



Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

GOVERNING DOCUMENT SLU ID: SLU.ua 2021.1.1.1-2921

Subject area: Human resources

Document type: Instructions
Decision-maker: Board for the Appointment of Distinguished University Teachers
Organisational unit: Vice-Chancellor's Office
Reference: Linda Ferngren

Decision date: 23/8/2021
Effective as of: 23/8/2021
Valid until: Further notice
To be updated by: 1/5/2023

Document(s) repealed: Instruction for staff applying for the title of distinguished university teacher at SLU, SLU ua 2020.1.1.1-2153

Annex to: Decision by the chair of the Board for the Appointment of Distinguished Teachers, 23 August 2021, SLU ua 2021.1.1.1-2920

Instructions for employees applying to be appointed distinguished university teacher at SLU

1. Introduction

The purpose of awarding the title distinguished university teacher is to promote teaching quality at SLU and encourage pedagogical development. Quality and development can be promoted as follows:

- Rewarding and drawing attention to skilled and pedagogically aware teachers by awarding them a title that indicates a clear level of competence and a corresponding salary increase. Investing in quality teaching and learning pays off.
- Awarding the title distinguished university teacher means that SLU will have a clearly defined group of particularly skilled teachers. Those awarded the title can be asked to take an active part in quality enhancement activities for their subject field and the university as a whole, the same way docents must take on certain tasks related to quality in research.

2. Basic requirements for eligibility as a distinguished university teacher

Those eligible to apply to be appointed distinguished university teacher are teachers employed for an indefinite period (lecturers, senior lecturers and professors) or other staff employed for an indefinite period with the equivalent competence and tasks.

To be appointed distinguished university teacher at SLU, the applicant needs to demonstrate broad teaching expertise. Applicants need to demonstrate skills within the five areas of expertise described in section 3. In other words, it is possible for a teacher to be highly skilled but still not fulfil all the requirements and criteria to be appointed distinguished university teacher.

The documentation to support the application should comprise the following:

Section A: CV listing the content and scope of the applicant's teaching experience plus a maximum of two pages on research and other activities; the postal address for correspondence with Nex should be clearly stated in the CV. Any clarifying and supporting documents should be compiled in section Dii.

Section B: Contact details for references; certificate of completed workshop on teaching in higher education or equivalent, on how to create a teaching portfolio (no certificate needed if the workshop was held at SLU).

Section C: List of training in teaching in higher education with certified copies of certificates. The scope of each course, converted to the number of weeks, must be indicated.

Section D:

- i. Teaching qualifications portfolio, 15 pages max.
- ii. Numbered annexes with the teaching qualifications the applicant wishes to refer to. Any teaching material the applicant wishes to refer to and which cannot be presented as hardcopies must be electronically available (e.g. a public web page).

See section 4 for more detailed information. Only complete applications submitted before the application deadline will be assessed.

3. Criteria for teaching expertise that must be fulfilled to be awarded the title of distinguished university teacher at SLU

The teaching expertise needed to be awarded the title of distinguished university teacher at SLU is summarised as five criteria, or areas of expertise. Teachers holding the title distinguished university teacher must have demonstrated expertise in all five areas. For each area, there are a number of indicators. In this context, an indicator is a concrete activity that can contribute to a teacher fulfilling the general criterion. The areas where an applicant needs to demonstrate expertise to be awarded the title of distinguished university teacher are:

1. Teaching expertise
2. Scientific and developing approaches to pedagogy
3. Collaboration with colleagues and pedagogical leadership
4. Holistic approach and collaboration within the university and with society
5. Critical grounding in the subject.

3.1 Teaching expertise

Teaching expertise refers to the teaching skills demonstrated in direct contact with students. This includes creating a safe and open climate and an efficient learning environment. Being able to communicate clearly with students, building good relations and being able to cooperate with students to improve courses, teaching and learning are other aspects central to teaching expertise.

Applicants can fulfil criteria 3.1 by, for example, demonstrating that they:

- function well in student relations, that their teaching is of a high quality in a broad field and is conducted in a manner that is appreciated by students and evokes commitment;
- establish well-functioning communication with students, communicate high expectations on student performance, and offer constructive feedback;
- have a clear picture of the students' prior knowledge and expectations on their teaching or on course components in their field of responsibility;
- create conditions that enable students to learn, by teaching in a way that encourages interaction and cooperation between students;
- explain, justify and discuss course objectives, activities and examination with the students;
- in a reflective manner, balance the teaching and instrumental aspects of courses and programmes and encourage critical thinking in students;
- see each occasion to teach as an occasion to learn;
- in a considered approach, use a broad repertoire of student-activating teaching and examination formats;
- reflect on their teaching from a power-critical perspective, above all concerning gender and diversity, and take advantage of the different backgrounds and experiences of students.

3.2 Scientific and developing approach to teaching and learning

A scientific and developing approach is a prerequisite for efficient teaching as well as for research and collaboration with society. A teacher's view of teaching and learning will change constantly, based on reflections on experience and research findings in teaching in higher education. Practice is continually adapted to new knowledge and changes in composition and prior knowledge in the student groups. Applicants can fulfil criteria 3.2 by, for example, demonstrating that they:

- can justify the choice of course content as well as teaching and assessment formats based on the role the course plays in the students' education and their needs and expectations;
- show clear development over time when it comes to teaching practice;
- discuss and reflect on teaching practice and student learning based on research on teaching in higher education and proven experience;
- investigate and evaluate student learning in their teaching practice;
- subject their teaching practice to peer reviews by contributing to conferences on teaching practices or publications in journals on teaching or didactics;
- can show a clear link between their basic approach to teaching and their teaching practice.

