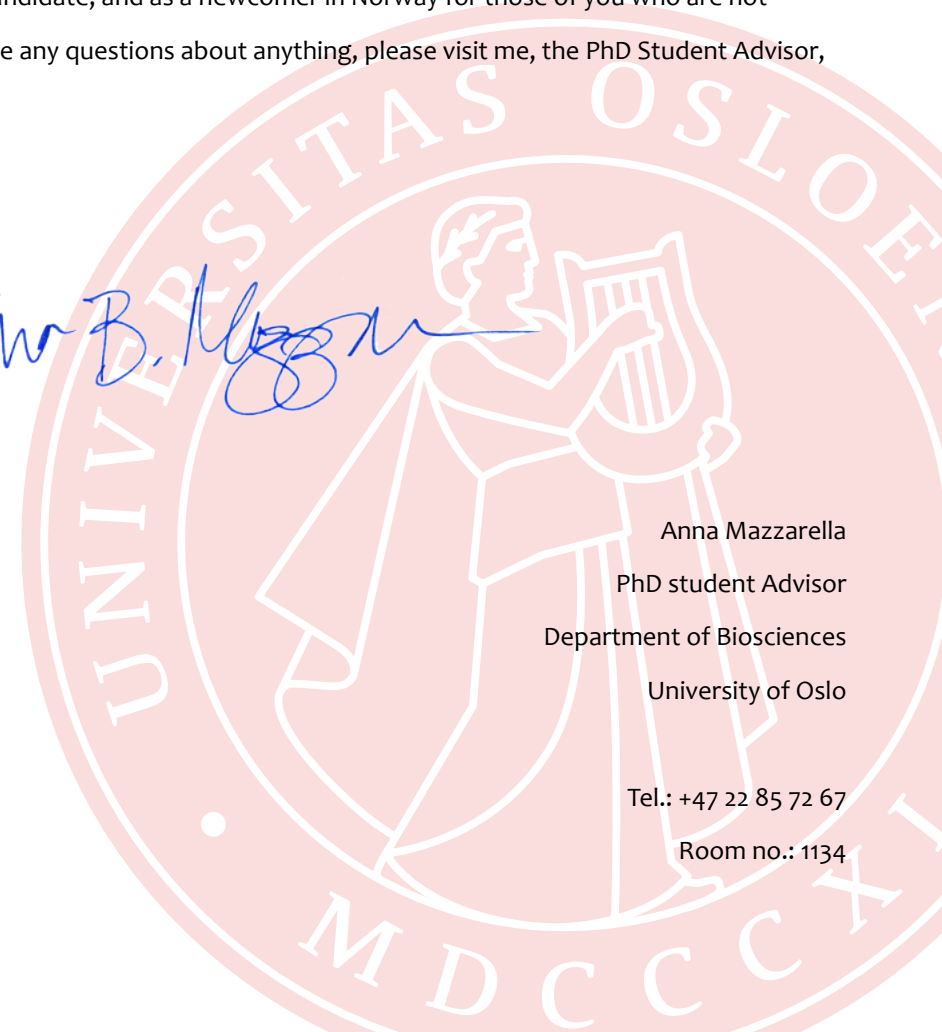




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WORKING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OSLO



ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT

The Department of Biosciences (IBV) is part of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (MN) and was established on Jan 1, 2013, following the merge of the Departments of Molecular Biosciences and Biology. IBV has 5 sections:

1. **AQUA:** Aquatic Biology and Toxicology
2. **EVOGENE:** Genetics and Evolutionary Biology
3. **CEES:** Centre for Ecological and Evolutionary Synthesis
4. **BMB:** Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
5. **FYSCCELL:** Physiology and Cell Biology

Although the sections have some of their own events and seminars, there are lots of joint activities as well, and a lot of collaboration between the sections.

The Department has about 340 employees, including 42 professors, 90 researchers and associate professors, about 120 PhD students, around 50 postdocs, and more than 60 administrative and technical staff. There are also almost 600 students in bachelors and master's programs.

Our building is **Kristine Bonnevie Hus**, found at Blindernveien 31, but with the main entrance facing Moltke Moes Vei. Our building is named after Kristine Bonnevie, who was Norway's first female professor and the first female member of the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters. She became a professor of Zoology in 1912.

IBV has a lot to offer our PhD students. We have our own Norwegian Sequencing Center, we have Animal and Plant facilities, we have several research stations (Finse Alpine Research Center and Marine Research Station Drøbak), our own research vessel in the Oslo Fjord, and many different specialized laboratories such as the NorMIC imaging node.



GETTING SET UP

Your contract: You have in all likelihood already signed your contract, but if not make sure your name is registered the Norwegian way, or in other words with your given name first and surname/family name last to make sure your publications will be registered properly.

To get your employee card: Go to SIO Kundeservice in Kristian Ottosens hus, Problemveien 9 (SIOsenteret) which is on the back side of the book store Akademika (see photo below). See page 41 (the last page) for a campus map. They are normally open from 10:00-15:00.

