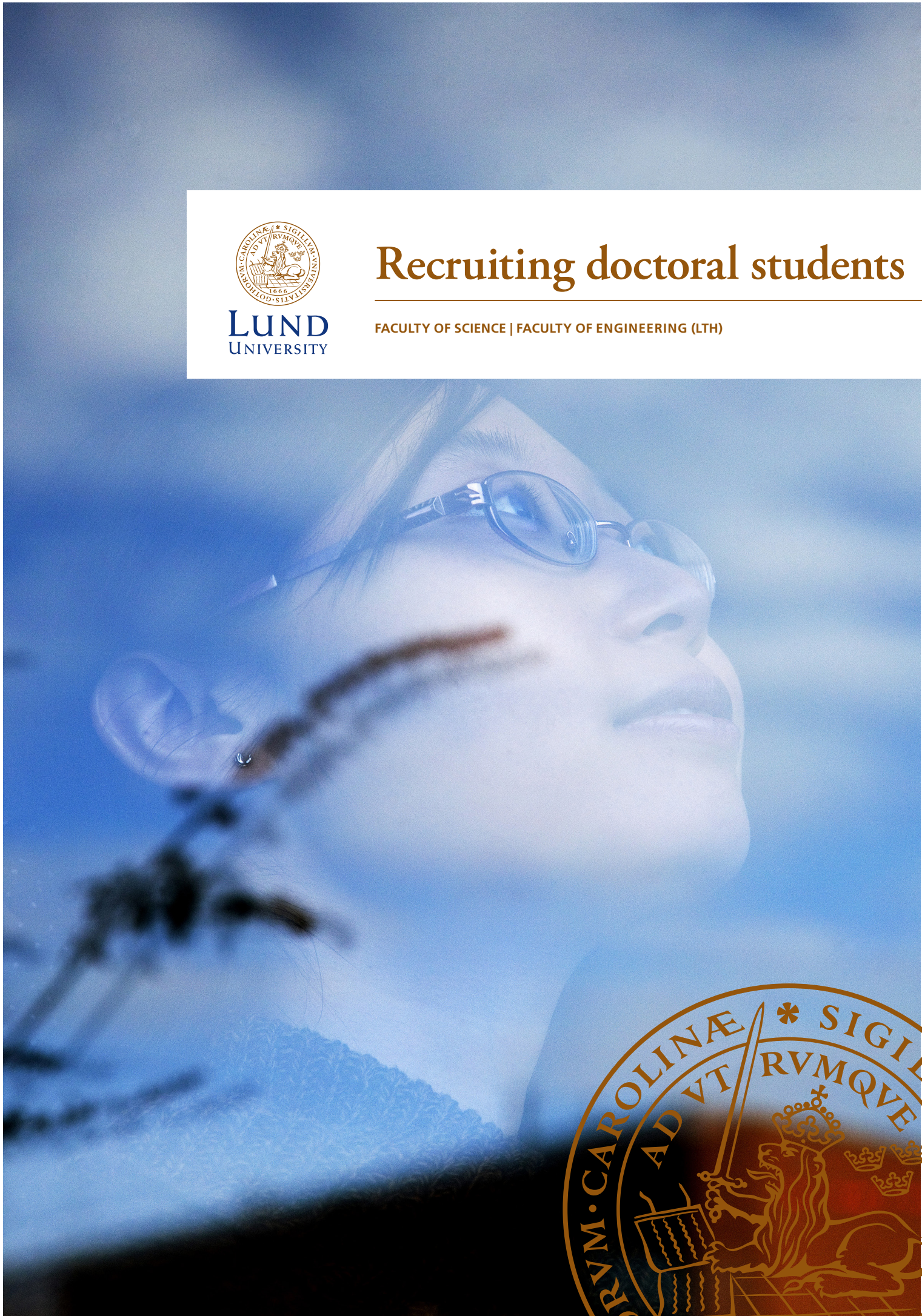




**LUND**  
UNIVERSITY

# Recruiting doctoral students

FACULTY OF SCIENCE | FACULTY OF ENGINEERING (LTH)



# Preface

Recruiting a new doctoral student is a strategically important decision and often a major investment for the organisation. A well-executed recruitment process increases the chances of a successful recruitment and reduces the risks of selection error.

The needs of the organisation, expressed in a person specification, are to be guiding elements throughout the recruitment process. The recruiting manager, together with the head of department, is responsible for the recruitment, with the support from Human Resources. Include the organisation's objectives with regard to gender equality and equal opportunities in the recruitment process.

