

Guidelines for the Appointment of Docents¹

These guidelines were finalised by the Faculty Board on the 13th of Mars 2025 and take effect from the same day.

Registration number HS 2025/207

¹ This is a translation of the Swedish version (Riktlinjer för utnämning till docent, registration number HS 2025/206). In the event of any discrepancy, the Swedish version of this document shall prevail.

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1 Introduction

Anyone holding a doctoral degree, or having equivalent scientific or artistic expertise, and meeting the stated scientific and pedagogical criteria may apply for an appointment as a docent at the University of Skövde (the University).

The title of docent implies a mark of quality of an individual's scientific and teaching expertise, but it does not change his/her form of employment. Being a docent is normally required as a minimum to act as the main supervisor of doctoral students, sit on examination committees, serve as an expert, or act as an opponent at the defence of a doctoral thesis, etc. Becoming a docent is therefore an important step in gaining academic competence.

A docent is appointed within a subject established at the University. A person who is a docent at another institution cannot normally be appointed as a docent in the same subject at the University. The decision to appoint someone as a docent is taken by the Faculty Board on a proposal from the Council for Docent Assessment [Rådet för docentprövning]. The proposal is based on a report from normally two external experts. A decision on the appointment as a docent cannot be appealed against. The appointment is not limited in time.

2 The Council for Docent Assessment

The Council for Docent Assessment is established and organised by the Faculty Board with the task to process docent applications. The Council consists of five members representing all schools. All members of the Council should be professors at the University. The members are appointed by the Faculty Board based on proposals from the heads of schools. The Faculty Board appoints the chair of the Council. The student union may appoint a student representative. The University Support Services appoints an administrative officer to provide administrative support to the Council. The aim should be to obtain a gender balance among the members of the Council.

3 Benefit to the University

3.1 Docents and the University

Docent-qualified lecturers are a major asset to the University as they are expected to actively contribute to further development of the University as a whole by developing the quality of research and teaching activities.

In addition to the individual acquisition of qualifications, docents are expected to increase their responsibilities for their subject and the University. Docent-qualified lecturers have more experience and

higher potential for seeking and obtaining funding, publishing new research results and supervising doctoral students as well as developing academic networks and third-stream activities. Through their academic or artistic experience, docents are expected to contribute to a great extent to ensuring that good research environments are created and developed at the University, to conduct further research for the benefit of the University and to actively contribute to the research basis of teaching on undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate levels. An important part of this is to support colleagues in their acquisition of qualifications. When publishing research, docents employed at the University are expected to state the University of Skövde as their academic affiliation.

Docents are also expected to be prepared to undertake both administrative and academic assignments corresponding to their levels of expertise, both at the University as a whole and at the relevant school. This may, for example, involve being a member or the chair of boards, councils and similar bodies, being responsible for assessments and investigations, being a representative for the University and its research as well as actively participating in public life contexts.

3.2 “Nyttointyg” – Certificate of benefit

If an applicant for docentship is not employed by the University, the school in question must judge that the applicant considerably contributes to university activities. The head of school is to describe this contribution in a “Nyttointyg” (certificate of benefit), i.e. a statement motivating the benefit to the school of the appointment of the applicant as a docent in the specific subject.

4 Qualifications required

The assessment of the qualifications of an applicant for docentship is to include both scientific/artistic and teaching expertise, of which the scientific/artistic expertise is of greater significance. However, comprehensive scientific expertise cannot compensate for deficiencies in teaching expertise. Equal care should be devoted to the assessment of scientific/artistic and teaching expertise.

4.1 Scientific expertise

In order to be qualified for the appointment as a docent, applicants must display research experience, skilfulness and independence, all quantitatively and qualitatively exceeding what is demanded for a doctoral degree, including clearly broader and deeper knowledge of the subject and its methodologies.

