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Appointment of recognised university teachers and distinguished university teachers

Policy document Örebro University

Category: Guidelines

Reg. no: ORU 2024/07008

Adopted by: All faculty boards

Adopted: 2025-03-04, 2025-03-06, 2025-03-11

Last revised: -

Document owner: Faculty Office



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Örebro University's model for recognition of educational qualifications

The model for recognition of educational qualifications at Örebro University is intended to benefit the university and aims to highlight and recognise qualities that strengthen and develop the pedagogical activities at the university¹. It is also to support teachers in their efforts to develop in the scholarship of teaching and learning and to gain teaching expertise.

The model encourages teachers to

- broaden their pedagogical practice: to develop teaching and support learning in further and wider contexts and to take responsibility for the quality of education in various roles

and

- deepen their scholarly approach: to base learning activities, assessment and examination on research and to develop knowledge about teaching and learning themselves.

The model for recognition of educational qualifications at Örebro University has two tiers: *recognised university teacher* and *distinguished university teacher*. A person who wants to apply for appointment as a distinguished university teacher must first have been appointed recognised university teacher.

A teacher who has been appointed as a recognised university teacher or a distinguished university teacher is to be viewed as an asset and a resource for their subject, division and school – especially in driving pedagogical development work, organising and leading education, and initiating collegial exchanges of experience and knowledge about teaching and learning. Those appointed as recognised and distinguished university teachers are also expected to contribute to the pedagogical development at the university as a whole by taking on pedagogical assignments and tasks of various kinds and at various levels within the organisation.

Eligibility requirements

A person is eligible for a review with the aim of being appointed as a recognised university teacher and distinguished university teacher if they

- are employed until further notice as a teacher at Örebro University²,
- have completed qualifying courses in higher education pedagogy of at least 10 weeks,
- have spent at least five years teaching within higher education,

¹ The model is broadly regulated in the vice-chancellor's guidelines *Key principles for the appointment of docents, recognised university teachers and distinguished university teachers*, ORU 2025/01150.

² The categories of teaching staff that exist at Örebro University are outlined in the university's appointment procedures.

- have spent at least 3,000 clock hours teaching within higher education, and
- have a broad teaching experience that includes various types of learning activities and modes of assessment.

Criteria

For each tier of the model, there are two criteria which the teacher must meet.

Criteria for appointment as a recognised university teacher

1. Teaching expertise and skills

The teacher excels in their relationship with their students and is very skilled at translating their pedagogical approach into learning activities and examinations, supporting students' learning, and adapting teaching to different conditions.

2. Ability for pedagogical reflection

The teacher systematically reflects on their teaching and their students' learning, grounding their reflection in higher education pedagogy or subject didactics research, and develops their learning activities and examinations based on their insights.

Criteria for appointment as a distinguished university teacher

1. Pedagogical leadership

The teacher takes a leading pedagogical role among the teaching staff, successfully organises and drives pedagogical development, and promotes collegial exchange and collaboration among teachers.

2. Pedagogical knowledge development

The teacher examines their pedagogical practice with a scholarly approach to teaching and learning and contributes to the development of higher education pedagogy or subject didactics knowledge by documenting their conclusions and sharing them with others at conferences or in publications.

Application

Applications for appointment as a recognised university teacher or distinguished university teacher are processed continuously throughout the year. Applications are to be made following special instructions available on the university webpage.

An application for appointment as a *recognised university teacher* must be accompanied by the following documents:

- Annexes verifying the teacher's teaching expertise and skills and ability for pedagogical reflection.
- Teaching portfolio

- A certificate of completed qualifying courses in higher education pedagogy, alternatively a certificate of a completed assessment of equivalent qualifications and experience. A person who has completed all their qualifying courses in higher education pedagogy at Örebro University or has had the equivalence assessment done at Örebro University does not need to attach a certificate.
- A joint recommendation of the application from the head of division and the head of school stating:
 - that the teacher has spent at least five years teaching within higher education,
 - that the teacher has spent at least 3,000 clock hours teaching within higher education,
 - that the teacher's teaching experience is broad and includes various types of learning activities and modes of assessment,
 - that the teacher excels in their pedagogical activities and in relation to students, colleagues, and administration,
 - that Örebro Student Union or the student section in question has been approached to obtain students' opinions on the applicant's expertise and skills as a teacher, and
 - that the division and school support the appointment of the teacher as a recognised university teacher.

An application for appointment as a *distinguished university teacher* must be accompanied by the following documents:

- Annexes verifying the teacher's pedagogical leadership and pedagogical knowledge development.
- Teaching portfolio
- Certificate of appointment as a recognised university teacher. This only applies to applicants who have been appointed as a recognised university teacher at a higher education institution other than Örebro University.
- A certificate of completed qualifying courses in higher education pedagogy, alternatively a certificate of a completed assessment of equivalent qualifications and experience. This only applies to applicants who have been appointed as a recognised university teacher at a higher education institution other than Örebro University.
- A joint recommendation of the application from the head of division and the head of school stating:
 - that the teacher excels in their pedagogical activities and in relation to students, colleagues and administration,
 - that Örebro Student Union or the student section in question has been approached to obtain students' opinions on the applicant's expertise and skills as a teacher, and

- that the division and school support the appointment of the teacher as a distinguished university teacher.

If the recommendation refers to a teacher who has been appointed as a recognised university teacher at a higher education institution other than Örebro University, it must also verify:

- that the teacher has spent at least five years teaching within higher education,
- that the teacher has spent at least 3,000 clock hours teaching within higher education, and
- that the teacher's teaching experience is broad and includes various types of learning activities and modes of assessment.

External expert assessments

For assessment of the application, the opinion of at least one external expert is to be sought. A person who is appointed external expert must be well suited to assess teaching expertise, for instance, by having taken the national course for external experts in higher education pedagogy; having themselves received appointment(s) as a recognised university teacher or distinguished university teacher; or being active within the higher education pedagogy research field. It is also an advantage if the external expert has a good understanding of subject didactics.

The external expert is to assess if the teacher meets the criteria for the tier in question, give reasons for their assessment in a written statement, and provide a recommendation whether or not the teacher should be appointed as a recognised/distinguished university teacher.

Decision

The vice-chancellor has delegated the appointment of recognised university teachers and distinguished university teachers to the faculty boards. In turn, the faculty boards have delegated certain decisions to the academic appointments committees and their chairs³.

After an applicant has been appointed as a recognised university teacher or distinguished university teacher, the school is expected to organise an event in acknowledgement of the decision, giving the teacher the opportunity to give a presentation of their pedagogical practice.

Appointments at other higher education institutions

A person appointed as a recognised university teacher or distinguished university teacher at another higher education institution does not need to apply for a new appointment but

³ Vice-chancellor and faculty board delegations.

is considered a recognised university teacher and distinguished university teacher,
respectively, also at Örebro University.

Adoption of these guidelines

These guidelines are adopted jointly by the faculty boards. Minor amendments of a non-essential nature may be decided on jointly by the faculty chairs.