The recruitment process is to be thoroughly documented and professionally, transparently and promptly executed.

The present handbook is intended to serve as guidance throughout the process of recruiting a doctoral student. The human resources administrators at the faculties are also available for further information and support.

All the appendices in the handbook are available to fill in online on the faculties' websites.

# Contents

<b>PREPARATION</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Recruitment group .....	3
Needs analysis .....	3
Personal specification .....	3
Planning the recruitment process .....	3
Screening questions .....	3
Suggestions for screening questions .....	3
Call for applications .....	3
<b>SELECTION AND INTERVIEW</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Making a shortlist .....	4
Prior to the first interview .....	4
First interview .....	4
Proposed structure, first interview .....	4
Prior to the second interview .....	4
Second interview .....	5
Proposed structure, second interview .....	5
Checking of references .....	5
Final assesment .....	5
<b>PRIOR TO THE APPOINTMENT</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Announcement .....	6
Objection .....	6
Individual study plan, admission and decision on appointment .....	6
Residence permit for third contry citizens .....	6
Introduction .....	7
<b>TEMPLATE PERSON SPECIFICATION</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>TEMPLATE SKILL-BASED QUESTIONS</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>TEMPLATE INTERVIEW</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>TEMPLATE CHECKING FOR REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>TEMPLATE ASSESSMENT MATRIX</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>NOTES</b> .....	<b>15</b>



# Preparation

## RECRUITMENT GROUP

Before recruiting, you should establish a recruitment group. Possible group members could include the head of department, head of division, research leaders, supervisors and HR. Student/doctoral student representatives are to be given the opportunity to participate in the recruitment group. Try to limit the number of participants to 3–4 people. This group should be responsible for the entire recruitment process. More people can be included in certain stages of the process. Throughout the recruitment process, attention must be paid to gender equality, diversity and conflicts of interest.

## NEEDS ANALYSIS

Define the needs of the organisation by deciding on the following:

- Objectives of the project?
- Objectives of the research studies programme/doctoral studentship?
- What responsibilities and duties shall the position involve?
- What requirements must the doctoral student fulfil in terms of education, experience, knowledge and skills?
- What does the current staff composition of the group look like? Do you want to change it? Please explain.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

It is important to write a well-conceived person specification, as it will be the basis for the entire recruitment process. The person specification is to be based on the needs analysis, see above. Persons other than those who are involved in the recruitment group can participate in drafting the person specification to ensure that all perspectives of the organisation are included. The person specification shall define the admission requirements and other requirements (minimum requirements which applicants must fulfil) and assessment criteria (desirable qualifications). HR can provide support when drawing up the person specification. *See also Template for Person Specification, Appendix 1.*

There are already established **general admission requirements** for admission and employment as a doctoral student and **specific admission requirements** set for each research subject. These are stated in the general syllabus for the subject, which also describes the relevant selection criteria, to be equated with the **assessment criteria** for the position. In addition to the formal requirements and general assessment criteria, other knowledge and skills can be added.

**Knowledge** is defined here as the learned theoretical abilities or facts within a particular subject field, such as language, IT, and technical knowledge.

**Skills** are defined here as the abilities to perform a task by applying knowledge and approach. Skills, unlike knowledge, remain over time and are difficult to develop and change. It is therefore important to define the skills that are necessary for the employee to manage their duties. Examples of skills that may be important when recruiting doctoral students are: independence, structure and initiative. *See Appendix 2 for more suggestions on skills.*

## PLANNING THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Once the person specification is complete you should discuss the choice of selection methods. Examples of selection methods are screening questions, CV reviews, interviews, work samples, personality testing and checking of references. Draw up a timeline of the entire recruitment process and reserve time for conducting interviews. Define the best way to reach the target group, such as advertising outlets, distribution networks and other channels.

## SCREENING QUESTIONS

Using screening questions is an effective tool that saves time, especially when there are many aspiring applicants. The applicants will be asked to answer questions in connection with submitting their applications electronically via the recruitment system. Answers to these questions can then be compiled, sorted and filtered.

The **screening questions** are to be based on the admission requirements and the assessment criteria specified in the person specification that are possible to document and assess. It is also helpful to ask questions if the applicant has submitted important documents with their application, such as a degree certificate. Asking how the applicant learned of the vacancy may also be interesting.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR SCREENING QUESTIONS

The questions are to be adapted to the person specification for the position.

