

Handling procedures for the recruitment of doctoral candidates at Stockholm University

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Description:

This document summarises the regulations governing the announcement and admission of doctoral employment at Stockholm University. It is intended for employees at Stockholm University who work with doctoral appointments, as well as for applicants and admitted doctoral candidates in the University's third-cycle programmes.

1 Introduction

This document summarises the regulations governing the announcement and admission of doctoral employment at Stockholm University.

Regulations for the recruitment of doctoral candidates exist at several levels: national level, central university level, area level, and departmental level. These regulations aim to ensure (1) broad, competitive announcements and (2) a selection process based on objective criteria among eligible applicants. The regulations presented below concern those that specifically apply to the appointment of doctoral candidates. In addition, the preparation and decision-making process for doctoral employment is subject to the legal requirements regarding due process, objectivity, and conflict of interest that apply to all public-sector work.

This document is intended for employees at Stockholm University who work with doctoral employment, as well as for applicants and admitted doctoral candidates. The Office of the President is responsible for reviewing and updating the content of the document annually.

National level – Higher Education Ordinance Chapter 5 and 7

As a Swedish public university, Stockholm University may only admit as many doctoral candidates as can be offered supervision and otherwise acceptable study conditions, and whose funding is secured for the entire period of study. In practice, the requirement for secured funding means that the vast majority of those admitted to doctoral studies at Stockholm University are also employed as doctoral candidates. Only those who are admitted, or have already been admitted, to third-cycle studies at a higher education institution may be employed as doctoral candidates. The regulations governing admission to doctoral studies therefore also determine the recruitment process for doctoral employment. All recruitments in which the prospective doctoral candidate is to be employed must be advertised in accordance with specific rules. The Higher Education Ordinance sets out the general entry requirements that applicants must meet.

Stockholm University's central regulations

At the central university level, the recruitment of doctoral candidates is regulated in the University's Admission Regulations for Third-Cycle Study Programmes and in the Regulations for Third-Cycle Education and Summative Assessment.

Announcement

According to the Admission Regulations, all doctoral study places must be advertised as broadly as possible to ensure competitive admission. Announcements of doctoral positions must be published in the University's recruitment system. The announcements must be made on specified dates, and each department must have predetermined and publicly communicated application deadlines (one or several per year). The Area Boards must regularly monitor that announcements are made in accordance with these rules

Selection and admission

The admission process for third-cycle education must be transparent. A general written description of the admission process must be easily accessible to prospective applicants. This description must state which body is responsible for the admission decision. In the general study plan for each doctoral subject, the Area Board must specify the assessment criteria used to evaluate applicants' ability to benefit from the programme. The Area Board must also regularly ensure that clear descriptions of the admission process are available at the departments.

In addition to the regulations mentioned above, the announcement and selection process is governed by the centrally approved template for announcing doctoral education and employment. According to this mandatory template, the application must include: a CV, a personal statement, a research plan (in some cases), degree certificates, transcripts and other certificates, as well as examples of previous independent work. Additional documents may also be required, such as proof of language proficiency (e.g., TOEFL or IELTS). The mandatory template ensures that all necessary and consistent information is collected from applicants during the announcement process. Publishing the announcement in the University's recruitment system guarantees a minimum standard for the dissemination of the call.

Science academic area

The Science Area at Stockholm University consists of a single faculty, the Faculty of Science. Area-specific regulations for the recruitment of doctoral candidates are set out in the *Regulations for Third-Cycle Education within the Science Area*. These regulations specify that announcements of doctoral study places should normally be made no more than four times per year, and that announcements should, where possible, be coordinated within the faculty. Decisions to announce doctoral study places must be published in good time on each department's website. Decisions on how applications for doctoral positions should be structured are delegated to the department board at each department. Information about announcements of doctoral positions must be available on the respective department's website.

Of the four annual announcements of doctoral study places, two are coordinated so that all study places within the faculty are advertised simultaneously. The Office of Science administers these joint announcements, and the dates are published on the Faculty of Science website.

In the general study plans for each doctoral subject, it is specified that selection among applicants who meet the eligibility requirements must be based on their ability to benefit from the doctoral programme. The mere fact that an applicant may be able to have previous studies or professional experience credited may not, in itself, give the applicant priority over others. Decisions on admission are made in accordance with the applicable delegation procedures. Each general study plan contains subject-specific information on the assessment

criteria used by the department to evaluate applicants' ability to benefit from doctoral studies in that subject.

The general study plans also specify the specific entry requirements that must be met in order to be admitted to doctoral studies in the subject. These specific requirements must be strictly necessary for the student to be able to benefit from the programme.

Human science academic area

Within the Human Science Area, the announcement and admission of doctoral candidates are regulated primarily through the area-wide template for the general study plan and its accompanying guidelines. According to the guidelines, the general study plan must specify the announcement dates and application deadlines, other necessary information regarding the announcement process, and instructions on how the application should be structured. The template for the General Study Plan must be used for each individual doctoral subject. It must be available in Swedish and also translated into English.

The specific entry requirements must be stated in the general study plan and must be strictly necessary for the student to be able to benefit from the programme. The assessment criteria used to evaluate applicants' ability to benefit from doctoral studies in the subject must also be specified in the general study plan.

The general study plan may include an overarching description of the usual admission process, such as procedures for ranking applicants, which body prepares the case, how the assessment is conducted, how conflicts of interest are handled, and other relevant aspects. If the details of the admission process are not specified in the general study plan, there must be a clear reference to where this information can be found, and it should be easily accessible in written form.

General process description

The department proposes dates for the announcement. Upon request, the Faculty Board may grant an exemption for an additional announcement. Specific entry requirements, assessment criteria, and the design of the admission process are stated in the general study plan, which is decided at the area level. Certain revisions may be made at the faculty level, but not regarding specific entry requirements. The general study plan must be available on the department's website.

A typical admission process, as described in the general study plan, may proceed as follows:

Selection among applicants who meet the general and specific entry requirements is based on their ability to benefit from the programme. It is also important for the department to consider its capacity to provide adequate supervision for the proposed research. The assessment criteria applied in the selection process include, among others:

- subject-specific knowledge relevant to the doctoral subject
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- where applicable, subject-specific knowledge relevant to the research project associated with the position
- independence in analysis and design in previous academic work
- quality of previous work and, in some cases, a project proposal
- ability to collaborate and, where applicable, ability to express oneself in English

A written decision proposal with justification is prepared by the admissions group and submitted to the department board, which decides on admission, and to the head of department, who decides on employment as a doctoral candidate. For further information on the admission procedure, please refer to the department's documentation.