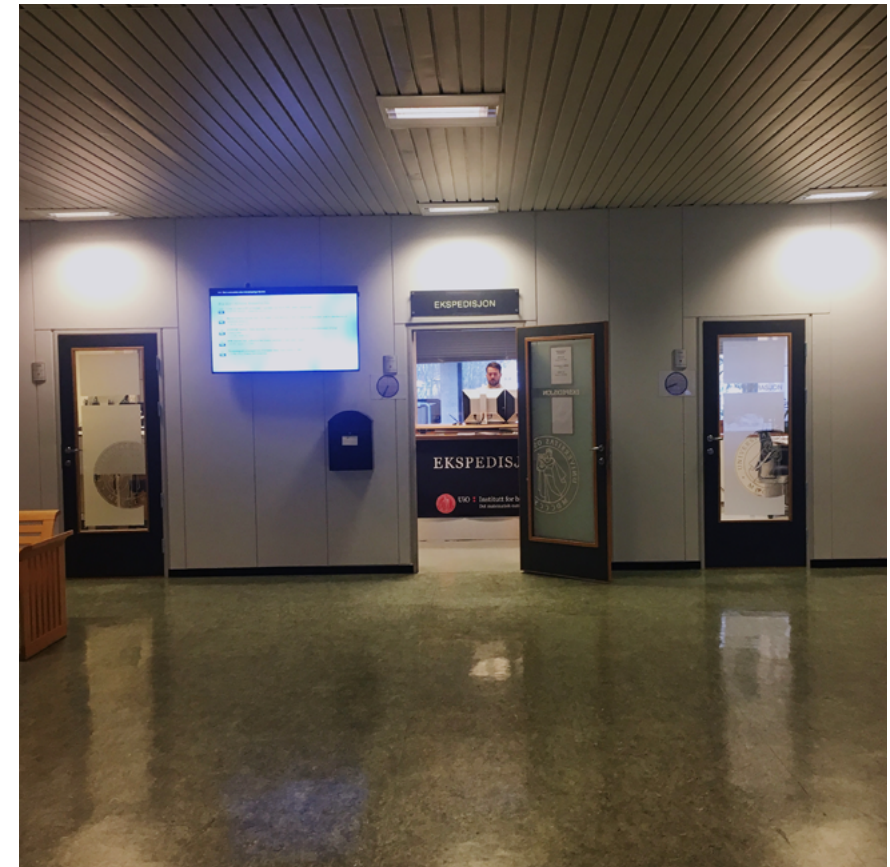
Remember to bring an ID, such as your passport or bank card with photo ID.

If you are from abroad, you will need to get your Norwegian personal number or D-number before you can get an ID card (see page 29).



To get office space: This is different for every section, so ask your supervisor who will arrange this for you.

To get your office keys: Go to the reception (Ekspedisjon) on the first floor of Kristine Bonnevis Hus (see photo below).



To get a computer: Your supervisor is responsible for making sure you have a computer, as such IT will need confirmation from your supervisor to order your computer for you. IT is on the first floor (room 1150). They can suggest a computer for you based on the programs you will be running. UiO supports both PC and mac platforms.

To get a username and email address: This will happen automatically after your contract gets approved and you get your employee card, but visit IT (room 1150) with your UiO employee card to get your username and password.

E-MAIL & MAILING LISTS

UiO now uses outlook web mail which is found at: mail.uio.no

If you search for “Webmail at UiO” on the UiO web pages you’ll find a good help page.

Of course a lot of people will choose to use an email client. The supported clients at UiO sometimes change, but IT can help you set up the one that is recommended when you get your computer. Usually these are more stable than the webmail.

Once your email is set up, it’s very important to get on the right **mailing lists!** You can do this through Sympa, which is found at sympa.uio.no/ibv.uio.no. Go to “my lists” and you can see what you are signed up for. Search for lists or go to the main index to make sure you are not missing any of these critical ones:

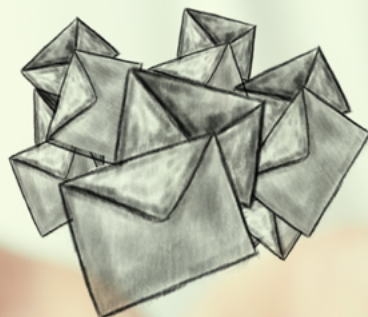
ansatte@mn.uio.no - All employees at the MN faculty

alle@ibv.uio.no - Everyone at the biosciences department

stipendiater@ibv.uio.no - All PhD students at IBV

phd-forum@ibv.uio.no - Events for PhDs connected to IBV

Your section will likely have other important mailing lists, so check the full list or check with your supervisor and other PhD students in your section about what else to add.



MAIL (THE OLD FASHIONED KIND)

Your “snail mail” arrives to the **mail room (postrom)** which is next door to the reception (Ekspedisjon) on the first floor (room 1116). Check every once in a while, because they throw away all unclaimed mail once or twice a year.