1. Do you have a Master's degree?
2. If you answered 'yes' to question 1 – in what subject?
3. Do you have a good command of written and spoken English?
4. Do you have a good command of written and spoken Swedish?
5. Do you have experience working with ...?
6. Are you aware of which documentation to submit with your application?
7. How did you learn of the vacancy?

## CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Once the person specification is complete, you can prepare the call for applications. Information about the application process should be included in the advertisement. Specify which documents are to be submitted with the application to verify the applicant's qualifications, and specify whether the application is to be written in a certain language. Suggested documentation could be a cover letter in which the applicant explains why they are interested in the position and how the research project matches their own interests and educational background, CV, degree certificate(s), letters of recommendation, etc. All vacancies will be advertised on the Lund University website through the recruitment system for at least two weeks. Newspaper or digital media advertisements are to be booked and administered by a procured media agency, preferably in collaboration with HR.

# Selection and interview

## MAKING A SHORTLIST

Once the applications have come in, it is time to start making a shortlist. This process can be divided into three steps:

**Step 1** Start by excluding those applicants who do not meet the admission requirements by reviewing their CVs. If you have used screening questions, you can begin, as a first round of selection, to sort and filter the answers to them. If an applicant refrained from answering such questions, their application must still be considered and evaluated. Those who do not meet the admission requirements for the position are to be excluded.

**Step 2** Additional selection can be made based on the assessment criteria listed in the person specification.

**Step 3** An overall assessment of the remaining applicants' qualifications is to be made, where the cover letter and explanation are also to be taken into account. The decision on who will be invited to a first interview is to be made.

## PRIOR TO THE FIRST INTERVIEW

Prepare the interview structure and questions in an interview guide and decide which members of the recruitment group shall participate, and what roles they shall have. A **structured interview** is preferable because it has a higher validity than an unstructured one. A structured interview is based on an interview guide (in turn based on the person specification) and ensures that the applicants are treated equally and that they are asked essentially the same questions. The questions are to be open, short, straightforward and simple. Avoid leading, dual, ambiguous, critical or discriminatory questions. Interview questions concerning skills should be based on the applicants' own experiences where the applicants are asked to describe a situation requiring a particular skill – unlike hypothetical questions, where the answers tend to be socially desirable. *An interview guide is available in appendix 3.*

Prior to the first interview, the applicant can be asked to prepare a short presentation (approximately 15 mins) of their degree project, for example in English. This will illustrate the applicant's understanding of the findings of the degree project, their ability to summarise and present the project in an accessible way and their language skills.

If the call to the interview is done over the telephone, a confirmation email should be sent to the respective applicants with information about the time and place, who will be participating and the structure of the interview.

## FIRST INTERVIEW

The purpose of the interview is an exchange of information that goes both ways. The recruitment group is to get as much relevant and in-depth information as possible about the applicant's knowledge, skills, experiences and expectations. In turn, the applicant needs to understand what the duties involve and what is required and expected from them in order to form a realistic understanding of what the position entails.

If many applicants are called to a first interview and/or do not live close by, the first interview can be conducted via skype or telephone.

## PROPOSED STRUCTURE OF THE FIRST INTERVIEW

### Introduction

Start by welcoming the applicant, present the interview participants, and briefly explain the structure and time frame of the interview.

### Information

Describe the duties, the workplace, and give a brief account of the organisation as a whole.

### Presentation of the degree project

If applicable, discussion about the presentation and feedback.

### Educational background

Ask the applicant to describe his/her educational background, specialisation and areas of interest.

### Knowledge-related questions

Examine the relevant theoretical and technical knowledge requested in the person specification, e.g. subject knowledge, language skills or IT skills.

### Experiences

Ask the applicant to talk about their work experience, experience doing voluntary work, their degree project, etc. Ask questions about their previous duties, responsibilities and what they learned from them.

### Future plans

What about the person specification/project description made them apply? Hopes and expectations they have about the doctoral studentship? Long term goals/aspirations?

### Skills-based questions

Ask questions that explore the skills stated in the person specification, based on the applicant's own experiences and their actions and reflections on the situation. Suggested skills and interview questions are available in *Appendix 2.*

### The applicant's questions

#### Expectations

Ensure that the applicant understands what it means to be a doctoral student, the challenges that they may face, and the employer's expectations of them. Also describe the responsibilities, duties, working hours, salary ladder and other terms of employment.

#### Practical issues and the continuation of the process

What is the applicant's current situation and availability? Term of notice, if applicable? Explain the continuation of the process and give a provisional time frame.

