



Guidelines for Doctoral Studentships

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Guidelines for Doctoral Studentships

1. General information

The university applies the provisions on the employment of doctoral students found in Chapter 5, Sections 1-7 of the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance. A decision to employ a doctoral student cannot be appealed, in accordance with Chapter 12, Section 2 of the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100). Information about student finance for doctoral studentships and other forms of employment is provided in the *Admission Regulations for Third-Cycle Study at Södertörn University*. More detailed information about doctoral studentships is available on the employee web's pages regarding doctoral students, staff and administrative procedures.

2. Employment decision

Before a decision on employment can be made, a doctoral student must be formally admitted to Södertörn University or another higher education institution with degree-awarding powers at third-cycle level. The first decision about employment on a doctoral studentship is made by the vice-chancellor as soon as possible after admission and can be valid for a maximum of one year.¹ The decision cannot be appealed.² New employment decisions are subsequently made for a maximum of two years at a time, up to the full-time equivalent of four years, by the head of school or the equivalent management function where the doctoral student is employed. A decision on renewed employment may not be delegated under the university's Delegation of Authority.³

3. Employment terms and conditions

A doctoral student must primarily devote themselves to their studies.⁴ In addition to their studies, a doctoral student may work with departmental duties that are equivalent to no more than 20 per cent of full-time employment – see Section 8. Otherwise, a doctoral studentship entails that the doctoral student has the same terms and conditions, benefits and responsibilities as other employees at the university. For example, the university's Guidelines for Secondary Employment also apply to doctoral students.

¹ Section 6 and the second paragraph of Section 7 in Chapter 5 of the Higher Education Ordinance

² Item 1 of Section 2 in Chapter 12 of the Higher Education Ordinance

³ See the current *Besluts- och delegationsordning för Södertörns högskola*

⁴ Section 2 in Chapter 5 of the Higher Education Ordinance

Doctoral students at Södertörn University, like its teaching staff, have a local collective bargaining agreement that regulates how all annual leave is automatically scheduled during the summer as a “standard holiday” that starts on the Monday prior to the Midsummer holiday. A doctoral student that starts their employment after 1 August in their first year as a doctoral student must have a written agreement with the employer on scheduling their annual leave before the end of the calendar year. During the final period’s employment decision, the doctoral student must also come to an agreement with the employer on the scheduling of their remaining annual leave. If a doctoral student wishes to schedule their annual leave differently to the “standard holiday”, this must be done after agreement with the head of department before 30 April in the year leave is requested.⁵

4. Salary

Södertörn University has a local collective bargaining agreement for the salary scale for doctoral students, which regulates doctoral students’ salaries. This salary scale entails collective salary levels, so doctoral students do not have individual pay negotiations. The salary scale is regularly renegotiated. The salary scale has four levels and is based upon the length of employment. There is a move from one level to another after 12, 24 and 36 months of full-time employment on a doctoral studentship.

5. Period of employment, part-time employment and leave in exceptional circumstances

Employment on a doctoral studentship is for a fixed term and can never continue for longer than one year after receiving a doctoral degree.

For studies that lead to a doctoral degree, the total period of employment may be no longer than that equivalent to four years of full-time third-cycle education. For studies that lead to a licentiate degree, the total period of employment may be no longer than that equivalent to two years of full-time third-cycle education.⁶

However, the total period of employment may be longer due to exceptional circumstances or departmental duties. See more information about extensions to the period of employment in sections 7 and 8.

Employment on a doctoral studentship is for full-time work but, if a doctoral student requests it, employment may be on a part-time basis at a minimum of 50 per cent of a full-time position.⁷ A doctoral studentship may thus last for a maximum of eight years if employment is part time.

⁵ Sections 1–3 of the local collective bargaining agreement, annual leave for teaching staff, doctoral students etc.

⁶ Paragraph three of Section 7 in Chapter 5 of the Higher Education Ordinance

⁷ Section 3 a in Chapter 5 of the Higher Education Ordinance

An application for part-time employment with the doctoral student's reasons for requesting it must be submitted on a specific form and preceded by consultation between the doctoral student, principal supervisor, director of studies or supervisory collegium and the head of department concerning any consequences, such as study route, course participation, supervision, departmental duties and financing. If the application is approved by the supervisory collegium or director of studies and the head of department, a new decision on employment with a change in scope is made by the head of school.

6. Leave of absence for leave from studies

At Södertörn University, leave of absence due to requested full-time leave from studies in doctoral education is regarded as an exception, because leave of absence for reasons other than those stated in Section 7 is not a given right in fixed-term employment under a collective bargaining agreement. Leave of absence for leave from studies may be granted only once during the period of study and for no more than one year.

The application must be submitted to the head of school and the reason for leave must be carefully explained by the doctoral student. The main reason should be that it benefits their studies and subsequent career.

The application must be submitted on a specific form and preceded by consultation between the doctoral student, principal supervisor, director of studies or supervisory collegium and the head of department concerning any consequences, such as study route, course participation, supervision, departmental duties and financing. If the application is approved by the supervisory collegium or director of studies and the head of department, the form can be submitted to the head of school as the basis on which a decision on leave from studies is made.

If leave from studies is granted it must be noted in the doctoral student's individual study plan. Leave of absence for leave from studies is counted as a ground for extension – see Section 7, "Other exceptional circumstances".

7. Extensions to doctoral studentships due to exceptional circumstances

A doctoral student who has been absent from studies due to the reasons stated in the Higher Education Ordinance⁸ is normally compensated for lost time by an extension to the period of employment.