There are also **postage-paid envelopes for outgoing post** in the cupboards beneath the mail boxes in the mail room for work-related letters. The outgoing mailbox is also in the mail room, just inside the door.



HR PORTAL

The HR portal (found under “for employees”: [/hr-portalen.uio.no/irj/portal](https://hr-portalen.uio.no/irj/portal)) is where you:

- **Register your vacation.** You don't *have* to register your working hours, although it is recommended (please see page 18 for more on this), but you have to register your vacation time.
- Find your **pay slips** (under Salary Information).
- Register **reimbursements** for trips, conferences, and other expenses - this is fully digital, so you should scan your receipts and then attach them under “attachments” on the first page of the form when you create a new reimbursement.
- Check that the **personal information** registered about you is correct - including your address and other contact information. This is important to keep up to date!

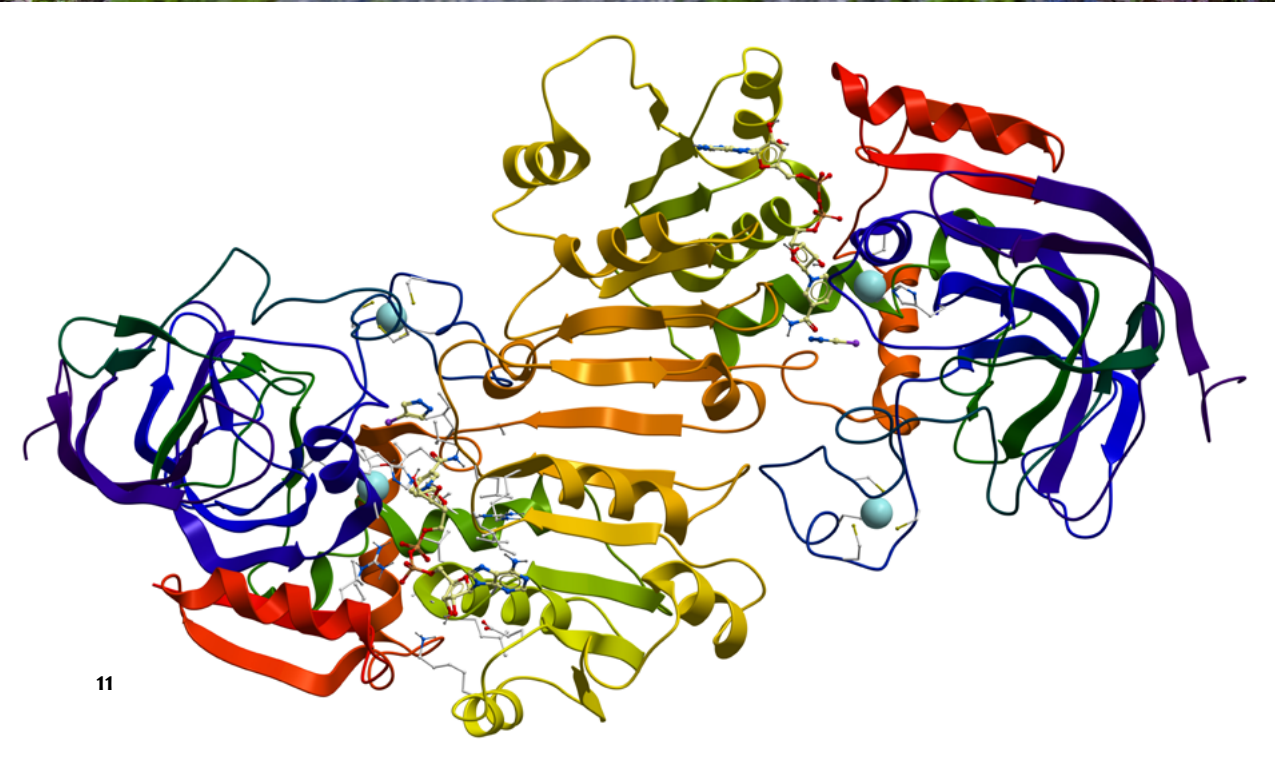


BOOKING TRAVEL

Simple trips can be booked using UiO's travel agency Egencia's online portal. This web page which will link you to Egencia's portal and also explain more complex bookings, which can be made over email: www.uio.no/english/for-employees/employment/travel/booking/ To log in, use your UiO username and password.



PHD PROGRAM



PHD PROGRAM & PROGRESSION

The PhD program at UiO is three years, some positions having also a fourth year of teaching (see page 16). The basics of the program are that it has an educational component (30 credits) and a thesis. The degree is awarded after an examination, which consists of a trial lecture and a public defense of the thesis. Your first step is to **apply for admission** to the program, which is something you should work on with your supervisor and deliver to the PhD advisor within three months of starting your contract. A more detailed overview of the program:

COURSES, REPORTS & FORMS

Courses

You have to take 30 credits, 5 of which must be an ethics course at UiO called Science, Ethics and Society which is held every semester. You can take external courses, but you might not be awarded the same number of credits that the external university says the course is worth, so for best results come tell the PhD advisor in advance when you plan to take external courses.