*The recruitment group selects the final applicants that best match the person specification and invite them to a second interview.*

## PRIOR TO THE SECOND INTERVIEW

If tests and work samples will be used as selection methods, they should be completed prior to or in connection with the second interview, when the result(s) can be discussed with the applicant. If the first interview was conducted via internet/telephone, it is important to meet in person at the second

interview. Ask applicants to bring contact information for two references, preferably people who have supervised the applicant.

### Work samples and knowledge tests

A work sample involves creating an assignment for the applicant to perform. This is a relatively easy way to find out how capable the applicant would be doing the work. Work samples have relatively high validity for predicting future job performance. Through work samples, specific professional knowledge, language skills, skills and abilities to handle certain technical equipment can be tested, for example, by performing a practical exercise in a lab environment.

An example of an assignment illustrating language skills and the ability to discuss scientific issues could be to send a research article to the applicants who have been called to the interview, and ask them to write a brief summary of the subject matter, explain what they believe the research challenges are in the area concerned, and then formulate one or two research questions on the subject. The assignment is to be submitted by a certain deadline and then discussed during the interview. To test their language skills, applicants should be encouraged to write their summary in English, for example.

Through knowledge tests, the applicant's specific knowledge in an area, such as technical knowledge and language skills, are tested.

Work samples and knowledge tests should be carefully planned and can be carried out in different ways. They can be performed prior to the interview and submitted in advance, or on site in connection with the second interview. It is important that everyone is given the same opportunities and the same instructions. When deciding on testing, consider the following:

- What information is there to gain from the test?
- How shall it be conducted?
- How much time shall the applicant have to complete the test?
- How will it be assessed?
- What possible aids shall the applicant have access to?

Please contact your human resources coordinator for help and support with work samples and knowledge tests.

### Personality assessment

Prior to the second interview, a personality assessment can be performed to highlight personal suitability. Lund University uses the Hogan Assessment System (HAS) and there are several trained human resources coordinators at the faculty offices who can help with these assessments. HAS consists of three parts which highlight:

1. personal characteristics,
2. performance under stress and pressure,
3. individual motivations and values.

The assessment can be very helpful when evaluating applicants for a doctoral studentship, where certain personal characteristics determine how well the person will perform in their research studies. These are often young people who are relatively untested in contexts other than being a student. Coping well as a doctoral student often requires

other qualities than those needed as a student, such as the ability to work independently. Based on these assessments, you can see whether the applicant's personal characteristics match the person specification. For a successful recruitment for both parties, the expectations and conditions must be in agreement. The results from the assessment can also give an idea of what type of supervision/leadership the applicant will need in order to perform optimally and thrive. It is also important that the applicant has the inner drive that is needed. The human resources coordinator will normally give feedback on the results of the assessment to the applicant and the recruiting group before the second interview. Please contact your human resources coordinator to conduct a personality assessment.

### SECOND INTERVIEW

During the second interview there will be opportunity to ask additional questions or go deeper into issues that were not addressed during the first interview, or that have emerged after the personality assessment. At the second interview, it is also appropriate to show the applicant around and meet prospective colleagues.

#### PROPOSED STRUCTURE OF THE SECOND INTERVIEW

##### Introduction

Start by presenting possible new interview participants and briefly explain the structure and time frame of the interview.

##### Work samples/assignment

Describe and discuss the results of the work sample(s).

##### Additional questions

Any questions that have come up since the last interview? The applicant's reflections since the first interview? Is he/she still interested in the position?

##### The applicant's questions

##### Practical issues and the continuation of the process

### CHECKING OF REFERENCES

The purpose of checking the applicant's references is for the employer to gain additional information about the final applicant(s), and verify the information they have submitted. The focus should be on evaluating the requirements and skills stated in the person specification. We encourage you to contact referees who have held managerial/supervising positions. The optimal way to check references is similar to the interview situation – a predetermined structure and interview technique, and we therefore recommend that you follow a guide for the *Checking of references*, see Appendix 4.

### FINAL ASSESSMENT

The recruitment group makes an overall assessment of the final applicants based on information from the CVs, interviews, any work samples/assignments and personality assessments, and references. Consider how well the applicants match the person specification, their development potential, and weigh the different requirements. To facilitate decision-making, you can use the *Assessment matrix template*, see Appendix 5.

# Prior to the appointment

## ANNOUNCEMENT

The purpose of the announcement is to objectively and clearly describe how the selection process was conducted, justify any ranking of applicants, and describe the qualifications that determined which applicant is to be offered the position.