The academic publications after the defence of the doctoral thesis must be at least equivalent to the length of a doctoral thesis and not be part of the doctoral project. As for the quantity, consideration is to be given to the prevailing publication traditions within the subject area of the applicant. Works selected for assessment must have been published or accepted for publication in international scientific forums. Applicants must clearly describe their contribution to the selected works.

In their research, docents should be able to display high quality, innovation, good presentation skills and independence. Applications must therefore clearly demonstrate the applicant's

- independence, in particular in relation to former supervisors (Documented through publications without a supervisor as co-author, where the applicant's contribution has been significant, for example, having a specific research profile, starting and successfully managing projects, being awarded research funding, etc.)
- deeper and broader knowledge of theory and methodology acquired after the defence of the doctoral thesis
- awareness of different scientific approaches
- creative, analytical and critical scrutinizing abilities
- ability for innovation and independence in relation to previous research
- ability to communicate research findings both within and outside higher education institutions

4.2 Artistic expertise

A docent qualified on artistic grounds must display artistic expertise on a high professional level. In addition to the artistic production on which the qualifications of the applicant as an artistic senior lecturer were based, additional subsequent artistic activities must be reported to an extent equivalent to that required for an artistic senior lecturer.

The applicant must display continued artistic development and be represented in well-reputed forums within the subject area. Artistic expertise may, for example, be demonstrated through

the applicant's own artistic productions and works

- publications (specialist press, popular science, etc.) in artistically relevant subjects
- commercial recordings
- documented recordings of concerts
- photo documentation of works, productions and exhibitions

- concert programmes, exhibition catalogues and the like
- reviews
- commitments and assignments at art schools, festivals and the like
- design assignments
- artistic development work

4.3 Teaching expertise

Teaching activities in an academic environment are to serve as the basis for the assessment. Applicants must have both quantitatively and qualitatively sufficient teaching experience and expertise within their subject. To qualify as a docent, applicants must have completed courses in teaching and learning in higher education of at least 15 credits or the equivalent. In addition, applicants must have completed formal training in the supervision of doctoral students.

If the applicant has been appointed as a qualified teaching practitioner or as an excellent teaching practitioner (or the equivalent at another higher education institution), there is no need for further assessment of the teaching expertise. If the applicant has been assessed for qualifications regarding teaching and learning in higher education, this should be stated in the application. Any certificate of an appointment as a highly qualified teacher or an excellent teacher should be attached to the application for the appointment as a docent.

If an applicant has not previously been assessed for qualifications regarding teaching and learning in higher education, the application should include documentation on the teaching expertise on different levels and an account of the applicant's pedagogical approach and teaching results within higher education.

A quantitative benchmark is that the applicant should be able to present teaching experience equivalent to one year of full-time teaching, comprising planning and implementation of teaching and examination. In qualitative terms, the applicant must display broad experience of teaching within the relevant subject. In addition to teaching experience on the first- and second-cycle levels, it is especially meritorious to have experience of teaching on the third-cycle level. It is also meritorious to have experience of different forms of teaching and examination. Other merits may be preparation of teaching materials, development of courses and study programs, course coordination and examination.

Moreover, the applicant is to be able to display necessary qualities for supervising doctoral students all the way to the defence of their doctoral theses. This may be shown through successful supervision of doctoral students; however, successful supervision of master's theses

can also be used to assess the applicant's qualifications as a supervisor of doctoral theses.

4.4 Other qualifications

Other qualifications that should be considered in the assessment include a documented ability to collaborate both within the academic community and with external partners in the private and public sectors. However, such collaboration is not crucial for the appointment as a docent. Academic assignments, as well as other types of assignments (for example, being an external reviewer), may also be meritorious for the applicant. Being a member of national and international organisations of value to the academic or artistic field may also be good qualifications.

