



Faculty Office

## Guidelines for admission to PhD studies at the Faculty of Medicine

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*The guidelines are translated from Swedish. In the event of any discrepancy, the Swedish version of this document has preferential interpretation.*

This document contains guidelines and provisions for the practical application of *Admission rules for doctoral education at Lund University* (STYR 2021/2700) at the Faculty of Medicine. The document describes the procedures for preparing decisions on admission to PhD studies that the Faculty Board is responsible for establishing in accordance with the university's regulations on the delegation of decision-making powers (STYR 2023/662). Other important provisions on which the document is based are the Higher Education Act and the Higher Education Ordinance, as well as the *Regulations for doctoral education at Lund University* (STYR 2018/562).

## 1. Prerequisites

### 1.1. Eligibility and requirements

To be admitted to the PhD programme, the applicant must meet the eligibility requirements.

#### *General and specific admission requirements*

General admission requirements are regulated in the Higher Education Ordinance and those who are eligible:

- have been awarded a second-cycle qualification, or
- have met the requirements for courses comprising at least 240 credits of which at least 60 credits were awarded in the second cycle, or
- have acquired substantially equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad.

The Research Studies Board may permit an exemption from the general admission requirements for an individual applicant if there are special grounds.

In accordance with a decision by the Research Studies Board, the following requirements apply for specific eligibility for PhD studies

- at least 60 credits within the subject area for the PhD programme

- For students with qualifications awarded outside Scandinavia, admission to PhD studies at the faculty requires English language proficiency equivalent to a grade of Pass in the TOEFL or IELTS test. The maximum possible points total on the TOEFL test is 660 and the requirement for admission to PhD studies at the faculty is a minimum of 550 points on the paper-based test, at least 213 points in the computer-based test and at least 79 in the online test. For the IELTS test the requirement is that the academic module is completed with a result of not less than 6.5 with no sub-component under 5.0.

### ***Funding***

At Lund University, those admitted to doctoral education are to be primarily employed as doctoral students. According to the Higher Education Ordinance, only as many doctoral students may be admitted as can be guaranteed study funding.

Admission may also take place with another form of funding, for example through an agreement with another employer or through an external scholarship. In this case, an assessment must be made before admission if it can be ensured that funding and time is available for the applicant to complete the programme within the stipulated time. If, during the course of the project, it becomes clear that another employer cannot fulfil the obligation to finance the PhD project, the department will take over the financial responsibility for the PhD project until other possible arrangements have been established.

### ***Joint doctoral education***

Within doctoral education, it is possible to complete parts of the education at another higher education institution and thereby obtain a joint or double degree. The prerequisite for a doctoral student to be admitted to a joint PhD programme is that an agreement is established between the participating higher education institutions. The agreement shall comply with the provisions of the Higher Education Ordinance (Chapter 6, sections 11a and 11b) and the university's admission rules (STYR 2021/2700).

## **1.2. Advertisement**

Unless there is an exception, vacant doctoral positions must be advertised at least three weeks before the deadline for applications. The application must be advertised on the university's website and should receive appropriate national and international circulation.

There are exceptions to the requirement to advertise:

- when admitting a doctoral student who is to complete the programme within the framework of employment with an employer other than the university, for example at Region Skåne or as an industrial doctoral student.
- when admitting a doctoral student who has previously started their PhD education at another higher education institution, or
- if there are similar special reasons, such as doctoral students with external scholarships.

## **2. Admission of a PhD student financed through employment as doctoral student**

Applications for advertised doctoral positions are made via Lund University's recruitment system.

### **2.1. Review panel**

The faculty shall ensure that the preparation of decisions on admission to third-cycle education is transparent and legally secure. Conflict-of-interest shall always be considered.

Preparation and selection shall be made by a review panel. The decision to appoint a panel is made by the vice dean responsible for PhD studies in connection with the adoption of the project plan. The panel shall include at least two members of teaching staff holding the qualifications for docentship, of whom at least one shall be someone other than the prospective supervisor. At the Faculty of Medicine, the review panel consists of the deputy head of department with responsibility for PhD studies, the prospective main supervisor and an additional teacher or researcher with at least a doctorate degree.

