

Handling procedures for the appointment of postdoctoral fellows at Stockholm University

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Description:

This document summarises the regulations governing the announcement and admission of postdoctoral appointments at Stockholm University. It is intended for employees at Stockholm University who work with postdoctoral appointments, as well as for applicants and appointed postdocs

Introduction

A postdoctoral position is a merit-based appointment primarily focused on research and constitutes an initial step in an academic career. The purpose of the position is to provide, after the doctoral degree, an early opportunity to develop independence as a researcher and to create conditions for further qualifications.

Postdoctoral researchers are expected to devote the majority of their time to research, but up to one fifth of the working hours may be allocated to teaching. Postdoctoral appointments are generally full-time positions.

Stockholm University is a public authority, and according to the Swedish Instrument of Government (Chapter 12, Section 9), appointments must be based 'solely on objective grounds such as merit and competence.' This is further specified in the Public Employment Act (1994:260), which states in Section 4 that competence shall be given primary consideration, unless there are special reasons to do otherwise.

This document is intended for employees at Stockholm University who work with postdoctoral appointments, as well as for applicants and appointed postdocs. The Office of the President is responsible for reviewing and updating the content of the document annually.

Employment

Appointments as postdoctoral fellows are made under the collective agreement Agreement on fixed-term employment as a postdoctoral fellow (the Postdoc Agreement), concluded in 2008 between the Swedish Agency for Government Employers and the trade unions. A new agreement with the same name entered into force on 1 February 2022.

The agreement applies to employees appointed with the title postdoctoral fellow. To be eligible for appointment, the candidate must hold a Swedish doctoral degree or an equivalent foreign degree. The eligibility requirement must be fulfilled no later than the date on which the appointment decision is made.

A postdoctoral fellow may be employed for an indefinite term, but for a period of no less than two and no more than three years. An appointment shorter than three years may be extended if necessary to fulfil the purpose of the position. However, the total period of employment may not exceed three years.

A prerequisite for using the fixed-term postdoctoral appointment under the Postdoc Agreement is that the employee has not previously been employed as a postdoctoral fellow under the agreement for more than one year within the same or a closely related subject area at the same higher education institution/authority.

The university also hosts postdoctoral researchers funded through scholarships. These individuals are not considered employees and are therefore not covered by employment-related benefits. Various scholarships exist, each with its own rules, which

means that different processes and regulations apply to scholarship-funded postdocs compared with those employed under the collective agreement.

To be appointed as a postdoctoral fellow under the Agreement on Fixed-Term Employment as a Postdoctoral Fellow, priority should be given to candidates who obtained their degree no more than three years before the application deadline. The three-year eligibility period is calculated from the application deadline.

If there are special reasons, the degree may have been awarded earlier than stated in the agreement. Special reasons include leave due to illness, parental leave, trade union assignments, service in the total defence forces, or similar circumstances, as well as clinical service or other relevant professional duties for the subject area.

The postdoctoral position is a collectively agreed fixed-term employment that applies in addition to the Employment Protection Act (LAS). An employee may therefore hold a fixed-term position before or after a postdoctoral appointment—for example as a researcher—under Section 5, first paragraph, item 1 of LAS (special fixed-term employment). Periods of employment as a postdoctoral fellow under the collective agreement cannot be combined with periods of fixed-term employment under LAS or the Higher Education Ordinance.

Overseas service

A postdoctoral appointment may be combined with overseas service in accordance with the central collective agreement on foreign postings and the guidelines for employment conditions during overseas service (URA). In such cases, the postdoctoral fellow is granted leave from the postdoctoral position. However, the period of employment continues to run as usual and, including the period of overseas service, may not exceed three years (unless any of the special reasons mentioned above apply)).

Application

The recruitment process for postdoctoral fellows at Stockholm University is conducted openly with clear application procedures. All postdoctoral positions are advertised externally. This open recruitment process ensures transparency throughout the appointment procedure. Since decisions on both announcing and appointing postdoctoral positions are delegated to the departmental level, the detailed steps in the process may vary somewhat. The general process is described below.

Recruitment process for appointing postdoctoral fellows under the Postdoc Agreement

1. Decision to recruit

The decision to announce a postdoctoral position is normally made by the head of department, or in accordance with the department's delegation procedures.

2. **Requirements profile**

The requirements profile forms the basis of the recruitment process. It serves as the foundation for the advertisement and as a tool for assessing the applications.

3. **Advertisement**

The advertisement is based on the templates used for all Stockholm University job postings. All advertisements are written in Swedish, but an English version should normally also be available.

4. **Advertising the vacant position**

The vacancy is always published online, on the university's official digital noticeboard, and in the Swedish Public Employment Service's job portal. The recommended application period is three weeks, but it may be longer. To employ a citizen from outside the EU, the advertisement must have been posted for at least 10 days on the Public Employment Service's website for the work-permit application to be approved.

5. **External advertising**

To attract applicants and reach the appropriate target groups, additional advertising may be placed in external media, either digital or print.

6. **Applications**

All applications are submitted digitally through the university's recruitment system.

7. **Selection process**

Once the applications have been received, a selection is made among the applicants. This selection is carried out by a recruitment group at the department. The recruitment group is appointed by the head of department or the department board (in accordance with the department's delegation procedures). After the strongest candidates have been identified based on their applications, they are invited to interviews. In addition to reviewing the applications and conducting interviews, the university recommends taking references.

8. **Decision on appointment**

The decision to appoint a postdoctoral fellow is made in accordance with the department's delegation procedures.

9. **Notification of appointment decision**

Information about the selected candidate is communicated to all other applicants and posted on the university's official noticeboard.

10. **Appeals**

Decisions on postdoctoral appointments may be appealed to the Higher Education Appeals Board (ÖNH). The appeal period is three weeks.

11. **Registration**

All documents related to the case are registered through the recruitment system.