To sign up for a UiO course, you have to register using **StudentWeb** (studentweb.uio.no) during the registration period. For the fall semester this begins June 1st, and for the spring semester it is December 1st. Registration deadlines vary year to year based on when classes start, but registration is always open for at least one month. Sign up as early as possible to ensure you get a place in the courses you want. If you cannot sign up for a course through StudentWeb and it's during the registration period, send an email to the PhD advisor, Torill, or Lise (see page 39). Some courses have only manual registration so they will have to sign you up.

If you change the courses you plan to take from your original application, you have to submit a *Changing of Theoretical Curriculum* form. You can do this after you have taken the new course.



PHD PROGRAM & PROGRESSION

3rd/5th/7th Semester Evaluations

These are progress evaluations done in the 3rd, 5th and (optional) 7th semesters of your PhD, organized by your supervisor. The goal of these is to make sure your progress is on track and help you with any problems or roadblocks that have come up. For these evaluations, you will give a presentation about your progress to a committee of two researchers who are not your supervisors. The presentation or a written report should be given to the committee ahead of time so they can be best prepared to advise you. Your supervisors should also be present. You will also be able to talk to the committee without your supervisors present in case there is anything you would like to talk about that you would like to keep private from your supervisors. The committee will give a written report to the PhD advisor, who will take care of any follow-up if needed.

Change of Supervisor

It is not usually necessary to change your supervisors, but if you must do this (most often this would be adding a new supervisor, or removing a co-supervisor who has moved elsewhere) you can do so by submitting a *Change of Supervisors* form. You need the signatures of all your old and all your new supervisors to do this.

Extention

If your PhD contract is running out but you're not done yet, you should apply for your agreement with the University to be extended. This only extends your student rights, not your salary, but it's important in terms of keeping access to your email and to UiO's online resources. For this you have to submit a form called *Extension of contract*.



PHD PROGRAM & PROGRESSION

THE THESIS

Thesis submission

Your thesis needs to amount to three years of full time work. The rule of thumb is three first author papers, but for example one huge first author paper in a very good journal, if it amounts to three years of work, would be enough for a thesis. You may also include papers where you are not first author. Aside from the articles/manuscripts, your thesis needs a separate introduction where you are the sole author. Feel free to ask the PhD advisor for some examples to look at. When you are done with that, there's some paperwork involved in submitting your thesis. This information is on IBV's internal web pages (see page 18).

Evaluation

You get a written evaluation of your thesis several weeks before the defense date. It might be accepted as is, or you might be asked to make minor or more extensive changes.

Trial Lecture

Ten working days before your defense date you will get your trial lecture topic given by your committee. You have two weeks to make a 45 minute lecture on this topic. You give the trial lecture the morning of the defense day.

Defense

After your trial lecture, you will typically have a lunch break, and after that you will give a 30 minute talk on your own thesis. After your talk, your first opponent puts the work into an international context, and then the defense begins. It's a good idea to go to defenses during your time as a PhD candidate to get familiar with what to expect at your own.



TEACHING DUTIES (FOR THOSE WITH 4 YEAR CONTRACTS)

If you have teaching duties, you have an extra year of contract in exchange for 1 year of teaching at UiO. If you don't have teaching duties but want them, come talk to the PhD advisor - it is possible to be awarded an extra year if the department is in need of teachers.

One full year of teaching is 1690 hours, so your goal is about 1600 hours.

You will be asked each semester which upcoming courses for the next semester you want to/ are qualified to teach, and these lists will be sent out to the professors in charge of the courses, who will contact you directly about teaching. We try to make sure that everyone who wants to be teaching is teaching every semester, so if you are not contacted, please tell the PhD advisor so we can help find something for you.

Your **target for every semester** should be 200-250 hours. You are not required to teach in your final semester so that you can focus on finishing up.

Remember to keep track of your own hours! The hours are reported by the professors in charge of each course after the semester's end, but of course mistakes can be made, so make sure you know how much you have been teaching so we catch any mistakes.



OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE

The **Library** is across the street from Kristine Bonnevis hus, and is open for everyone. If your office becomes a bit too social and you need a quiet place to work, they have lots of study spaces for you to use. The Science Library is in Vilhelm Bjerknes' Hus, a little further down from the main library (see page 41). They can also lend you laptops, chargers, iPads, calculators and more. UiO have access to thousands of journals, and all you have to do to get access is to be on UiO's internet. To access them at home, you might have to use Remote Desktop or UiO's **Program Kiosk** (where you also have access to computer programs such as Adobe Acrobat Pro, Photoshop and Illustrator.)

The **Instrument Workshop (Instrumentverksted)** provides services in mechanical construction and production. They can create tailor-made equipment and instruments for anyone working in the MN Faculty. Their expertise includes fine mechanics, plastics, electronics and electromechanics, soldering and welding, vacuum pumps, and they have a lot of equipment including a 3D-printer. If you are in need of custom technical equipment, this is the place to go.



