Criteria regarding appointment as reader (“docent”) at the Faculty of Engineering, Lund University

Introduction

A readership may be granted at the Faculty of Engineering – LTH – if it is of benefit for research and tuition. This is taken to signify research and research tuition within the subject area, as well as basic education linked to research. Those qualified to be appointed as readers are those who have been awarded a doctor’s degree or have corresponding scientific competence and in addition has acquired advanced scientific skills as well as educational skills. A readership is a proof of higher academic competence and not an employment title at LTH.

A reader is qualified to act as main supervisor for research students – provided he/she also holds a permanent teacher position at the faculty and has undertaken a compulsory supervision course. A teacher with a fixed-term employment may also be appointed as main supervisor if he/she has the qualifications required and if there is at least one co-supervisor employed on a permanent basis. A reader at LTH will be expected to participate as a member of examination boards for doctoral theses, to act as an opponent in the oral defence of doctoral theses, as well as to accept assignment as expert in the assessment of applicants in employment or promotion matters. An extramural applicant may also be appointed as a reader provided he/she is prepared to accept appointment in accordance with the above mentioned and otherwise satisfies the requirements for such appointments.

Readership applications within LTH are processed and decided by an Academic Appointments Board. A readership is normally granted only in one of the already established research disciplines at LTH.

The requirements of scientific, educational and other skills

LTH places high demands on scientific competence held by applicants for appointment as reader in a given subject. The applicant should have been scientifically active and have developed his/her scientific competence after the doctorate.

Taking into consideration that a reader will be expected also to contribute to research tuition and basic education linked to research, the applicant should also present the relevant educational skills.

To be granted a readership the applicant should have conducted independent research after his/her doctor’s degree and should have acquired a holistic view on the
ongoing research within the field and the research problems linked to it. The applicant should be in a position to demonstrate research conducted under his/her own responsibility and on the basis of his/her own ideas. It should be made clear what role the applicant has had in the works or projects cited. Independence after the doctor’s degree can be evidenced in various ways, e.g. by renewal of research profile, by accounting for applied and successful research grants, by extended collaboration with other researchers, by national and international recognition. In the assessment of the readership applications importance will be placed not only on already acquired qualifications but also on the applicant’s ability to present plans for future development. Consequently, a research plan should be included in the application. Such a plan should relate to the activities within the receiving department and should also present visions on the tuition of doctoral students.

The applicant should be able to account for an academic production that quantitatively and qualitatively constitute a substantial addition of the order of magnitude of a further doctoral thesis, implying both depth and broadening of the research area. It should be made clear what work was included in the doctoral thesis. Academic papers should have been published according to prevalent traditions within the discipline, i.e. in internationally renowned periodicals or at conferences, with peer-review systems, or in a way that will guarantee the applicant’s independent contribution to the development of the subject. Importance will also be placed upon the applicant’s ability to take active part in the scientific community and the scientific debate by presenting articles in technical or scientific periodicals, by giving presentations at conferences or at seminars, etc.

In the assessment of the application, attention will also be paid to educational skills and documented educational experience. This is principally to relate to an active participation in the basic and post-graduate research education at LTH. In order to assess the applicant’s ability to shoulder the responsibility that main supervision implies, the applicant must demonstrate considerable experience of supervision and be able to observe and reflect thereupon. Such experience should consist of co-supervision – in the initial as well as the final phases of doctoral thesis works. Guidance of master thesis works may also be considered, to a lesser extent. Supervision assignments should be verified with name and time period of people supervised, name of projects, courses, level of responsibility etc.

Documented ability to cooperate with companies and other extramural activities that will open up for and support mutual understanding for research and development is an important aspect to consider in the assessment of readership applications.

Before being granted a readership, the applicant should have participated in the joint readership course at LTH or have acquired the equivalent knowledge. Approved supervision training education is compulsory in order to be assigned as main supervisor. From 2006 supervision training is included in the LTH readership course. After having completed the readership course the person is expected to put theory into practise by participating in the supervision of doctoral students, for a reasonable length of time. This will also provide a base for the applicant to observe and reflect upon supervision as such.

Applications and procedure

Application

All parties involved in the assessment process should always consider grounds for partiality, according to the legislation.
The application is to be submitted to the Academic Appointments Board of LTH and be drawn up according to the instructions (see enclosure).

**Statement from Department**

The Head of Department should state whether he/she believes it to be of benefit for research and tuition in the subject/Department that the applicant be appointed as reader. In case the subject of readership should differ from the established research disciplines at LTH, this statement should also comment upon the subject title. The Head of Department is also expected to propose a suitable external evaluator.

**External expert evaluator**

In the assessment of the applicant’s competence, an official pronouncement from at least one expert should be obtained. The expert should state whether the applicant satisfies the requirements within the different assessment criteria; both strengths and weaknesses should be commented upon. The external expert is appointed by the chairman of the Academic Appointments Board. The report should be at hand within six weeks. The expert will receive an honorarium.

**Personal meeting with the applicant**

The Academic Appointments Board is recommended to conduct a personal meeting with the applicant as part of the assessment process. At this meeting the applicant may present his/her activities and visions on research and tuition and there will be possibilities for discussions in connection with this presentation.

In addition, the receiving Department may arrange a readership seminar – this is outside of the assessment process however.

**Decision and new salary**

The Academic Appointments Board is to make a holistic qualitative assessment of the applicant’s skills, taking into account the expert’s report and other relevant information, and decide on appointment as reader in the subject/research tuition subject, or decide to refuse appointment. The decision will be sent to the applicant as well as to the Department in question. A decision of appointment is also to be sent to the Human Resources. A reader who holds a position at LTH will also be granted a raise of salary.

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A decision in this matter was reached by the undersigned Faculty Dean after presentation by Kerstin Torfgård, Senior Personnel Officer at LTH.

Viktor Öwall

Kerstin Torfgård