3.3 Collaboration with colleagues and pedagogical leadership

Collaboration with colleagues and a well-functioning, responsible pedagogical leadership are important cornerstones for well-functioning courses and programmes and efficient pedagogical development. To promote a department culture that benefits teaching, discussions on teaching practices within the department need to be highlighted and supported by a well-developed pedagogical leadership. Student learning and reflection on teaching formats and content must be a common concern for both the department and the teacher community involved in e.g. a degree programme.

Applicants can fulfil criteria 3.3 by, for example, demonstrating that they:

- actively support colleagues in the role as teacher, course coordinator, programme coordinator or director of studies;
- contribute to improving courses and programmes and the professional and personal development of colleagues;
- take part in and initiate discussions on teaching practices at different levels;
- drive the development of courses and degree programmes;
- initiate development projects related to teaching practices;
- exercise active pedagogical leadership in their role as e.g. course coordinator, programme coordinator or director of studies;
- take an active part in teachers' days, continuing professional development for teachers and courses and conferences on teaching in higher education.

3.4 Holistic approach and collaboration within the university and with society

A university degree is an important part of an individual student's journey and at the same time plays an important part in society. A university degree should generate well-functioning citizens capable of critical thinking and also supply vital functions in society with qualified staff. To be able to fulfil their task, university lecturers must understand the bigger context in which they are active and be able to manage the expectations on courses and programmes both from students and from democratic institutions and future employers.

Applicants can fulfil criteria 3.4 by, for example, demonstrating that they:

- have a clear picture of the role of their teaching on degree programmes and can link the components they teach to other components on a degree programme;
- have a clear picture of the role of their teaching for the students' personal development and their capacity for critical thinking, communicating with different groups in society, and managing ethical and social questions within their main field of study;
- develop and continually reconsider the objectives of courses and programmes in relation to student needs and changes in society and professional life;
- actively cooperate with business and industry and societal functions to link teaching to professional life and show students examples of concrete applications;
- actively cooperate with other parts of SLU and other universities to improve teaching and absorb knowledge and experience missing from the local teaching environment.

3.5 Critical grounding in the subject

Teaching is almost always focused on a clearly defined subject. To be able to make a considerable contribution to relevant and efficient learning, with clear links to research, teachers must have a firm grounding in their subject and have knowledge of topical research in their field. Teachers need a deeper understanding of the subject as well as an ability to distance themselves from it and see where the boundaries are in relation to other areas of knowledge.

Applicants can fulfil criteria 3.5 by, for example, demonstrating that they:

- reflect on and problematise their subject field, its specific requirements regarding content and knowledge and how this should affect teaching and learning;
- are aware of the strategies they use to link teaching to research and/or artistic development;
- stimulate a scientific, reflective and critical approach in students;
- acquire basic knowledge in adjacent subject fields and an understanding of the opportunities and difficulties involved in interdisciplinary work.

4. Documents to enclose with the application

4.1 Curriculum vitae

The applicant's CV should give a clear picture of their education, professional experience and other relevant merits. Above all, experience of pedagogical activities and pedagogical merits should be highlighted. The CV should also show that the applicant has a solid grounding in the subject they teach and takes an active part in or monitors developments in their field.

4.2 References

The application for the title of distinguished university teacher should give the names of two referees with proven teaching experience and good knowledge of the applicant's teaching practice. For each referee, there should be contact details and a short description of how the referee has gained insight into the applicant's teaching practice.

4.3 Certificate on completed workshop/equivalent on compiling a teaching qualifications portfolio

The applicant must have taken part in an SLU workshop, or equivalent training elsewhere, on compiling a teaching qualifications portfolio. If the workshop was organised outside of SLU, a certificate must be enclosed. The workshop should focus on the applicant's teaching experience and the criteria for being awarded the title of distinguished university teacher and how to structure this in a qualifications portfolio. After the workshop, the applicant should be able to assess whether their experience is sufficient for the title of distinguished university teacher.

4.4 Certificate on completed training in teaching in higher education

Applicants for the title of distinguished university teacher must be able to show that they have completed training on teaching in higher education corresponding to at least 10 weeks of full-time study.

4.5 Teaching qualifications portfolio

The teaching qualifications portfolio is the main document of the application. The purpose of the portfolio is to give the board sufficient supporting data to assess the applicant's teaching expertise against all criteria as described in Section 3. The portfolio consists of a self-reflection where the applicant describes their experience and above all how they have carried out their teaching, why they have done it in that particular way and what the result has been of different choices and measures in their teaching practice. The reflections in the portfolio should be based on concrete examples from the applicant's teaching practice. The self-reflection should also explain the applicant's teaching philosophy, how this is linked to their teaching practice and the applicant has developed their teaching over time.

Material that supports the content of the portfolio can usefully be annexed to it. The qualifications portfolio should not exceed 15 pages, excluding annexes.

5. The assessment process

Handling applications and assessing the teaching expertise of applicants is the responsibility of Nex, the Board for the Appointment of Distinguished University Teachers. Nex will base its assessment on the following:

- the submitted application
- two opinions from external experts
- contacts with referees
- personal interview.

On completion of their assessment, the board will submit proposals to the vice-chancellor for decision. Applicants whose application is rejected will receive a written justification from Nex.

6. Miscellaneous

Applications should be submitted in Reachmee. A link to Reachmee will be published on the Nex web page in good time before the deadline.

The application can be written in Swedish or English. Staff who only teach in English may also submit applications for the title of distinguished university teacher. In such cases, the interview can be held in English.