IMPORTANT LINKS

Our IBV web page for PhD students (www.mn.uio.no/ibv/forskning/phd/) has a lot of important and practical links for PhD students, such as:

- Links to all of the **Faculty web pages** where they have information, instructions and the **forms** you need for all the different aspects of the PhD program, from applying to the program to submitting your thesis.
- Information on **time management, stress management and project management**. For example, there is a yearly course at UiO for PhD students on stress management. (The announcement will be sent out to the PhD email list whenever the course is available for signing up.) There are also lots of online resources on these topics listed on the web page too.
- Information on **3rd and 5th Semester Evaluations**
- Detailed instructions for **submitting your thesis**
- Tips for **where to look for jobs after your PhD**
- Additionally we have some **external links** that might be useful for PhD students such as **PhD On Track**, a resource made by the University libraries in Oslo, Bergen and Aalborg which has information about scientific literature and publishing.

Don't forget to check out the **Faculty's PhD pages** (www.mn.uio.no/forskning/phd/) as well for key Faculty-wide events, social media, and other resources.



LEGAL INFO: YOUR RIGHTS AS A UiO EMPLOYEE



WORKING HOURS

Regulation of **working hours** for employees in scientific posts at the University of Oslo is different than it is for other government jobs in Norway. As research demands flexible hours, you do not have ordinary working hours mandated. PhD students should work 37.5 hours per week, but there are no regulations that state when those hours must be, other than that you may not exceed 13 hours of working time per 24 hours. PhD students as a “particularly independent post” are also exempt from ordinary overtime as this is considered part of the flexible working time. It is up to you to make sure you do not work overtime if you choose not to. This is why it is recommended for you to keep track of your working hours in the HR portal, because otherwise it can be very hard to tell how much overtime you have been working, and therefore how much extra time off you should take in compensation (if you so choose).

It might seem that 37.5 hours a week is not enough time to finish a PhD in three years, and it's true that many do work overtime even though it is unpaid. However making sure to take enough time off from working helps you to be mentally healthy and productive, which will pay off in the long run. If you work through evenings, weekends and vacations for a long period of time, you risk burning out, which will stop your progress entirely.

In the case of circumstances beyond your control that have significantly hindered your progress, please come talk to the PhD advisor about whether you can get a short salary extension from the Faculty to enable you to finish your thesis.



UNIONS

There are several unions you can join as a PhD student in Norway. The biggest ones relevant for you are Forskerforbundet, Tekna, and Akademikerne, but there are many others. They have offers on travel insurance, they offer free legal advice, and they also have courses you can take as a member. Some even offer homeowners loans with interest below what the banks can offer you. It can be very advantageous to join a union as a PhD student, especially if you are interested in improving the working conditions for all PhD students throughout Norway. This UiO web page has more information: www.uio.no/english/for-employees/employment/trade-unions/



HOLIDAYS

All employees (you included!) have the right AND obligation to take holidays provided you have qualified for holiday pay.

The first year of your employment you will not qualify for full holiday pay (unless you were previously employed in Norway), but you still have the right to take unpaid holidays if you want to. You are entitled to 25 days (5 weeks) of vacation per year. Most supervisors are flexible about when you take your holidays, but check with them before making any concrete plans, and remember that you have to register your holidays in the HR portal.

General and public holidays are work-free days in addition to holidays. The easiest way to find out which days these are each year is to go to norskkalender.no - the weekdays in red are holiday days, where there will probably be almost no one at work.

The full rules and regulations are online here: www.uio.no/english/for-employees/employment/working-hours-and-absence/holiday/



SICK LEAVE

You are entitled to sick leave from your doctor from the first day you begin work here (are physically present). “Egenmelding” or sick days without a doctor’s note can be used after you’ve been working at UiO for two months.



In cases of sick leave which is **more** than two consecutive weeks (so 16 days or more), your employment period is extended by a period equivalent to the sick leave period. You will need to visit your doctor to get this. Sick leave is registered automatically, so any sick leave that your doctor registers goes directly to either HR, your advisor, or the section leader.

It is recommended that you discuss your sick leave with your supervisors and possibly our HR representative Ann Elisabeth Mellbye, so that they are updated about the situation and so that you can have a plan for your re-entry when your sick leave ends. If you are on 100% sick leave, it is important that you not work during that time, as it is not legal.

PARENTAL LEAVE

You are entitled to parental leave if you have been working in Norway for at least 6 months before the leave is due to happen. Remember to send notice to the Parental Leave team by week 24 of your pregnancy (or 12 weeks before the start of your leave if you are going to be a father, co-mother, or are adopting a child). Everything you need to know is on this UiO web page: www.uio.no/english/for-employees/employment/working-hours-and-absence/leave-absence/parents/ including checklists and descriptions of your rights and obligations.



