

Employment conditions for doctoral candidates at Uppsala university

Your employment contract is a very short text on a single piece of paper, with some short information on the back about holidays and notice periods.

So where are the rules about your working hours, your rights, your benefits, your salary...?

Central collective agreements (*centrala kollektivavtal*)

The general rules for employment at public universities in Sweden are negotiated between the Swedish Agency for Government Employers (*Arbetsgivarverket*, representing the universities) and the trade union confederacy SACO-S (representing us). The agreements can be found on the Arbetsgivarverket website: <https://www.arbetsgivarverket.se/avtal--skrifter/>

These agreements are in Swedish, there are many of them, and some are over a hundred pages long. The two that are most likely to interest you are *Villkorsavtal-T* and *RALS-T*. I am not giving you direct links to those documents because they get renegotiated from time to time. Use the link above for the Arbetsgivarverket website, and then scroll down the list to find the document and download the current version!

Villkorsavtal-T is the "big one", with sections on working hours, holiday, sick pay, travel for work, healthcare benefits etc. (Look again at your employment contract: it should state that the terms of *Villkorsavtal-T* apply.)

RALS-T defines a framework for salary negotiations. You will not actually find salary levels in this document. Rather, it is an agreement on how salaries will be agreed.

Local collective agreements (*lokala kollektivavtal*)

Local agreements are negotiated between Uppsala university and the Uppsala SACO-S council (*SACO-S-rådet vid Uppsala universitet*). These extend, and in some cases may override, the central agreements.

Local agreement texts can be found on the university Staff Portal (*Medarbetarportalen*) here: <https://mp.uu.se/web/info/anstallning/anstallningsvillkor/kollektivavtal/lokala> and also on the SACO-S website here: <http://www.saco.fackorg.uu.se/lagar-och-avtal/> Again: there are many documents, they tend to be in Swedish, and some can be quite long.

A lot of general information about your employment conditions, benefits etc. is also available in English in various sections of the Staff Portal.

Doctoral salary ladder (*Doktorandstege*)

While many other university staff members have individual wage negotiations, the salaries for doctoral candidates follow a "ladder", with a starting salary that increases over time. You can find the current ladder here:

<http://www.saco.fackorg.uu.se/verksamhet/doktorandfragor/doktorandstege>

In the past, salary ladder steps were after one year of employment, after two years, then at 50% completion and at 80% completion. We are moving away from that system, because measuring a percentage of completion is subjective, and supervisors have in some cases

attempted to downplay completion in order to save money. We are now working towards a system more strictly based on years of employment.

In some departments, particularly in engineering and computer science, the salaries for doctoral employment are higher than at the rest of the university. The justification is that graduates in these subjects can easily find private sector employment with higher salaries, and therefore higher doctoral salaries must be offered to recruit people. The doctoral salary ladder also specifies higher salaries for medicine graduates (with *läkarexamen*), and even higher for medical doctors who have completed their residency training (*legitimerad läkare*). Not everybody is pleased with these differences in salary, and they are a topic of ongoing discussion.

The SACO-S Council at Uppsala university (*SACO-S-rådet vid Uppsala universitet*)

So who are the people who negotiate these long agreements and these salary rules?

SACO-S has an Uppsala office located in the Yellow Villa (*Gula villan*) within the Engelska Parken campus. On the internet, you can find them here: <http://www.saco.fackorg.uu.se/>
The nationwide SACO website is here: <https://www.saco.se/en/>

Most University employees are members of a trade union. The largest union at Uppsala university is SULF, the Swedish Association of University Teachers and Researchers (*Sveriges universitetslärare och forskare*). SULF includes an association of doctoral candidates, called SDF: <https://sulf.se/en/sdf/> While most of Sweden's trade union movement has Swedish as its main working language, SDF operate in English, thus providing some much needed representation for non-Swedish speakers.

Other unions with a presence in Uppsala include the Swedish Association of Professional Scientists (*Naturvetarna*) and job-defined unions such as the Swedish Doctors' Association (*Sveriges läkarförbund*), Swedish Association of Graduate Engineers (*Sveriges ingenjörer*) and so on.

Together, these unions form SACO. That is: SACO is a confederacy of trade unions, and the members of the SACO-S Council at Uppsala university are elected by the local unions, in proportion to their membership size. The local union boards are in turn elected by union members, so ultimately the SACO-S Council are elected (indirectly) by those of us who work at Uppsala university and are members of a union. The SACO-S Council then negotiate the employment conditions for all employees – even those who are not members of any union. If you have any questions about your employment as a doctoral candidate here in Uppsala, you are very welcome to contact our local SACO-S office on saco@uadm.uu.se. If you struggle to find information about your employment conditions or your rights, get in touch. If you find the information in Swedish, and need it explained to you in English, get in touch. If you are experiencing any conflict or harassment in your workplace, get in touch. If working conditions at your workplace do not comply with what it says in the collective agreements, get in touch. At the SACO-S office all inquiries are treated confidentially, and nobody will contact your supervisor, your head of department etc. unless you expressly ask them to do so.



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Förbundsstyrelseledamot, SULF

Sveriges universitetslärare och forskare