### THE ANNOUNCEMENT SHALL INCLUDE:

- The title of the position and registration number
- The names of those who participated in the recruitment group
- The total number of applicants
- Description of the admission requirements and assessment criteria, in accordance with the person specification
- Description of the selection process and the methods used:
  - Which applicants were selected for the first round of interviews, and based on what qualifications
  - Which applicants moved on to the second interview and based on what qualifications
- An overall assessment of the final applicants and the decision on who will be appointed. A justification of the decision, based on how well the person's qualifications match the person specification must be included. If there are several possible candidates, they can be ranked.
- Signature of the recruiting manager and head of department

## OBJECTION

Before a decision on appointment is made, the announcement is to be sent to the other applicants, together with information about the possibility to object to the decision. This should normally be done at least two weeks before the decision on admission is taken. An objection provides applicants with an opportunity to address any formal errors in connection with the processing of their application, and is to be submitted in writing to the department within 14 days from the date of the announcement. Subsequently, the decision on who will be appointed will be made and any objections are to be considered. Decisions on appointments of doctoral students cannot be appealed.

## INDIVIDUAL STUDY PLAN, ADMISSION AND DECISION ON APPOINTMENT

An individual study plan is to be drawn up before admission to the research studies programme. The plan shall include the University's and the doctoral student's undertakings and a time frame for the doctoral student's education.

The plan is to be approved after consultation between the doctoral student and the supervisor. The individual study plan shall be followed up annually and revised to the extent neces-

sary, after consultation between the doctoral student and the supervisor. The follow-up is to involve documenting the doctoral student's performance in relation to the study plan. In connection with the follow-up, the doctoral student and supervisor can also evaluate the supervision and work situation. On the University's website, you will find a template for what the study plan is to look like and include. Once the individual study plan has been signed by all parties, admission can take place.

As soon as the doctoral student has been admitted to the research studies programme, the decision on appointment to a doctoral studentship can be made. Pursuant to the Higher Education Ordinance, the first appointment may not exceed one year, after which the appointment may be renewed for a maximum of two years at a time. A doctoral studentship is primarily a full-time position.

The total employment period may not exceed the equivalent of four years of full-time research studies and is only to be extended if there are special reasons. If it involves departmental duties (maximum 20%), the period of employment is extended with the corresponding amount of time. Decisions on appointments to doctoral studentships cannot be appealed.

## RESIDENCE PERMIT FOR THIRD COUNTRY CITIZENS

If the prospective doctoral student is a third country citizen (those who are not citizens of an EU/EEA country or Switzerland), they are required to have been granted a residence permit before entering Sweden.

More information about the application procedure for a residence permit is available on the Swedish Migration Board's website under 'Studying in Sweden'. The doctoral student can apply online or via the form called 'Application for residence permit for students and doctoral students'. When applying for a residence permit, the applicant must submit a certificate from the employer that certifies that the appointment will take place once the residence permit has been granted.

For a fast and efficient residence permit application process, procured relocation companies can be used. For more information, please contact HR.

## INTRODUCTION

It is important that the doctoral student is properly introduced to the workplace. An individually adapted induction should be based on the doctoral student's needs. At LU, inductions for new employees take place at various levels. University-wide welcome fairs are organised twice a year and several faculties organise their own inductions for new employees. For more information on this and checklists, visit LU's and the faculties' websites.

# Person specification for a doctoral studentship

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## DOCTORAL STUDENT IN RESEARCH SUBJECT

*(and any specialisation)*

### DUTIES

The main duty is to pursue research studies including participation both in research projects and PhD courses. The duties also involve some teaching and other departmental duties (maximum 20%). The appointment is limited to 5 years (if 20% departmental duties are included). Rules regarding doctoral studentships can be found in the Higher Education Ordinance (1998:80).

*Provide additional information about the duties involved.*

### ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The general admission requirement for third cycle studies is a second-cycle qualification or courses comprising at least 240 credits of which at least 60 credits were awarded in the second cycle, or substantially equivalent knowledge acquired in some other way in Sweden or abroad.

*For specific admission requirements, see the general syllabus for that subject.*

### OTHER REQUIREMENTS

*Here it is possible to add other requirements for employment such as language skills, other specific experience or knowledge necessary to perform the work duties.*

### ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Admission to third cycle studies is based on the assessed ability to complete the research studies programme.

The assessment of the ability referred to in the first paragraph is mainly based on the study record from the first and second cycle.

The following will be considered:

1. Knowledge and skills relevant to the thesis project and subject. These can be demonstrated through submitted documents and a possible interview.
2. Estimated ability to work independently and to formulate and address research problems. The assessment can be based on the degree project and a discussion of the degree project at a possible interview.
3. Ability to communicate in speech and writing.
4. Other experiences of relevance to the third cycle study programme, e.g. work experience.