5 Procedure

5.1 Initiating the application

When applying to be appointed as a docent, the representative of the applicant's school in the council for associate professorship must be contacted at an early stage for a preliminary assessment of the applicant's qualifications and advice, before a formal application is made. The applicant does this by submitting a CV to the representative of the school. CV and list of publications must be designed according to the template provided by the Council for Docent Assessment. If the applicant's qualifications are deemed sufficient, the CV is sent to all members of the Council and is processed at the next meeting, where a decision is made whether or not to open for a formal application. If the Council for Docent Assessment assesses that the applicant's qualifications are sufficient, the administrator opens an application in the University's staff recruitment system and contacts the applicant to submit a formal application. If the qualifications are considered unclear or deficient, the applicant is contacted, for clarification or is recommended to return at a later time when the qualifications have been strengthened.

Information on the composition of the Council and its contact details is available on the University's website and on the staff portal. The formal application is to be submitted via the University's system for the recruitment of staff.

5.2 The design and content of the application

The application may be written in Swedish or English. The application is to be called "Application for the appointment as a docent" and contain the following parts:

5.2.1 Letter/Introduction

(a maximum of 2 A4 pages)

An introductory text stating that it is an application for the appointment as a docent in a specific subject and how the application is related to the definition of the subject at the University. This letter must be signed by the applicant.

5.2.2 Scientific/Artistic expertise

A description of the applicant's field of research and scientific/artistic qualifications with a focus on the period after the defence of the doctoral thesis.

(a maximum of 3 A4 pages)

- A summary describing the doctoral thesis/the artistic work as the grounds for the employment as a senior lecturer
- A description of the scientific/artistic activities after the defence of the doctoral thesis and their contribution to research and the development of methodology
- A description of future plans for research/artistic development work in relation to the University

5.2.3 An overview of the selected works for assessment

An overview of the scientific/artistic works selected for the assessment of the application for appointment as a docent with a clear description of the applicant's role. Two of these works must have been published/made public within a period of two years prior to the application date. For publications featuring more than one author, there must be a statement on the principle of the order of the authors' names (for example, according to the extent of each author's contribution, alphabetical order, one of two collaborating authors coming first every second time, most senior colleague listed last, etc.)

5.2.4 Teaching expertise

If the applicant has been assessed for qualifications regarding teaching and learning in higher education, only the certificate of the appointment as a qualified or excellent teaching practitioner should be attached to the application. The following applies for other applicants.

(a maximum of 3 A4 pages)

- A description of the applicant's experience of teaching on first-, second- and third-cycle levels (including supervision of doctoral students and master's students)

- Experience of pedagogical development work (development of courses and programmes, planning of courses, development of textbooks and teaching materials, compendiums, etc.)
- Reflection on future development plans for teaching
- An account of the applicant's pedagogical approach and achieved results as a teacher in higher education.

5.2.5 Other qualifications

(a maximum of 2 A4 pages)

- A description of other qualifications, such as, for example, academic or administrative leadership, having been engaged as a speaker or external expert/reviewer, membership of editorial committees and the like.

5.2.6 Appendices

- A brief CV (a maximum of 3 A4 pages)
- Selected works for assessment
- A complete list of publications, with a statement on the principle of the order of authors
- Certificates
- "Nyttointyg" – Certificate of benefit (for applicants not employed by the University)

5.3 Pre-review of the application

When the Council for Docent Assessment has received an application, the administrative officer will check that it is complete. The Council also makes an initial assessment of the content and quality of the application. The aim is to ensure that the application is clear and possible to assess. If the Council finds that the application is complete and displays an acceptable quality, two external experts are appointed. If the Council finds that the application is incomplete, the applicant will be given the opportunity to develop the application before the Council decides on appointing external experts. If the Council finds that the application contains serious flaws or that the qualifications are deemed insufficient, any request for an expert review will be rejected. In such cases, the applicant may withdraw the application.