- **Illness, parental leave or leave for service in the Swedish defence forces**
An extension is normally granted for the actual period of absence the doctoral

⁸ Section 7 in Chapter 5 of the Higher Education Ordinance

student has reported in the university's HR and salary system.

- **Elected position in a trade union**

An extension is normally granted for the time required for union work under the Trade Union Representatives (Status at the Workplace) Act (1974:358), collective agreement and agreements between the employer and employee organisations at the university. The doctoral student reports the scope of the position to their line manager for registration in the university's staffing system.

- **Elected position in student organisations and certain other elected positions**

The doctoral student reports the scope of the position to their line manager for registration in the university's staffing system. Extensions and application for such are regulated in *Riktlinjer för förlängning av doktoranders anställningstid vid vissa förtroendeuppdrag (Guidelines for the extension of doctoral studentships for certain elected positions)*.⁹

Decisions on extensions due to the above reasons are made by the head of school. This is done through a new employment decision that starts to apply after the doctoral student has been employed for the equivalent of four years of full-time work for a doctoral degree or two years for a licentiate degree.

- **Other exceptional circumstances**

Exceptional circumstances as a reason for extension other than those provided in the Higher Education Ordinance¹⁰ can only be approved on rare occasions. This could be leave of absence for leave from studies, see Section 6, or extraordinary events and circumstances outside the doctoral student's control and which have a negative impact on their ability to conduct their studies.

An application for an extension to the doctoral studentship due to extraordinary events and circumstances must include a clear background and reasoning. Decisions on extensions that are financed by the university are made by the vice-chancellor after being prepared by the supervisory collegium and steering committee. Decisions on extensions that are financed with the academic schools' funding are made by the head of school after being prepared by the supervisory collegium or director of studies along with the head of department.

A new employment decision is drawn up by the head of school in both the above cases, and starts to apply after the doctoral student has been employed for the equivalent of four years of full-time work for a doctoral degree or two years for a licentiate degree.

⁹ *Riktlinjer för förlängning av doktoranders anställnings- och utbildningstid vid vissa förtroendeuppdrag*

¹⁰ Section 7 in Chapter 5 and Section 29 in Chapter 6 of the Higher Education Ordinance

Applications – on any grounds for extension – must be submitted to the HR generalist at least two months before the end of the total period of employment. Absence of at least five calendar days is required for an extension during the last period of employment. No extensions are possible after the doctoral student has received their notification of termination of employment.

8. Extension of doctoral studentship due to departmental duties

Over their total period of employment, in addition to their studies, a doctoral student may spend a maximum of 20 per cent of full-time working with education, research and administration, known as departmental duties.¹¹ If departmental duties exceed 20 per cent for a period, an equivalently reduced proportion of departmental duties may be performed in another period.

Departmental duties must be agreed between the doctoral student, principal supervisor and the line manager before they begin. The university cannot demand that a doctoral student perform departmental duties. The scope and content of departmental duties must be stated in the doctoral student's individual study plan.

Performed departmental duties provide the equivalent extension to the period of employment, as a doctoral student cannot be granted overtime or compensation for overtime when employed on a doctoral studentship. An extension to a doctoral studentship is equivalent to the clock hours reported in the university staffing system by the line manager. A decision on extension is taken by the head of school, through a new employment decision that starts to apply after the doctoral student has been employed for the equivalent of four years of full-time work for a doctoral degree or two years for a licentiate degree.

A doctoral studentship cannot be extended due to departmental duties or other reasons for extension after studies have been completed. Therefore, any departmental duties for the last year of study should be jointly planned by the doctoral student, principal supervisor, head of department and HR generalist.

9. Reporting activity and financing

The university is obliged to report student finance and the degree of activity to Statistics Sweden twice a year. The degree of activity only includes the time spent on doctoral studies. To obtain the degree of activity, departmental duties, sick leave, parental leave or other

¹¹ Section 2 in Chapter 5 of the Higher Education Ordinance

leave must be subtracted. For 100 per cent activity, the doctoral student must conduct full-time studies covering 40 hours per week.

The doctoral student is responsible for correctly reporting any absences in the university's HR and salary system and checking with their line manager that all information about grounds for extension is entered in the staffing system. The school's administrative services are responsible for retrieving information from these systems and reporting activity and financing to Statistics Sweden.

10. Reduced period of employment

During the admission process, credit transfers from previous education may not give one applicant an advantage over others¹² or be linked to demands for a reduced period of employment.¹³ After being admitted, a doctoral student may apply for a credit transfer that is dealt with in accordance with the university's Delegation of Authority and *Rules for Credit Transfers*. Credits transferred after studies start may not result in a reduced period of employment unless the doctoral student requests this.

11. Employment for continuing studies following a licentiate degree

For admissions to continued studies after a completed licentiate degree a vacancy must be advertised according to the normal procedures.¹⁴ The advert and admission decision must state that the continuing studies are only financed with the equivalent of two years of a full-time doctoral studentship.

If an applicant with a licentiate degree applies for a doctoral studentship in the same or an equivalent research subject, which has been advertised for the equivalent of four years of full-time work, the assessment panel may, with the applicant's permission, propose admission for continuing studies for the purpose of obtaining a doctoral degree with funding equivalent to two years of a full-time doctoral studentship. The admission decision must state that the continuing studies are only financed with the equivalent of two years of a full-time doctoral studentship.

¹² Section 41 in Chapter 7 of the Higher Education Ordinance

¹³ *Admission Regulations for Third-Cycle Education at Södertörn University*

¹⁴ *Admission Regulations for Third-Cycle Education at Södertörn University*