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Appointment of docents at the Faculty of Medicine and Health

Policy document Örebro University

Category: Guidelines

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Background

Docent is an academic title that indicates that the holder has reached a level of research expertise and teaching qualifications and experience that significantly exceeds the requirements for a doctoral degree.

The vice-chancellor has established the following principles for appointment of docents¹:

- To appoint a researcher as a docent, the appointment must be deemed to benefit research and education at the faculty.
- Docents are normally appointed in a main field of study and/or third-cycle subject area taught at Örebro University.
- A person who has obtained a doctoral degree is qualified for the appointment as a docent.
- Each faculty board determines guidelines with criteria for research expertise and teaching qualifications and experience, as well as any other requirements for the appointment as a docent.

Responsibilities, rights and obligations

A person holding a docentship in a subject means that they have demonstrated autonomous research ability and qualifications and experience within higher education pedagogy, and that they possess a notably higher degree of research expertise than is required for a doctoral degree. The majority of the qualifications pertaining to research and higher education pedagogy should be recent.

A docentship does not entail any designated resources. An docent has the opportunity and is expected to accept assignments as principal supervisor of doctoral students, member of examining committees, external reviewer and/or other expert roles. They are expected to assume responsibility for and be proactive in teaching as well as research within the faculty.

Qualified applicants

An application for a docentship should normally be submitted no earlier than three years after the applicant has obtained their doctoral degree. The purpose of this waiting period is to enable the applicant to develop and document their autonomy as a researcher and to establish their own research projects.

Assessment of the applicant's qualifications is not based solely on the demonstrated expertise thus far. It is also essential that they are able to present plans for future research and teaching activities. The applicant's independent research track and their teaching activities going forward must be outlined in the application.

¹ Key principles for the appointment of docents, recognised university teachers and distinguished university teachers, guidelines, ORU 2025/01150.

External applicants

For applicants outside of Örebro University (ORU), an affiliation to the university is required. For applicants who have their employment at Region Örebro County (RÖL), and no concurrent employment at ORU, affiliation with ORU is required by local agreement² before the application for appointment as an unsalaried docent can be considered by the faculty board.

For applicants who have their employment at an external employer other than RÖL, for example another region or a private healthcare provider, affiliation is required in accordance with the guidelines for affiliation at Örebro University³ before the application for appointment as an unsalaried docent can be considered by the faculty board.

Docentships at other higher education institutions

A person appointed docent at another Swedish higher education institution who is subsequently employed at Örebro University do not need to apply to transfer their docentships, as the title will remain fully valid.

Research expertise

In addition to what is required for the doctoral degree, all applicants must display notable autonomous research expertise in their total research production, including among other things, theoretical and methodological knowledge, analytical acuity and a capacity for originality. This means that the applicant after the defence of their doctoral thesis has

- developed their autonomy as a researcher, and
- specialised and broadened their own research.

The applicant should also have experience of independently managing research projects and of applying, as principal applicant, for external research funding in national or international competition. It is essential that the applicant's research production is coherent and exhibits sufficient research depth. The majority of the publications must have been written after the defence of the doctoral thesis. The applicant is to demonstrate independent research by describing in the application the degree of their contribution to each of the works listed. Works published before the doctoral thesis, but not included therein, may be included, but are not to be cited as works in which the applicant was the principal author. Assessment of authorship order is to be made in accordance with the faculty's publishing policy⁴ in which the positions as lead and last author are sought to demonstrate autonomy.

² *Samverkan och villkor för knytning av aktiva forskaranställda vid RÖL och ORU, så kallad affiliering* (Collaboration and conditions for linking active research staff to RÖL and ORU, so-called affiliation) (ORU 6.1-03154/2015)

³ Guidelines for affiliation at Örebro University (ORU 1.2.1-05688/2018)

⁴ The publishing policy (in Swedish) can be found on the faculty website at www.oru.se

For applicants within medical or healthcare science subjects

Articles must be original works, published or accepted for publication (verified by a copy of the notification thereof) in for the field reputable **international scientific** peer-reviewed journals. Occasional meta-analyses or systematic reviews generating new knowledge may also be included. Non-peer-reviewed articles or articles published in journal supplements are not considered to be original works, nor are proceedings, case reports, study protocols, non-systematic reviews or editorials, etc.

The benchmark, that is, the minimum scope of the total scholarly production, is 15 original works, including the articles in the doctoral thesis. The quality and authorship order are considered which means that deviations from the benchmark may be made up or down depending on the quality of the scholarly works and the applicant's contributions to the same, as demonstrated among other things through the authorship order and the number of authors. The quality and scope of other publications are also considered. Moreover, the applicant is to be the principal author (lead or last) of 3–5 original works (depending on the scope of the postdoctoral works listed in the application). Shared lead or last authorship means that more publications may be needed. Articles where previous supervisors are not contributing underpin the image of the applicant's autonomous research.

For applicants with a social science specialisation

Publications are to be international and scholarly, externally peer-reviewed and published after the applicant has obtained their doctoral degree. In terms of quality, they are to significantly contribute to the field. In scope, the cited research contributions are to correspond to at least one further doctoral thesis and be on par with the research contributions required for appointment as a docent in the subject nationally. Works cited may not contain extensive overlaps. The same applies to cited publications in relation to the doctoral thesis.

