

The Lise Meitner Professorship

What is the Lise Meitner Professorship?

The aim of the Lise Meitner professorship is to offer a distinguished female researcher the opportunity to work at LTH for a period of one to three years, and to be a role model for other women at LTH. The professorship was created in January 1999.

Who is eligible?

The proposed candidate must be employed at an organisation outside Lund University, and have qualifications equivalent to a professor. It is of importance that she has the qualities required to take an active part in research, in teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and in other activities at the host department. It is also desirable that she takes part in lectures and seminars, with internal and external reach, both at the host department and in arrangements made by LTH.

Who was Lise Meitner?

Lise Meitner was born in Vienna, Austria in 1878, and studied at the universities of Vienna and Berlin. She discovered, together with the German chemist Otto Hahn, nuclear fission, as well as the element protactinium in 1918. She was professor at Berlin University from 1926 to 1933.

Lise Meitner was of Jewish extraction, and in 1938 she was forced to flee the Nazi regime in Germany bringing only a few personal possessions. Bringing her long experience in research as head of the Department of Physics at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute in Berlin she found a safe haven in Stockholm, where she began working with other atomic physicists at Stockholm University. She became a Swedish citizen in 1949.

Meitner and her colleagues understood the enormous powers of fission, and she expressed her concern about this discovery being taken into war industry, and tried to influence some of her science colleagues to take action against warfare.

In 1946 she became a visiting professor at the Catholic University in Washington DC, and in relation to that visit she achieved the award "Woman of the Year" by the National press Club. She returned to USA in 1959 invited to give lectures at Bryn Mawr College, one of them with the title "The Status of Women in the Professions". In 1960 she retired and moved to England, where she died in Cambridge 1968. The chemical element 109 was retrospectively named after her, as meitnerium in 1997.

Proposals to the chair:

Departments at LTH are invited to submit proposals for the Lise Meitner Professorship for 2017-2019.

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