



UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

PROCEDURES FOR HOUSING ADMINISTRATION

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¹ This document has been translated from Swedish into English. If the English version differs from the original, the Swedish version takes precedence.



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1. Description

These procedures aim to clarify internal housing administration for international students, doctoral students, postdoctoral fellows (scholarship holders), visiting research fellows and research fellows employed at Umeå University, based on the Ordinance (SFS 2022:1515) on the possibility for higher education institutions to provide housing.

2. Background

Umeå University recruits international researchers, admits international students and doctoral students, and welcomes postdoctoral fellows and visiting research fellows, which places demands on the University to also be able to offer these individuals housing wherever possible. The aim is for them to begin their work, their studies and their everyday lives in Umeå without the stress of having to look for accommodation themselves, thereby facilitating international recruitment.

In Government Decision U2022/03919, the Government tasks state higher education institutions with providing housing in accordance with the Ordinance (SFS 2022:1515) on the possibility for higher education institutions to provide housing. In accordance with Section 3 of the Ordinance (SFS 2022:1515), a higher education institution may rent housing for the purpose of subletting if:

- there is a shortage of housing within the municipality;
- renting housing is necessary to ensure internationalisation and mobility among researchers; and
- tenants are covered by the Ordinance (SFS 2022:1515).

In order to assess whether there is a shortage of housing within the municipality, the higher education institution must carry out an overall analysis of available information about the local housing market from the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, the county administrative board and the municipality. The higher education institution may also use other information for this analysis if necessary.

Even municipalities that do not have a general shortage of housing may have a shortage of a specific type of housing that affects certain groups, resulting in a housing market within the area that is ineffective from an overall point of view. These municipalities are therefore also covered by the Government's decision. The assessment of whether or not there is a shortage of housing and the need to provide housing should relate to the entire tenancy period in question, and should be carried out before the higher education institution enters into or extends an agreement for renting housing.

3. The Accommodation Service at Umeå University

The Vice-Chancellor has established a university-wide function for housing at Umeå University. This function is organised as a subunit within the Property Management Office called the Accommodation Service (Sw. *Bostadsförmedlingen*). The Accommodation Service is a joint function that can be used by all parts of the University, and is financed partly by rental income and partly by internal fees for those departments that use the service.

The role of the Accommodation Service is to promote international collaboration and the recruitment of international students and international staff and visiting research fellows by making it easier for arriving individuals to find housing. The Accommodation Service rents out a number of apartments and student rooms, and is responsible for the entire rental process.

The Accommodation Service will also:

- create synergies;
- provide the correct level of service; and
- make the necessary contact with housing applicants, departments and public authorities.

The Accommodation Service's way of working is illustrated in the image below:



3.1 Groups that can rent via the Accommodation Service

In accordance with Section 3 of the Ordinance (SFS 2022:1515), the University can rent housing and then sublet it to:

- students who carry out a limited part of their education at the University as part of an exchange programme with a foreign higher education institution;
- students at first- or second-cycle levels (undergraduate and Master's) who are required to pay fees in accordance with Section 5 of the Ordinance (SFS 2010:543) on application fees and tuition fees at higher education institutions;
- students at third-cycle level (doctoral students) who have commenced their studies during the last six months;
- visiting research fellows who are not employed by the University; and
- university employees who have been employed for a maximum of six months and who work primarily with research/artistic research and **who have completed a doctoral degree no more than five years before their employment began.**



The term *research fellow* is used below to refer to both employed research fellows and visiting research fellows, unless otherwise stated.

3.2 Fees

In accordance with Section 6 of the Ordinance (SFS 2022:1515), a higher education institution must charge a fee when letting housing. This fee is to be calculated so that it contributes towards covering operational costs, but may not be higher than reasonable rent in accordance with Chapter 12, Section 55 of the Swedish Land Code (SFS 1970:994).

The rent-setting principles for the University's accommodation are decided on by the University Director following investigation by the Pricing Council. The University's rent levels are also negotiated with the tenants' association, which means that the basic rent complies with the Swedish Tenancy Act (Chapter 12, Section 55 of the Swedish Land Code, SFS 1970:994).

In addition to basic rent and supplements for furnishings and equipment, charges may also be applied for other services (other utilities) that constitute a prime cost and are of benefit to the tenant.

3.3 Financing

In accordance with Section 7 of the Ordinance (SFS 2022:1515), the University may use direct government funding to reimburse costs for renting housing and other costs for being able to let out such housing. However, direct government funding may not be used if the costs can be covered by rental fees.

When a department registers a housing applicant, it must also pay a previously determined fee to the Accommodation Service. The department is responsible for paying the tenant's rent in those cases where a tenant pays late or fails to pay their rent.

3.4 Reporting

Section 8 of the Ordinance (SFS 2022:1515) stipulates that the annual report must indicate the following:

- 1) the group(s) to which the University has decided to let out apartments and student rooms;
- 2) the number of apartments and student rooms rented by the University, and their occupancy rates;
- 3) costs and income relating to the University letting out housing;
- 4) income broken down into fees and government funding; and
- 5) a forecast for future years, with corresponding details.

