Guidelines for the assessment of professorships at the Faculty of Social Sciences

Employment as a professor is regulated by the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance (HF). A person who has demonstrated both research and teaching expertise shall be qualified for employment as a professor except in disciplines in the fine, applied or performing arts. A person who has demonstrated both artistic and teaching expertise shall be qualified for employment as a professor in disciplines in the fine, applied or performing arts.

The assessment criteria for appointment as a professor shall be the degree of the expertise required as a qualification for employment. An equal amount of attention shall be given to the assessment of teaching expertise and the assessment of research or artistic expertise. Each higher education institution determines itself what other assessment criteria to apply to the appointment of a professor. (The Higher Education Ordinance Chapter 4 Section 3)

The terms of the Higher Education Ordinance are supplemented by the local employment regulations for teachers at Umeå University (ref. 300-2349-11). Research expertise is demonstrated by independent research work, the ability to plan and lead research activities and the ability to communicate research with the outside world. The criteria for assessing research expertise are:

A. breadth and depth of research – quality and scope
B. originality of research
C. productivity
D. contribution to the international research community
E. assignments within the research community
F. ability to obtain external research funds in competition

Teaching expertise relates to the teacher’s work with students, the teacher’s own pedagogical development and the teacher’s contribution to the overall pedagogical development of the institution. The following knowledge, skills and approaches must be demonstrated:

A. knowledge of students’ learning in higher education
B. the ability to plan, teach in, examine and evaluate higher education and support individual and group learning
C. the ability to adopt a reflective approach to their individual role as a teacher
D. knowledge of the goals and rules of society within higher education
E. the ability to make use of, analyse and communicate their own and others’ experiences
The employment regulations also contain rules for the promotion from senior lecturer to professor. A senior lecturer in permanent employment may be given the opportunity to be assessed for promotion to professor, based on the needs and requirements of the department. The head of department determines in each case if an assessment is justified. The same rules for eligibility and assessment criteria apply for promotion as for employment.

The Faculty of Social Sciences has specified how the rules for employment and promotion will be applied over and above the employment regulations. How to interpret the assessment criteria and the requirements for employment and promotion are described below. These guidelines should be regarded as indicative rather than a list of absolute requirements. Exception from these guidelines may be granted in light of the nature and specific requirements of the subject, as well as in the event of other special circumstances.

Guidelines for assessing research and teaching expertise

The research expertise of an applicant will mainly be judged on the applicant’s own research output. A professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences must have demonstrated that he or she can formulate and analyse important research problems, have acquired general knowledge and methods that can be used in different areas, and have produced research results that demonstrate a certain universality. The research output must have a scope that demonstrates significant research experience (normally equivalent to twice the expertise of a docent, although there may be some variation between subjects). It is also important that the applicant can demonstrate extensive activity during the most recent period. The main research work must also be of an original nature, i.e. the research problems, methods and results are new in relation to the work of others. It is insufficient to have simply summarised the research of others, or simply have replicated research results with new data. The research work must also have a breadth of subject to indicate that the applicant can represent the research subject to which the professorship relates.

A professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences must have achieved a high degree of national and international recognition. Recognition can be demonstrated, in particular, by international publication based on the peer-review procedure and the researcher having been frequently quoted by other researchers. However, it can also be illustrated by various research partnerships. ‘Partnerships’ refers to professional networks of various kinds, for instance research partnerships involving researchers at other universities and colleges, or contributions to international research organisations. Recognition can also be demonstrated by invitations to be a speaker at conferences, and through various assignments in the research community, such as expert reviewer of articles and acting as an external examiner.

Two important tasks for a professor are the ability to lead and plan research activities and communicate their research to society. A professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences must be able to demonstrate leadership in research projects and successful supervision. Planning and leadership of research projects can also be demonstrated by having obtained
research funding in competition with other researchers. Communication and dissemination of research demonstrates the usefulness of such activities. This can be done through direct partnerships with business and social organisations, by providing expertise in various contexts, authorship of popular science works or participation in public debate in general.

Teaching expertise relates to the criteria specified in the employment regulations and in the specific guidelines for teaching expertise attached to the employment regulations. In addition to the terms in these guidelines applicable for a professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences, a professor must have demonstrated participation in third-cycle activities. This applies to both doctoral supervision and participation in and formulation of third-cycle courses and seminar activities in third-cycle programmes.

The distinguishing characteristics for a professor at the Faculty of Social Studies are that they:

- Have a comprehensive research output of good quality, normally equivalent to (at least) four doctoral dissertations, although there may be some variations between subjects.
- Have a comprehensive résumé in international scholarly journals or in the form of books/book chapters for international publishers. International journal/publisher is understood to mean a publishing channel with a reach outside the Nordic area and with a peer-review procedure.
- Have distinguished themselves by being published in journals or by publishers of good repute.
- Have gained attention through their research output having been frequently quoted by other researchers.
- Have distinguished themselves by means of assignments within the research community. The applicants must have made repeated contributions through various review assignments and/or by acting as an external examiner.
- Have obtained research funding as the main applicant in competition with others.
- Have completed research training or equivalent.
- Have completed research supervisor for at least one doctoral student up to thesis defence.
- Have conducted teaching at second-cycle and third-cycle programme level and also have contributed to the development of courses and course materials at these levels.
- Can demonstrate the use of their research through partnerships and work that extends beyond universities and colleges.