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Guidelines for externally employed doctoral students and externally financed doctoral students

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1. Introduction

As a part of the third-cycle studies that it offers, Luleå University of Technology (henceforth the University) admits doctoral students employed and financed by an external employer. Employers may be other higher education institutions, enterprises and public authorities that the University collaborates with and plans to continue collaborate with, and that create value within the research and education conducted at the University. Supporting documents describing this must be presented to the Head of Department when the process for admission and signing of agreement begins.

It is important that the agreement specifically clarifies the division of responsibility between the University and the external employer. These clarifications are also important for the individual doctoral student from a legal certainty point of view. The clarifications are found in two separate documents, an agreement between the University and the external employer and an individual study plan laid down by the relevant Head of Department.

To begin with, it is noted that the University is responsible for admissions and thereby responsible for the doctoral student's education, whereas the external employer is the responsible employer and thus has the personnel responsibility for the doctoral student.

The agreement regulates the issue of financing and other important circumstances regarding the implementation of the doctoral student's third-cycle studies. The individual study plan is a document in which the doctoral student's studies are planned and followed up. Agreements made and measures taken are documented with the purpose of contributing to the implementation of efficient and high-quality third-cycle studies. The individual study plan, laid down by the Head of Department, is jointly prepared by the principal supervisor, the assistant supervisor(s) and the doctoral student. In case an external employer or a director of a graduate school is affected by the design of the education, they too are to participate in the preparation.

All doctoral students admitted at Luleå University of Technology, regardless of the form of financing, comply with the Higher Education Ordinance and the University's local rules and guidelines for third-cycle courses and study programmes^{1 2 3}.

2. Admission and Employment Agreement

Before the admission of a doctoral student, an agreement (based on the template⁴) must be signed between the Head of Department and the doctoral student's employer. The agreement is only binding once the doctoral student has been admitted and is employed by

¹ The Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100)

² Admission regulations for third-cycle (doctoral) courses and study programmes at Luleå University of Technology

³ The handbook for third-cycle studies, Luleå University of Technology

⁴ The template is available in The handbook for third-cycle studies, Luleå University of Technology

the employer concerned. The agreement must be communicated to and approved by the doctoral student concerned.

The admission decision is a separate decision⁵. If the doctoral student's employment ends, regardless of the grounds, the agreement expires automatically at the end of the employment.

3. Student funding

The agreement must specify that the external employer is responsible for the student funding and that the University, as the admitting higher education institution, is responsible for the education.

3.1 Funding by smaller enterprises

The admission of a doctoral student employed by a smaller enterprise, i.e., a micro-enterprise⁶, requires an inquiry and a separate decision by the Vice-Chancellor.

The Head of Department is responsible for the inquiry with the support of an administrative officer at the Professional Services prior to the decision by the Vice-Chancellor.

The reason why a separate decision must be taken by the Vice-Chancellor in these cases is that it must be determined that it is not a question of disguised self-funding, see section 3.3. below.

3.2 Funding by scholarships

The Vice-Chancellor decides on the admission of a doctoral student financed by a scholarship⁷.

3.3 Self-funding

There is no explicit prohibition of self-funding in the Higher Education Ordinance. However, there are many problems related to allowing self-funding, where the University risks acting contrary to mandatory provisions in the constitutions and in the Higher Education Ordinance, something that may damage the confidence in the University⁸. Therefore, Luleå University of Technology does not allow self-funding by a person's private capital as a basis for admission to third-cycle studies.

⁵ The Vice-Chancellor's Rules of Decision-Making and Delegation of Authority, Luleå University of Technology

⁶ Definition, micro-enterprise: An enterprise with less than ten employees and an annual turnover of less than EUR 2 million.

⁷ Scholarships Rules at Luleå University of Technology

⁸ Inquiry – the University lawyers (reg.no. LTU-412-2021)

4. The individual study plan

An individual study plan must be drawn up by the principal supervisor and the doctoral student when the doctoral student is admitted to the third-cycle studies. The individual study plan is approved by the head of the admitting department. There will be annual follow-ups and revisions of the individual study plan.

The sections in the agreement important for the doctoral student's education are to be included in the individual study plan.

The individual study plan must specify the person responsible for the doctoral student at the external employer. This person must be informed about the draft individual study plan before the plan is laid down by the Head of Department. This applies to both the drawing-up and the follow-up of the individual study plan.

5. Supervision

Luleå University of Technology appoints a principal supervisor and one or more assistant supervisors in accordance with the Higher Education Ordinance and the University's local rules and guidelines^{9 10 11}. The division of responsibility between the Principal supervisor and the Assistant supervisor(s) must be specified in the individual study plan.

If there is a supervisor at the doctoral student's employer, the agreement must specify that the employer provides the supervisor with the necessary prerequisites to enable them to fulfil their commitment in accordance with the individual study plan.

The Head of Department is responsible for ensuring that the principal supervisor and the assistant supervisor(s) have knowledge of the University's governing documents related to third-cycle studies.

The assistant supervisor employed by the doctoral student's employer must, through the agency of the department, be connected to the research environment and the third-cycle studies environment.

If a doctoral student substantially neglects their undertakings in the individual study plan, the Vice-chancellor can decide that the doctoral student is no longer entitled to supervision and other study resources¹². This is to be regulated in the agreement.

⁹ The Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100)

¹⁰ Admission regulations for third-cycle (doctoral) courses and study programmes at Luleå University of Technology

¹¹ The handbook for third-cycle studies, Luleå University of Technology

¹² The Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100)

6. Examination

Luleå University of Technology is responsible for the final examination in accordance with the Higher Education Ordinance and the University's local rules and guidelines for third-cycle courses and study programmes^{13 14}.

7. Student influence

Doctoral students admitted to third-cycle studies at Luleå University of Technology can be represented by the PhD Student Association in preparing and decision-making bodies within the University.

¹³ The Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100)

¹⁴ The handbook for third-cycle studies, Luleå University of Technology