Consideration will also be given to personal suitability and how the applicant, through their skills and experience, is deemed to possess the skills necessary to complete the research studies programme.

*Add any other qualifications: knowledge, experience, abilities and skills. For doctoral students, it may be important to be structured and self-driven, to show initiative and stamina, and to have good collaborative skills.*

### OTHER INFORMATION

*Such as information about the application process.*

Only those admitted to research studies may be appointed to a doctoral studentship.

## Suggestions for skills-based questions

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Below is a selection of skills, with definitions and examples of skills-based questions. These skills can be critical success factors for the doctoral student's performance.

### INDEPENDENCE

*Takes responsibility for the assignment. Independently structures an approach and drives the processes forward.*

- What were your responsibilities or obligations during your studies/working on your degree project? How did you cope with them? To what extent did you feel you needed to find support from, ask questions or report to your supervisor to be able to pursue your issues further? Can you give a concrete example?

- Describe a major assignment that you were responsible for. What was it about? What was the situation? How did you proceed? What was the biggest problem? How did you solve it? How did it go? Is this typical for you? Can you give another example?

- Have you ever started something that you did not complete? What was it? What happened? What caused it?

*Note whether the applicant accepts or denies responsibility, and whether you can be certain that the applicant will not need more support than what can be considered necessary. Also note whether there are concrete indications of an ability to independently structure an assignment and achieve results, and if so, the complexity of the assignment.*

### INITIATIVE

*Shows initiative, starts activities and achieves results.*

- Do you often push to make things happen or do you usually have a more relaxed approach? Tell us about a time when you pushed. What was it about? What did you do? How did it go?

- Tell us about a difficult problem you had to solve. What was the situation like? What did you do? What was good about the way you handled the situation? What could have been better?

- Have you ever taken an initiative out of the ordinary? Tell us about such a time! How did it go? What feedback did you receive from others?

*Note to what extent the applicant describes his/her own initiatives – particularly initiatives that go beyond those necessary for performing their regular duties or to meet normal expectations. Be sure to note what was done by*

*the applicant specifically, not the team. Evaluate whether the initiatives were appropriate within the context of what one was trying to achieve and whether they had the desired results.*

### STRUCTURE

*Plans, organises and prioritises the work in an efficient way. Creates and stays within time frames.*

- In what way have you needed to plan and organise during your studies/degree project? How did you structure your work? Do you think it worked well? Can you tell me about a time when it worked really well?

- Tell us about a time when you had a lot on your plate. How did you proceed? How did it go?

- What are your time frames? Are you able to stay on schedule? Can you tell us about a time when it was impossible to stay within the time frame? What happened? How was it resolved?

- Has it ever happened that your plan completely failed? Why? How was it resolved?

*Valuations can often be based on both direct and indirect observations, in which positive indications are about careful planning, order and methodology even on a tight schedule, and that the person shows a good ability to prioritise the right things.*

### ORAL COMMUNICATION

*Speaks clearly, eloquently and passionately in individual meetings and small and large groups. Listens and is receptive to the other party/parties and adapts to the situation.*

- In what situations during your studies have you needed to make presentations? Normally, how big was your audience? Were they internal or external? How did you feel about these situations? Tell us about a recent presentation you made. Take us there. What were you trying to achieve? What could have been better? What was the response?

- In what situations during your studies have you needed to convince or persuade others? Describe the last time you managed to convince someone about something that was important to you. How did you do it? Is this your usual approach when trying to influence others?

- When did you last try to influence a group about a particular topic? Take us there (what was it about? what did you do?). How did it go?

*Positive valuations are to be based on how the applicant communicates in the interview situation, especially if the person is eloquent and engaging to listen to; if the person is listening and responding appropriately to the interviewer; adapts their communication to different contexts; and if the person has achieved good results in connection with major presentations.*

**COLLABORATIVE SKILLS**

***Works well with others. Can relate to them sensitively and smoothly. Listens, communicates and resolves conflicts in a constructive way.***

- Tell us about a working/ study group that you were part of. How did the collaboration go? What was the separation of roles like? What was your role in the group? Why do you think you had this particular role? Did you enjoy that role? What type of feedback have you received with regard to the way you work with others?

- Do you do anything to promote the group’s work and improve relations? If so, what? What type of response have you received? Is there something you should do/want to do but don’t? If so, why?

