

Information brief on post-doctoral appointments

Background

This brief is written in response to an expressed need for more information regarding employment opportunities at the department especially for recent Ph.D graduates and early career researchers. Transparency in relation to recruitment processes is essential to dispel perceptions of favouritism, while more information can also enhance possibilities for preparing for an early career in research and higher education in Sweden more broadly speaking.

Types of post-doctoral positions

-**Researcher** (Forskare) – you are employed primarily to do research, this is funded by external research funds. Anyone can have a research position, there is no limit in terms of the date of your thesis defense. You can have some teaching as part of a researcher position.

-**Post Doc**, a two-year position focused on early career researchers – those who have defended their Ph.D less than three years before the time of application are eligible. A Post Doc is not tied to the subject specifically, i.e. you do not need to have defended your Ph.D. in a particular discipline to be eligible. You can only teach 20% of a Post Doc position.

-**Substitute lecturer** (vikarierande universitetslektor or tillsättningslektorat), a temporary position in which you replace somebody who is on leave, for instance due to increases in external research funds or parental leave (a maximum of two years), or you fill in for staff shortages while somebody else is being recruited, open to anyone with a Ph.D., you need to have 5 weeks of teacher training.

-**Temporary Senior lecturer** (universitetslektor), temporary employment according to ALVA (Allmän lag om visstidsanställning) a maximum of 2 years.

-**Associated senior lecturer** (biträdande lektor), a tenure track position geared to those who defended their Ph.D within the discipline within 5 years of the application date. You apply for promotion to a permanent position as a senior lecturer after four years.

-**Senior lecturer** (universitetslektor), permanent employment as a senior lecturer. A position open to those with a Ph.D., with 5 weeks of pedagogical training and at least 1600 hours of teaching.

-**Employment by the hour** (as lecturer) (intermittent anställning), hourly employment, for very short term or urgent needs, never more than 20% of full time employment. Can be used both for all types of staff, administrative as well as academic.

Basic principles

Recruitments at Lund University follows a set of basic principles:

-all positions are announced, except for research positions in which the researcher has been named in the funding application, or tillsättningslektorat (where there has been an announcement for the permanent or tenure track position in question)

-all temporary positions as lecturers, researchers, post docs and employments by the hour are appointed directly by the department without a peer review process.

-all other positions are sent for external peer review, where shortlisted candidates are peer-reviewed, commonly this includes sending in a number of publications, a research proposal and a teaching portfolio. The faculty funded post docs are also externally reviewed. The external reviewers usually list a group of top applicants and also make an assessment of the employability of the remaining shortlisted candidates.

-after the external peer review process is complete, a number of candidates are interviewed by the Department and at least one representative from the Faculty Board of Appointments (Läraryrådsnämnden).

-all types of temporary employment, except for the Post Doc positions automatically turn into permanent contracts when two years have passed (so called In-Lasning). In the past this meant that positions were not subjected to external peer review and this practice therefore has been stopped by the University to improve (international) recruitment and to open positions for external competition. For researchers on projects that last longer than two years, a retrenchment procedure therefore takes place roughly a year before the project ends. For other types of positions, it means that you can generally not be employed for more than two years on a particular position. You can however be employed first on ALVA basis and then as a substitute lecturer, so you can in theory be employed 2+2 years as a lecturer.

Importantly, the 2-year rule applies to all employment at LU as a whole, so you cannot stack up multiple two year employments by moving between departments.

Reasoning around recruitment

In general, from LU as a whole and the Faculty there is strong pressure to encourage post doctoral mobility – Ph. D students who defend their theses at LU are expected to find jobs elsewhere. The Department also has the view that permanent employment is highly desirable for many reasons, not least for the employment security of the employees.

The possibilities for staying at the Department depend mainly on external funding – if you raise your own funds or somebody employs you in a project, it is possible to employ you as a researcher. In addition, given that an average recruitment process for teaching staff can extend for over a year, it is sometimes necessary to hire temporary teaching staff. These appointments are made by the Department to deal with shortfalls in permanent teaching staff. In turn, the possibilities for hiring temporary teaching staff depends on the need for teachers, so in areas with a lot of teaching in relation to staff resources, there will generally be stronger demand for temporary staff. Permanent staff within a particular research group hence need to fill their required teaching hours before temporary staff are hired.