EXTRA:

Other types of leave: There are other situations where you might be entitled to leave, such as Family Care leave, Educational leave, or Compassionate leave. More information about this: www.uio.no/english/for-employees/employment/working-hours-and-absence/leave-absence/

Electric cars: If you need to use a car during work hours (for work) you can use an electric car for free! Check it out: www.uio.no/english/for-employees/operational/transport/move-about/

There is a lot of information about **health care** for UiO employees if you search for the page “Health services” (www.uio.no/english/about/jobs/ismo/while-in-oslo/health/). Anyone formally employed by a Norwegian employer automatically becomes a member of the Norwegian National Health Scheme on their first day of work (for more information see page 35). A lot of people find SiO Helse, the SiO health services, to be very convenient as the offices are on or close to campus.

Dental Care for adults is mainly private, ask your friends or colleagues to recommend a good, affordable dentist.



Employee benefits are also detailed on a page called “employee benefits” (www.uio.no/english/for-employees/employment/welfare/). Some of the most useful are:

- UiO allows you to spend up to 1.5 hours per week of your work hours on physical exercise. In addition you can become a member of SIO Athletica for reduced rates, they have five fitness centers around Oslo including one on Blindern campus.
- UiO offers its staff members 157 day care places in two employee day cares (in Norwegian: **barnehage**). Keep in mind the application period is 1 Feb - 1 March.
- UiO’s Committee for Cultural and Social Activities (KVU) organizes cultural and social events for UiO employees such as concerts and parties.

FOR THOSE COMING FROM ABROAD

REGISTERING

You will have to **register** with the Norwegian authorities if you are not a Norwegian citizen. How much work this is depends on whether you come from an EU/EEA country or not. If you do, it is quite straightforward. If not, there is more paperwork involved because you will need a visa, and you must apply for that from **UDI**, the department of immigration. The **Service Center for Foreign Workers** in downtown Oslo (see photo below) is a one-stop-shop where foreign workers can complete all official registration at a single office in a (somewhat) efficient and timely manner.

Go to the web page for the “Service Center for Foreign Workers” to find out exactly what you need to do based on your citizenship, and how to do it: www.sua.no/en

Special note on taxes: If you have moved to Norway for this job, you will need to apply for a **tax deduction card** (you can do this at the Service Center for Foreign Workers). Until the Norwegian Tax Administration has provided you with a tax card, you will be taxed at 50%. This will of course be paid back when your tax card is provided.



HOUSING

Oslo is unfortunately in a bit of a housing crisis as there are not enough accommodations for everyone who wants to live here. Still, most Norwegians buy rather than rent, so the rental market is not as cutthroat as you might imagine. There are a few places to look for apartments:

Finn.no and **hybel.no** are the two main web sites with listings of apartments for rent that you can search through. If you don't speak Norwegian, use the Chrome browser's built in google translate function, it works extremely well for translating Norwegian to English.

Both Finn and Hybel have an option where you write a short biography of yourself and what you're looking for, and people can come to you with offers of apartments. This tends to work extremely well for our PhD students because people prefer more responsible renters.

It can be hard to find an apartment in Oslo from abroad, but if you are worried about coming to Oslo and having nowhere to stay, try renting short-term accommodation for researchers through UiO, or using overnatting.no or [air BnB](http://airBnB) to rent a room for the first few weeks or month. Once you are in Oslo, it is possible to find an apartment quite quickly. Many of the apartments listed are available immediately.

Employees hired for at least one year can apply for a salary advance (www.uio.no/english/for-employees/employment/welfare/loan/) to cover the deposit for a private rental, which can be substantial.



GETTING TO WORK

There is lots of public transportation that will get you to Blindern campus, including the subway/t-bane (lines 4 and 5), the tram/trikk (lines 17 and 18) and many buses (those that come closest to us in Kristine Bonnevis Hus are numbers 20, 25, 28, 120, 345, and 435). If you are in doubt, check Ruter.no or Google Maps which know all the Oslo public transport and can tell you the best way to get anywhere in Oslo.

The easiest way to buy tickets is with the smart phone app called RuterBillett, but they can also be bought at ticket machines (at all t-bane stops), 7-Eleven, and Narvesen.

Also check out RuterReise, an app that will tell you when the bus/t-bane/tram is coming in real time, and can help you plan your journey.



BANK ACCOUNT

After you have your Norwegian personal number, you can open a bank account. You'll need your passport to open a bank account in Norway, and a residential address in Norway. They will also want to see your work contract and some banks also want a passport photo.

There are many choices, so if you are picky then do some googling, but the most popular are:

- DnB (dnb.no): This is the most popular bank in Norway, but it takes a long time to open an account because you have to make an appointment at one of their physical locations, of which they only have a few. Make an appointment as far in advance as possible if you choose DnB. Online banking and their smart phone app are available in English, which makes them a popular choice with non-Norwegians.
- Nordea (nordea.no): This is Norway's largest and second most popular bank. Online banking is only in Norwegian, but the smart phone app is available in English.
- S'banken (sbanken.no): This is an online-only bank, so you can make an account online, meaning it is quite fast to get an account. Their online banking is however in Norwegian only.
- Danske Bank (danskebank.no): This bank is known to be the most helpful if you need to open a bank account don't yet have your Norwegian personal number, but they also only have internet banking in Norwegian.