- Tell me about a situation/collaboration where participants clashed. What happened? What did you do? How did it go?

- Have you ever had to interact/work with someone you perceived as difficult to work with (fellow student, colleague or similar)? Tell us about the situation. Why was it difficult? How did you handle it? Can you give an example? How did it go?

*Positive valuations are to be based partly on the behaviour during the interview – if the person has a positive and responsive approach, listens and is receptive, and is perceived as open and accommodating – and partly on their awareness of workplace relationships, and what concrete, positive steps the person has taken to improve them, and if they have a constructive approach for resolving conflict.*

**STABILITY**

***Is calm, stable and in control in stressful situations. Maintains a realistic perspective on situations and focuses on the right things.***

- In what way have your studies been stressful? When was it the most stressful? The last time that happened, how did you deal with it? How did it go?

- Have you ever felt that everything has gone wrong? Why was that? What did you do? It is typical for you?

- Tell us about the last time you were very busy. How did you feel? How did you prioritise different tasks? How did it go?

- What is the most stressful situation you have found yourself in? How did you react? What did you do? What was the result? How did you feel?

*Note whether the applicant has been in inordinately stressful situations, and, if so, whether they occurred during short or long periods, as this can affect the level of energy. Positive valuations are to be made if the applicant gives examples of good adaptation and proactive behaviour that led to good results, and if the applicant spontaneously expresses a constructive attitude.*

**STAMINA**

***Stays motivated and efficient despite setbacks and disappointments. Keeps working until projects are completed and results have been achieved.***

- Tell us about something that made you very disappointed. What were your thoughts when it happened? How did you respond? What happened next?

- Have you ever been criticised or questioned during your studies or at work? What was it about? Who criticised/questioned you? What was your response? What was the result?

- Have you ever lost interest? What happened? How did you deal with it?

*Positive valuations are to be made when the applicant can provide concrete examples of constructive behaviour that led to positive outcomes in connection with being disappointed and questioned. The valuation is to be made in relation to how big the setback was, how proactive the applicant was, and what results they achieved.*

**CREATIVITY**

*Often comes up with new ideas and approaches to handle work-related issues. Shows innovation that can be translated into practice and that will lead to results.*

- In what contexts are you able to come up with new solutions or ideas? Give us an example of such a situation. How did you come up with that? How did it go?
- Tell us about a situation when you came up with something you believe was very good. In what way was your idea new? Have you had the opportunity to realise it?
- Tell us about a situation when you questioned something which was widely accepted? What was it? What was your thought process? Where did the thought come from? What did it lead to?

*Positive valuations are to be based only on concrete examples of ideas that the applicant has had or contributed to that lead to actual results.*

**PROBLEM SOLVING ANALYTICAL SKILLS**

*Works well with complex issues. Analyses and breaks down problems into their components and solves complicated problems.*

- What type of information have you needed to analyse when studying/doing your degree project? What type of decisions have your analyses led to?
- When was the last time you had to analyse a large amount of information? What was it about? How did you proceed?
- What is the most complex problem that you are currently faced with? What methods do you apply to reach a decision in the matter? Where do you gather information? What is your analysis?
- What do you see as your strengths in this context? Can you give an example? What are your weaknesses? Can you give an example?

*Positive valuations are to be based on the applicant's ability to handle complex issues and problems. Consideration must also be given to the results of analytical tests which largely create the conditions for this expertise.*

**NUMERICAL-ANALYTICAL SKILLS**

*Understands numerical information. Solves numerical tasks quickly and correctly.*

*Evaluated best through occupational psychology testing that focuses on numerical-analytical skills.*

**LANGUAGE-ANALYTICAL SKILLS**

*Understands complex spoken and written language. Produces documents of high quality.*

*Evaluated best through occupational psychology testing or simulations that focus on language-analytical skills.*

Source:

Kompetensbaserad Personalstrategi, 2008. Author: Malin Lindelöw, trained psychotherapist, Doctor of Psychology

# Interview guide

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## INTRODUCTION

Start by welcoming the applicant, present the interview participants, and briefly explain the structure and time frame of the interview.

## INFORMATION

Describe the duties, the workplace, and give a brief account of the organisation as a whole.

## PRESENTATION OF THE DEGREE PROJECT

If this has been agreed prior to the interview, ask the applicant to present their degree project. Discuss the degree project and presentation.

## EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Ask the applicant to describe his/her educational background, specialisation and areas of interest. What drives the applicant? Any gaps in the study record?