Beneficially, the review panel can be supplemented with additional members to ensure a thorough assessment of the applicant(s).

Doctoral students are entitled to be represented on the review panel.

## **2.2. Assessment and selection**

After receiving the application, the HR section of the relevant department checks the applicant's information regarding general and specific admission requirements.

According to the Higher Education Act, a selection must be made among the applicants if not all qualified applicants can be accepted. This selection is made by the review panel. Selection among applicants who meet the entry requirements shall be made with regard to their ability to benefit from the programme. Important assessment criteria must be stated in the call for applications.

Review of the application or applications may be supplemented by other elements, such as interviews with a group of prime candidates.

## **2.3. Opinion statement**

The review panel shall compile its assessment in an opinion statement containing information about the call for applications, an account of the selection process, including how many candidates were considered for the doctoral position based on eligibility and other qualifications, and a proposal for a suitable candidate with justification, based on the candidate's ability to benefit from the programme.

In connection, the deputy head of department conducts a final assessment of the candidate's eligibility and certifies that the case has been prepared in accordance with current regulations.

The HR section at the relevant department must send the statement to all applicants, who then have the opportunity to submit an objection to the proposal. The time that the applicants have to submit an objection shall be at least two weeks and this shall be stated in the information to the applicants. The objection must be submitted to the head of department concerned.

## **2.4. Decision**

After the time-period for submitting objections has passed, the candidate and main supervisor apply for admission to the PhD education to the vice dean responsible for PhD studies. The application must contain:

- Application for admission according to the form
- The applicant's CV and degree certificate
- The opinion statement of the review panel

Any objections are appended to the application.

The vice dean then makes a decision on admission to the PhD education programme. The head of department or the person to whom the head of department has delegated the right of decision at the relevant department makes the decision on employment as a doctoral student.

The HR section at the relevant department is responsible for ensuring that all applicants are informed of the decision within one week of it being made. The decision cannot be appealed. The PhD Studies Office is responsible for ensuring that the selected candidate receives information about admission.

A decision to employ a student from a country outside the European Union as a PhD student may only be made after the student has been admitted to doctoral studies and the Swedish Migration Agency have granted the student a residence permit.

## **3. Admission of a PhD student funded through employment by another employer or an external scholarship**

### **3.1. Review panel**

The faculty shall ensure that the preparation of decisions on admission to PhD education is transparent and legally secure. Conflict-of-interest shall always be considered.

Preparation and selection shall be made by a review panel. The decision to appoint a panel is made by the vice dean responsible for PhD studies in connection with the adoption of the project plan. The panel shall include at least two members of teaching staff holding the qualifications for docentship, of whom at least one shall be someone other than the prospective supervisor. At the Faculty of Medicine, the review panel consists of the deputy head of department with responsibility for PhD studies, the main supervisor and an additional teacher or researcher with at least a doctorate degree.

Beneficially, the review panel can be supplemented with additional members, appropriately the hospital's head of department in cases of education in clinical setting, to ensure a thorough assessment of the applicant(s).

Doctoral students are entitled to be represented on the review panel.

### **3.2. Assessment**

The assessment of the candidate's merits is made by the review panel. The deputy head of department conducts a final assessment of the candidate's eligibility and an assessment of the conditions for study.

### **3.3. Opinion statement**

The review panel shall compile its assessment in an opinion statement containing information on the candidate's qualifications and ability to benefit from the doctoral education.

Risk assessment, as well as assessment of study funding, is particularly important when admitting PhD students with funding other than employment as a PhD student, such as other employers or scholarships.

### **3.4. Decision**

The opinion statement, signed by the deputy head of department responsible for PhD studies, is sent to the PhD Studies Office along with the application for admission to the PhD education. The application must contain:

- Application for admission according to the form
- The applicant's CV and degree certificate
- Certificate from the employer if the doctoral student will undertake the education within an employment at an external employer.

Thereafter, the vice dean decides on admission to the doctoral education.

The decision cannot be appealed. The PhD Studies Office is responsible for ensuring that the selected candidate receives information about admission.