

It has now been a couple of years since Stockholm University introduced a tenure-track system modelled after the US, with employment as an assistant professor as the first step. This was made possible by the new four-year training position introduced by the government. A growing proportion of announced teaching positions are now assistant professorships, and I imagine that, in the future, most of the Faculty's associate professors and professors will have been recruited via assistant professorships. I think this is a very good system, but not all universities have introduced it. Karolinska Institutet does not currently offer any opportunities for promotion, as all professorships and associate professorships are advertised. However, KI is now going to review the tenure-track system. The reason for their opposition to this system is that they believe it is necessary to recruit in order to maintain quality. I do not think this is necessary. In fact, I believe that, handled properly, the tenure-track system helps increase quality, as it makes the positions more attractive. KI's hesitation points to a potential problem, however. The review process in connection with promotions must be strict enough that we do not promote almost everyone out of "kindness". It is of crucial importance to the future of our Faculty that the promotion of assistant professors to associate professors works properly. It is equally important that the employment terms are such that the assistant professorships are very attractive. An important factor in this is that those who are successful should know that they will be promoted.

The goal should be that everyone we appoint to an assistant professorship should eventually be promoted to associate professor. Not everyone will live up to our high expectations, however. These people are recruited early in their careers, and the qualification period as an assistant professor is unfortunately far too short – we should seek to extend this to six years. Some will not be able to demonstrate the ability to independently initiate and conduct the internationally prominent research that we require in accordance with the criteria for promotion adopted by the Faculty nearly two years ago. In such cases, the Faculty will have to reject the application for promotion. Of course, there should not be any given proportion that will not be promoted, but if I had to guess I would say that far more than half, but also fewer than nine out of ten, will be promoted.

An important basis for promotion will be the external reviewers' reports concerning research skills. The reviewers should be international authorities in their fields and will be very carefully selected. External funding is important to our operations, and being able to compete for such funding is an important indicator of quality. Those seeking promotion should specify what kind of funding they have applied for and what the outcome was. The Swedish Research Council is a natural source for a very large part of our operations, and our active researchers in many fields are expected to seek funding from there. This applies to assistant professors as well. Different scientific disciplines operate under different conditions, and the same criteria cannot be applied to all of them, but a demonstrated will and ability to find external funding will be an important part of the assessment.

What I have written so far mainly relates to research skills. The assessment of teaching skills is also very important, but it is much easier, since these people have been working at the University for many years. Teaching skills will thus be assessed internally.

As a complement to the external reviewers' reports and other written documentation, the promotional committee will probably conduct interviews with the assistant professors.

The Faculty is currently discussing an introductory programme for assistant professors to give them a good start to their career at Stockholm University. Planned elements include

mentors at the departments and a Junior Faculty where assistant professors from different disciplines within the University can meet.