## KNOWLEDGE-RELATED QUESTIONS

Examine the relevant theoretical and technical knowledge requested in the person specification, e.g. subject knowledge, language skills or IT skills.

## EXPERIENCES

Ask the applicant to talk about their work experience, experience doing voluntary work, their degree project, etc. Ask questions about their previous duties, responsibilities and what they learned from them.

## FUTURE PLANS

What about the person specification/project description made them apply? Hopes and expectations they have about the doctoral studentship?

## SKILLS-BASED QUESTIONS

Ask questions that explore the skills stated in the person specification. See *Suggestions for skills-based questions, Appendix 2*.

## THE APPLICANT'S QUESTIONS

Invite the applicant to ask questions about the position and project.

## THE POSITION AS A DOCTORAL STUDENT

Ensure that the applicant understands what it means to be a doctoral student, the challenges that they may face, and the employer's expectations of them. Also describe the responsibilities, duties, working hours, salary ladder and other terms of employment.

## PRACTICAL ISSUES

What is the applicant's current situation and availability? Term of notice, if applicable?

Conclude the interview by informing the applicant about the continuation of the process and a preliminary date for announcing the appointment decision.

Ask for two **references**, preferably of persons who have had a supervisory role in relation to the applicant.

# Checking of references – guide

Position	
Department/organisation/business	
Name of applicant	
Name of referee	
Referee's current position	
Telephone	
Date of reference check	

## INTRODUCTION

- Introduce yourself, the organisation and why you are calling.
- Ask if the referee is currently available or if you should book a time for you to call back.
- Explain briefly the position for which the applicant has applied, what their work duties and responsibilities would be
- Find out whether the applicant has prepared the referee for the call

What is your relationship with X (manager, colleague, private)?

How long did you work together?

When did you stop work together and why?

Can you tell me about X's duties?

- General description of the duties (including responsibilities, authority, line of reporting, etc.).
- Specific responsibilities?
- Participation in major projects/development initiatives?
- Any leadership function/s?

How did X perform during the time you worked together (refer to the points above)?

Describe how you perceive X in your own words. (Ask the referee to be specific and ask for examples of the applicant's behaviour).

What distinguished X from other employees in the same type of position? (Ask for specific examples of the applicant's approach compared to others).

What qualities or abilities of X have been the most valuable to your collaboration? (Ask for specific examples of the applicant's line of action and the results achieved).

What aspects does X need to develop or improve?

How do you think others who worked with X would describe X?

Was X part of any working group? If so, what was X's role? Did X enjoy working as part of a group? What role did X usually take/get in group situations?

Giving free rein to your thoughts, what type of work/position do you think X is most suited for or would be most suited for X to do him/herself justice?

Were there any conflicts within the group? What happened? How was it resolved?

Given the opportunity, would you reemploy or wish to work with X again?

Continue by examining the skills specific to the position, stated in the person specification. These skills are to be referred to throughout the entire recruitment process, also when checking references. For a definition of specific skills, see *Suggestions for skills-based questions, Appendix 2*. To increase the possibilities for informed answers, explain to the referee what is included in each skill. Use the structure of the *Interview guide (Appendix 3)* and ask detailed questions about the applicant's performance within the separate skills areas.

Are there examples of X being late for work, dishonest or involved in substance abuse?

Example: I would now like to ask you a little bit more specifically about some skills areas. I would like to start by asking you questions about how independent X has been. What were X's work-related responsibilities or obligations? What was X like in this regard? How much did X need to find support from, ask or report to their supervisor in order to push their questions forward? Can you give a concrete example? Describe a major assignment that X was responsible for. What was it about? What was the situation like? How did X proceed? What was the biggest problem? How did X solve it? How did it go? Has X ever started something X did not complete? If so, what? What happened? What caused it?

Would you like to add something I haven't asked about?

**SUMMARISE THE INFORMATION YOU HAVE RECEIVED. THANK THE REFEREE FOR THE TIME.**

Skill 1	
Skill 2	
Skill 3	
Skill 4	

## Assessment matrix

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Position	
Department	
Recruitment manager	
Line manager	
Type of employment	
Scope (%)	
Preferred start date	

	Job specification	Applicant	Applicant
Education			
Experience			
Knowledge			
Skills			
Other requirements			
Total			

1. The applicant does not meet the skills requirements to the same extent as most other applicants. Indications of limitations are in majority.
2. The applicant meets the skills requirements to the same extent as most other applicants. There are positive indications and these tend to be in majority, but there are indications of limitations.
3. The candidate meets the skills requirements to a greater extent than most other applicants. Positive indications are in clear majority.





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