Teaching qualifications and experience

All applicants are to have the ability to create, in a skilful manner, conditions for learning and development based on research and reflection on teaching, learning and didactics in higher education, in accordance with the university's educational philosophy. Örebro University's template for preparing a teaching portfolio is to be used for presenting teaching qualifications and experience. Teaching qualifications and experience are assessed with regard to, notably, how the applicant has put their own teaching philosophy into practice and the results thereof, as well as their teaching experience of various types of instruction: lectures, seminars, demonstrations, supervision. Teaching qualifications and experience cited should include teaching at undergraduate, master's and doctoral levels.

In addition, the applicant

- is to have gained the teaching qualifications and experience that are obtained through 10 weeks of qualifying courses in higher education pedagogy or equivalent training, or account for any corresponding teaching qualifications and experience gained in any other way. The applicant is recommended to take the 10-week qualifying course offered by the Centre for Academic Development

required for appointment as senior lecturer. More information can be found at www.oru.se.

- is to have completed the course Supervising PhD Students or equivalent courses on research supervision.

It is considered an additional qualification if the applicant also has experience of the following:

- course coordination
- course development
- educational development work
- programme coordination
- authoring teaching materials
- clinical educational development work

A significant portion of the cited teaching experience should be recent.

For applicants within medical or healthcare science subjects

In addition to the above, qualifications and experience may also comprise specialist medical and in-service training for medical doctors (doctor's specialist medical training courses and CPD courses). Teaching experience from teaching activities other than the above may also be cited, with the exception of bedside teaching.

A quantitative benchmark for total teaching experience is 120 hours of teaching, including a maximum of 40 hours of supervisory experience (independent projects, doctoral supervision, doctor's specialist medical training projects, [one-year] master's and bachelor's dissertations). Supervision of degree projects at the (one- and two-year) master's level as well as assistant supervision of doctoral students are considered an additional qualification.

For applicants with a social science specialisation

The quality and scope of the applicant's teaching experience is assessed with regard to the different types of instruction: lectures, seminars, supervision, etc. A quantitative benchmark for total teaching experience is 400 hours of teaching, including the equivalent of 50 hours of supervisory experience.

Subject expertise

The subject for the docent title is to mirror the applicant's principal scientific and teaching specialisation. For a docentship in a clinical subject (medical specialty), specialist medical training in the subject in question is required.

Other competence

Collaboration and public engagement in line with what is referred to as "third-stream activities" are considered an additional qualification.

Application and application process

The application for appointment as a docent is processed and assessed by the Academic Appointments Committee for the Faculty of Medicine and Health. Based on an overall assessment of the documents submitted by the applicant and the external expert assessment, the committee will either recommend or advise against appointment. The faculty board makes the final decision on appointment of docents.

Should supplements to the application be deemed necessary, these must be submitted within a reasonable time period (maximum of one month), or the matter will be dismissed from further processing. If the application is denied at any level, a new application may be submitted no earlier than after 12 months.

The application for appointment as a docent in a specific subject is to be made using a designated form. The application must clearly state if it refers to medical/healthcare science subjects or the social science specialisation. The application must be accompanied by the following documents:

- recommendation of the application from the head of subject/specialisation coordinator, including an assessment of the benefits brought to research and education at Örebro University,
- recommendation of the application from the head of school,
- copy of the doctoral degree certificate,
- certificate of completion of the course Supervising PhD Students or equivalent,
- certificate of completion of the 10-week qualifying course in higher education pedagogy or equivalent, or documentation of corresponding qualifications and experience,
- teaching portfolio,
- curriculum vitae,
- publications (not abstracts) cited for external expert assessment,
- proof/certificate of the specialty in question (for those applying for a docentship in a clinical subject),
- recommendation of the application from head of subject/specialisation coordinator, including an assessment of the relevant social science affiliation (for those applying for a docentship with a social science specialisation).

Applicants who have completed the courses above at Örebro University do not need to include course certificates with the application.

Applicants who have defended their doctoral theses at Örebro University do not need to include a copy of the doctoral degree certificate with the application.

The application and attachments (including scholarly publications) are to be written in Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, or English. Documents in other languages must be translated by an authorised translator to Swedish or English. Incomplete applications will not be processed.

The application is to be addressed to the Faculty Board of Medicine and Health and submitted via email to registrator@oru.se, alternatively per regular post (Records Office, Örebro University, SE-701 82 Örebro).

External expert

In assessing the applicant's expertise, qualifications and experience, the opinion of an external expert is to be sought. The person nominated as external expert is to be a professor (unless special circumstances exist) at another higher education institution. In a written statement, the expert is to substantiate their assessment of whether the applicant meets the requirements for research expertise and teaching qualifications and experience.

Decision

Decisions to appoint a docent or reject an application thereof is made by the faculty board. When the decision on appointment has been made, the docent certificate will be sent to the applicant.

Docent's lecture

The newly appointed docent is to hold an introductory docent's lecture on their research. The target group can be the surrounding community, fellow researchers or students. It is the responsibility of the head of subject/specialisation coordinator to arrange, together with the docent, such a lecture.

Entry into force and revisions

This decision is effective as of 1 November 2023. Language and editorial amendments to these guidelines that leave the substance therein unchanged may be made as needed by faculty management. The faculty board must be informed of any such changes.