All these banks have various fees for accounts, debit and credit cards, etc., but they are not wildly different. Chrome browser's built in google translate function is good enough that you can probably get away with Norwegian language online banking if the wait times at DnB are too long for you.

DRIVERS LICENSE

Driver's licenses from EU/EEA countries are valid in Norway.

From non-EU/EEA countries, the rules vary by country. Some countries can exchange their license for a Norwegian one, but must do so within 12 months to avoid additional requirements. Keep in mind that it costs more than 20,000 nok to complete the drivers license in Norway if you miss this deadline and have to do it from scratch. To find out the rules for your country, check this page: www.vegvesen.no/en/driving-licences/driving-licence-holders/foreign-driving-licences-in-norway



LANGUAGE COURSES

Your first semester/year in Norway is the best time to take **Norwegian language classes!** It will only get harder to make time as you get further into your PhD. Some sections/supervisors/projects are willing to support your attendance by covering the fee, if they have extra funding available. Just ask them to see whether this might be possible for you. UiO offers a lot of different options, including a free online intro course, once a week courses for international researchers (NORIR courses), and more intensive courses that are meant to help you really master the language and which count for university credit (NORA courses). There is also an intensive summer course put on by UiO's International Summer School. If you need advice for which to take, ask your colleagues or the PhD advisor for help, or read more here: www.uio.no/english/about/jobs/ismo/while-in-oslo/language-courses/

Learning Norwegian can help you to get more integrated in Norway. Additionally for those from outside the EU who are interested in staying in Norway longer than their 3-4 years as a PhD student, you need to have a certain level of Norwegian to be granted permanent residence, which would allow you to stay in Norway after your PhD contract is over, even if you do not find another job immediately.



INSURANCE

You are automatically, as an employee, enrolled in Norway's **National Insurance Scheme** which is state-run health insurance. This insurance is great and very few in Norway buy private health insurance.

You should get separate **Traveler's insurance** for trips for leisure or business. Year-long travel insurance is very affordable in Norway, and covers you as soon as you step outside your front door. Most banks offer this, as do most unions.



EXTRA

CONTACT INFORMATION

NOTES:

PhD student issues: Anna Mazzarella, a.v.b.mazzarella@ibv.uio.no, office number 1134

IBV Courses: Torill Rørtveit, torill.rortveit@ibv.uio.no, office number 1130
or Lise Bøknes, lise.bokenes@ibv.uio.no, office number 1132

Human Resources: Ann Elisabeth Mellbye, a.e.mellbye@ibv.uio.no, office number 1232

Health and Safety: Kathrine Schou, kathrine.schou@ibv.uio.no, office number 1234

IT: drift@ibv.uio.no, office number 1150

Science Communication: Tore Wallem, tore.wallem@ibv.uio.no, office number 3330

Web Pages: Tore Wallem, tore.wallem@ibv.uio.no, office number 3330
and Kristine Dobbe, kristine.dobbe@ibv.uio.no, office number 1124

