

Postdoctoral fellows at UPSC

Umeå Plant Science Centre consists of the Department of plant physiology, Umeå University (UMU) and the Department of forest genetics and plant physiology, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU).

UPSC hosts a high number of postdoctoral fellows. Postdoctoral fellows could be either employed or hold a scholarship (stipend). There are important legal differences between the two options, in general employments are regulated by many laws and agreements while stipends are not. It is important that you are aware of the differences to avoid misunderstandings, this document aims at describing them. The information below is valid for both UPSC departments.

Postdoctoral employee

- Postdoctoral employees are covered by the same legal framework as all other employees at universities.
- Employees are insured while at work, on the way to work and on way home from work. There is also a travel insurance covering when they are on business travel.
- Employees have an occupational pension through the employer. That means that the university pay an amount of money each month to the occupational pension fund, and pension will be paid out when the employee retires.
- Employees have regulated annual working hours (how many hours per year is depending on age and department) and are entitled to paid vacation from the beginning of the employment. The number of days (28 days or more when working a full year) depends on age and starting date of the position.
- Employees have the possibility to sign up for unemployment insurance (“a-kassa”).
- Employees have the right to paid sick or parental leaves, although at a lower level than the salary. For employee that has been on a paid sick or parental leave, the employer has the right to prolong the postdoctoral employment contract correspondingly.
- Salaries for employees are decided about after annual negotiations between your university and the labor unions.
- Employees are offered fitness reimbursement that applies to fitness activity subscriptions such as gym cards. Read more on your departments website ([SLU](#) and [UMU](#)).
- A postdoctoral position is a well specified type of position that last between 24 up to 36 months. At both universities, persons could perform “postdoctoral work”, although not being formally employed as a postdoc but on another kind of position.

- Read more about the employment conditions and benefits on the internal webpage ([UMU](#) and [SLU](#)) of your university.

Postdoctoral scholarship holders

- Scholarships are quite common in Sweden and fulfill an important function to allow individuals to study. Studies can be of different kinds, for example both artists and postdoctoral researchers can be awarded scholarships for their studies. Scholarships are tax-free in Sweden, a unique exception from the tax laws. In principle, stipends could also be given for PhD studies, but Swedish universities accept only under unique circumstances that PhD studies are financed by scholarships.
- A scholarship holder is not an employee, rather a person affiliated to an institution to perform postdoctoral studies. This tax exemption is the reason behind the differences between rules applying to employees and scholarship holders; they are there to ensure that the stipend qualify for a tax exception.
- Even though scholarships are tax-free in Sweden you need to visit the Tax Agency if you plan to stay more than 12 months.
- You can either have a scholarship paid directly from the funding agency to your bank account, or you can have a scholarship that is administrated via the University's payroll system.
- Different funders grant scholarships and they each decide how scholarships should be paid out. This is beyond the control of the universities (except for scholarships administered by them).
- Scholarship holders are insured, although through a different system than employees, read more about the terms and conditions on: <https://www.kammarkollegiet.se/engelska/start/all-services/insurance-for-foreign-visitors/individual-insurance/insurance-for-foreign-visitors>. This insurance covers all temporary guests and researchers. If you think you need a more extensive insurance cover than this, you will have to arrange a private insurance.
- Scholarship holders are not part of the occupational pension system.
- Scholarship holders have no regulated working hours, hence no paid vacation. Nevertheless, at UPSC they typically try to conform to postdoctoral employees in this respect.
- Scholarship holders cannot sign up for unemployment insurance (a-kassa).
- The scholarship is paid with the same sum even if the person is absent, for example due to sickness, taking care of sick child etc.
- The level of the scholarship is decided by the funding body.
- Scholarship holders cannot be offered fitness reimbursements.

- Scholarship holders cannot be reimbursed for their expenses. Therefore, you need to make an agreement with your group leader/principal investigator (PI) that he/she takes any expenses that needs to be reimbursed.
- A scholarship could last for a maximum of 24 months and can under no circumstances be prolonged beyond that. Nor could a second scholarship be given to a person that already have had a scholarship for 24 months (even if the granting body and/or university is different).
- A scholarship cannot be given to a person that previously has been employed at the university.

Common information for all postdoctoral researchers at UPSC

Before you arrive

- Before your arrival register at the UPSC webpage <https://www.upsc.se/register.html>
Your PI will provide you with the account name and password.
In the registration form you can inform us if you need help with accommodation through UPSC.
- You need to have a residence permit if you are from a non-EU or non-ESS country, for more information visit Migrationsverket (<https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/Startpage.html>)
- If you are from an EU country, you should bring your EU health insurance card from your home country or country of last employment. This will give you right to necessary medical and dental care on the same terms and costs as those insured in Sweden before you got your Swedish personal identity number.
If you are a postdoctoral scholarship holder from an EU country: You need to bring with you a S1-certificate or a certificate of a private insurance that meets the requirements. This is necessary to be able to get a Swedish social security number.

On arrival

- The first step when you arrive is to register as living in Sweden and receive a Swedish personal identity number. To get this number you need to visit the Swedish Tax Agency. Please carefully read the information about your civil registration. (<https://www.skatteverket.se/servicelankar/otherlanguages/inenglish/individualsandemployees/movingtosweden.4.7be5268414bea064694c40c.html>).
- After you have received your Swedish personal identity number you need to visit the bank to open a bank account. At most of the banks you will need a Swedish ID card to open a bank account.
- After you have received a Swedish personal identity number, you can receive benefits from the Swedish social security system which you will be able to apply for at the Swedish Social Insurance Agency (Försäkringskassan) and you will be covered by basic health insurance as received by all Swedish citizens.
Remember to save all the original receipts from doctor appointments so you can claim the fee



back from the insurance company [Kammarkollegiet](#). Before you received your personal identity number the fees are higher.

- In addition to the insurance coverage through the university, we recommend everyone to take a private home insurance.
- We want to keep an open and friendly atmosphere and a good working environment with equal opportunities. We encourage honest and critical scientific discussions but have zero tolerance for misconduct, harassment and discrimination. Please contact the Head of department, work environment representatives or equal opportunity representatives if you experience any problems. You can find the names of the different contact persons on the internal part of the UPSC webpage. Log in on the page and look in the menu to the right or press the link below:

<https://www.upsc.se/about-upsc/internal/contacts-in-case-of-problems.html>

If you have any questions, ask the HR-administrator at your department. We hope you will have a pleasant time with us here at UPSC. Make yourself at home!

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