5.4 The external reviewing process

The Faculty Board has delegated to the Council for Docent Assessment to decide whether an application should be reviewed by external expert and to appoint external experts. These external experts should preferably be affiliated with a Swedish higher education institution. If special circumstances prevail, foreign external experts may be engaged.

The external experts reviewing an application for the appointment as a docent should have the qualifications of a professor. Employees at the University of Skövde cannot be external experts. Unless special circumstances prevail, one man and one woman should be proposed as external reviewers. The school in question is responsible for reviewer fees and other costs.

The subject coordinator (or the equivalent), supported by professors in the subject, is to propose external experts. If special circumstances prevail, the proposal may instead be made by the head of school or the head of department division, supported by a professor in the subject. For further guidance, see the document the University's "Guidelines for the appointment of external experts" [Riktlinjer för utseende av sakkunniga]. The subject coordinator (or the equivalent) has the responsibility to propose external experts and to contact these. External experts are normally allowed two months for their work.

The subject coordinator (or the equivalent) should also ensure that the external experts are not disqualified and then submit a signed investigation of disqualification for each external expert (cf. the Administrative Procedure Act, Sections 11–12). The results of these investigations should be stated in the form called "Förslag till sakkunniga för prövning av docentkompetens" (Proposal for external experts for the assessment of the qualifications of applicants for docentship); this form is available on the Council's web page. The subject coordinator (or the equivalent) should fill in and sign the form and then submit it, together with the CVs of the external experts, to the administrative officer of the Council.

5.5 Review by a third external expert

In cases where the two experts have differences in opinions, one is positive and one is negative, the application must be sent to a third expert for assessment. The subject coordinator submits the proposal for another expert on a signed form, together with the expert's CV, to the administrative officer of the Council.

5.6 Requirements of statements from external experts

The statement of an external expert is to result in a clear position as to whether the applicant should be appointed as a docent or not. The statement should include 3–5 A4 pages and is to be formulated in the University's template for statement of an external expert, which is sent to the external expert by the University.

5.6.1 Review of the scientific/artistic expertise

The statement is to include a detailed summary and critical review assessing the applicant's academic/artistic production, with clear references to the selected works. Based on this critical review, there must be an overview of the applicant's research/artistic production and how this has developed after the defence of the doctoral thesis or the assessment of an artistic lecturer.

In the statement, the main results are to be mentioned and the importance of these is to be assessed in relation to international development within the subject area. The broadening and deepening of the applicant's research should be demonstrated. The applicant's methodological development is also to be assessed. It is essential that both the strengths and weaknesses of the applicant's qualifications are highlighted in order to ensure that the grounds for the expert's recommendation are clear. The criteria for the assessment of the application are stated in sections 4.1 and 4.2.

In case the expert does not find enough grounds for approving the application, it is important that the deficiencies forming the basis for such a standpoint are clarified.

5.6.2 Review of pedagogical expertise

The statement is to include a detailed summary and critical review assessing the applicant's pedagogical expertise as well as an overview of the applicant's teaching activities and how these have developed. The criteria to consider are stated in section 4.3.

5.6.3 Other qualifications

The statement is also to include a brief reflection on the applicant's additional qualifications, which may give an idea of the applicant's ability to develop contacts, collaborate and assume responsibilities. For further guidance, see section 4.4.

5.7 The decision on the appointment of a docent

The Council for Docent Assessment take a stand on the application, based on the statements of the external experts. For assistance in the

preparation, the Council may consult experts within the subject. In case the application cannot be approved, the applicant may withdraw the application. If the applicant chooses not to withdraw the application, the Council will propose that the Faculty Board should reject the application.

The decision on the appointment of a docent is taken by the Faculty Board of the University of Skövde. Such a decision cannot be appealed against. An applicant having withdrawn an application during the process or having been rejected may gain additional qualifications and apply again later.

6 The document is valid from

The document is valid from 2025-03-13 and replaces Guidelines for the Appointment of Docents from 2023-12-06 (reg. No. HS 2023/903).