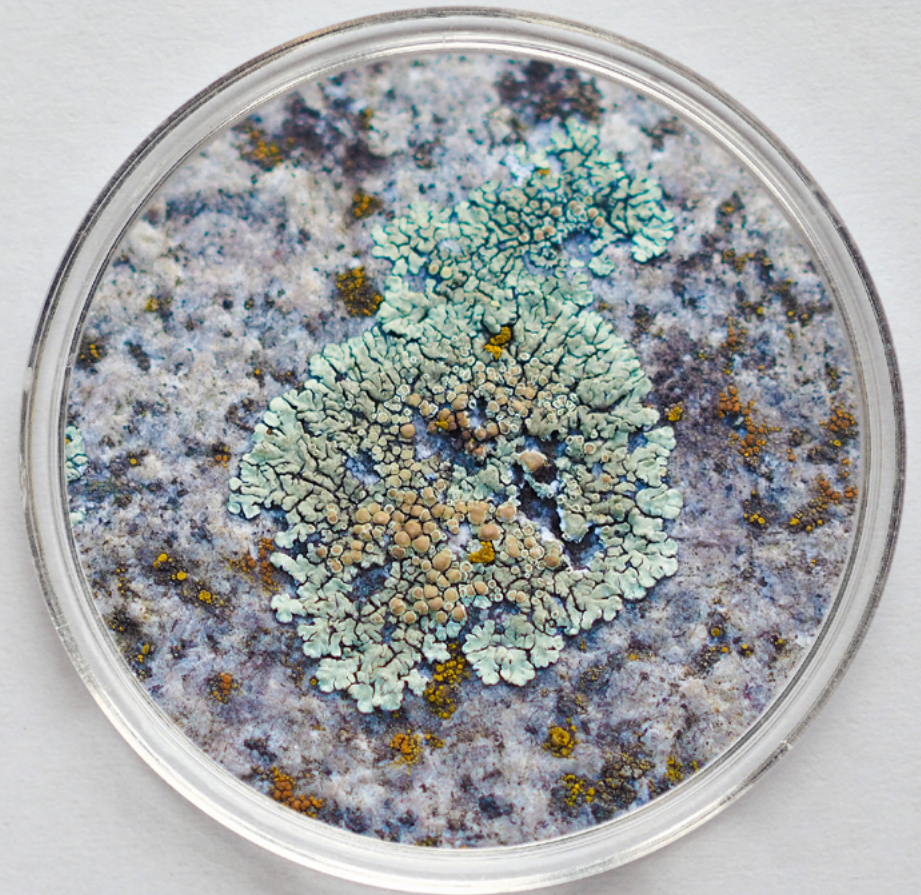
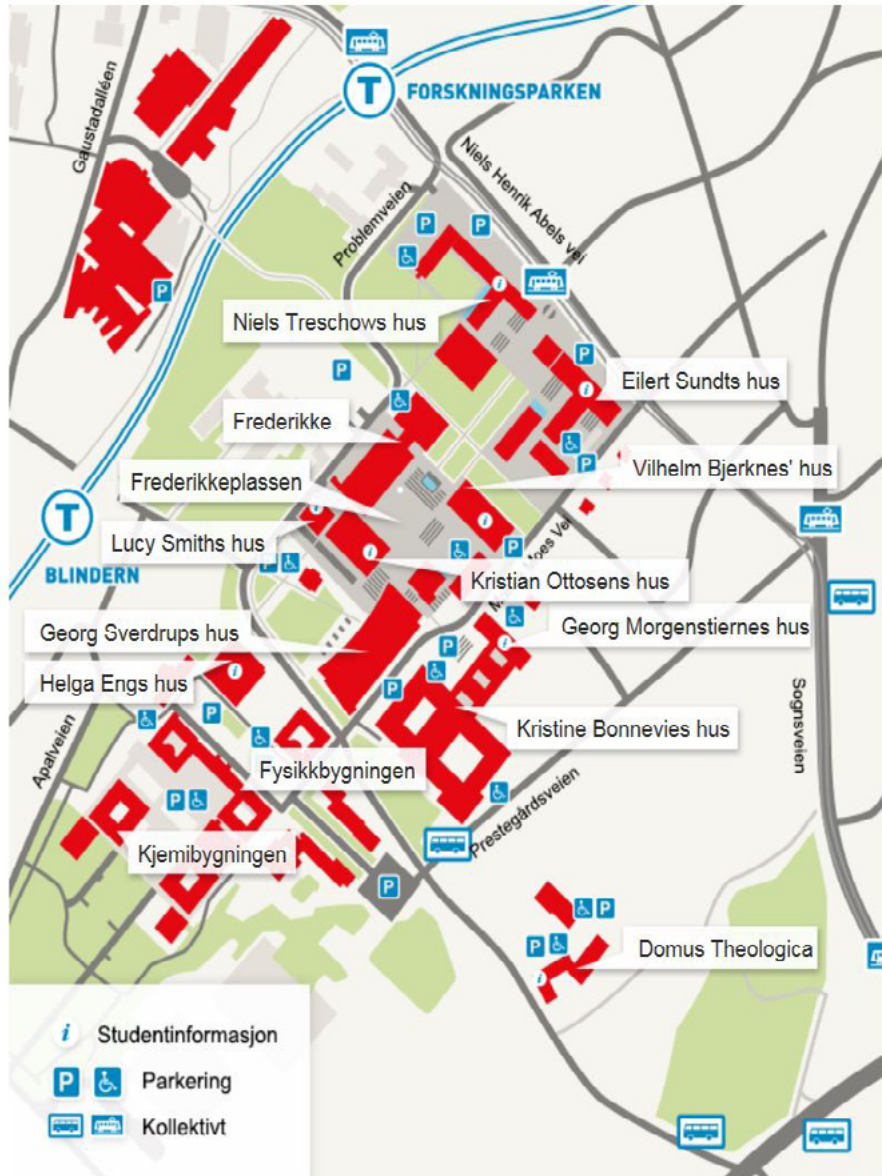
To order things: bestillere@ibv.uio.no, office number U-157

To print things (like posters): Representeren, repro@uio.no, www.uio.no/tjenester/trykk,
located in Kristian Ottosens Hus in the basement under Akademica book store (entrance from
parking lot).

****Keep in mind that non-scientific staff have regular working hours. For them, core hours (where they must be at work) are 9am-2:30pm. So if you need help from a technician or administrator, try to go between 9am and 2pm to make sure they will be in.**



MAP OF CAMPUS



Google Maps is also a good option for getting around campus!