Costs and income relating to the University letting out housing must be reported separately from other operations. This is done though the Accommodation Service's operations being reported as a separate organisational unit.



When renting housing, a higher education institution must – in accordance with Article 4 of Commission Decision 2012/21/EU – document the decision to provide housing. The documentation must include:

- 1) tenancy agreements entered into for renting housing;
- 2) an analysis of the housing market within the municipality in question and the higher education institution's assessment that there will be a shortage of housing in the municipality throughout the entire tenancy period. This analysis must also show which documentation the higher education institution has used in its analysis;
- 3) details of which groups the higher education institution has decided to let out housing to, and an account of its assessment that it is necessary to provide housing to these groups in order to ensure the internationalisation of the higher education institution or the mobility of researchers; and
- 4) confirmation that the assignment of providing housing constitutes a service of general economic interest under Commission Decision 2012/21/EU, with reference to the Decision.

Tenancy agreements and details are to be retained for ten years from when the tenancy agreements expire.

4. The rental process

4.1 Registration and application to the housing queue

To register an interest in available housing, the housing applicant must be registered in the University's administrative system for housing and must have applied to the housing queue. The process for this differs between students and research fellows.

4.1.1 Registration and application for students

Students register and apply in the system themselves, and must attach their admission decision.

Students receive information about the Accommodation Service in their admission decision, and can therefore register with effect from the day when they receive this decision. Fee-paying students receive information about housing, and can only register once they have paid their tuition fees.

4.1.2 Registration and application for research fellows

It is the host department that applies to the housing queue for visiting research fellows, employed research fellows and students at third-cycle level. More information about the application process can be found on the website for staff.

Once the department has submitted an application to the Accommodation Service, the housing applicant is placed in the housing queue and begins to accumulate queue points.



The application to the Accommodation Service must include a number of details about the housing applicant, as well as details of a contact at the department. The department is responsible for updating the application if the applicant's circumstances change.

4.2 Available rental apartments and student rooms

The housing applicant can find available apartments and student rooms in the University's administrative system for housing. All available apartments and student rooms are presented with a descriptive text detailing what is included in the housing, the monthly rent, images of the housing and a map of where the housing is located.

The housing applicant registers their interest in the housing that corresponds to their wishes and requirements themselves, and can also subscribe to offers relating to their preferred area. The housing applicant can register an interest in several different housing options, thereby increasing their chances of being offered housing.

All rental properties within the Accommodation Service are divided into two queues: one for students and one for visiting research fellows. Students can only rent student rooms, while visiting research fellows can rent one- to three-bedroom apartments.

The Accommodation Service's goal is that all housing that is rented out should be furnished and ready to move into when the tenant gains access. Umeå University's housing is equipped to varying degrees in terms of furnishings and other equipment. Additional furnishings and equipment can be arranged by the Accommodation Service based on how the property is equipped when it is rented from the landlord.

4.3 Queue management – prioritisation and selection

Applicants take their place in the housing queue once they have been registered in the system and have applied to the queue. They are then awarded one queue point for every day they are in the queue.

If several people register an interest in the same housing option, the applicants are ranked according to their queue points, with some exceptions as described in the following sections.

4.3.1 Prioritising students

Here, a first-come-first-served principle is applied as admission decisions are sent to different groups of students at different times. In order to obtain a tenancy agreement, the student must have uploaded their admission decision.

The place an applicant is given in the queue for a particular housing option depends on how many queue points they have been awarded and how many other people have expressed an interest in the same housing option. If there are only a few people in the queue for a student room, the chances of receiving an offer are better.



4.3.2 Prioritising research fellows

Priority is always given to applicants with accompanying children. The number of queue points then determines which place the applicant is given in the queue when registering an interest in a specific apartment.

If multiple applicants have the same number of queue points and register their interest in the same apartment, the following order of priority applies:

1. Postdoctoral fellows
2. Doctoral students.

The order of priority may be bypassed by the University Director at the request of a dean or equivalent.

4.4 The housing applicant receives an offer

The offer sent to the housing applicant includes the address of the rental property and the agreement date. The housing applicant has a certain number of days in which to consider the offer. If they accept the offer, a subletting agreement will be drawn up and the applicant has seven days to sign the agreement.

If they decline the offer, the same offer is passed on to the next applicant in the queue. The applicant keeps their queue points even if they decline an offer.

4.4.1 Rental period

Umeå University has decided to limit the tenancy period for the different target groups to increase the availability of housing.

Tenancy agreements for exchange students cover one semester, and can be extended for a maximum of one more semester. Fee-paying students can rent housing for two semesters with no option to extend.

Research fellows are offered subletting agreements with a maximum tenancy period of two years. Postdoctoral researchers holding a two-year appointment that is extended by an additional year may be granted an extension of their housing rental period for a further year, subject to the university's assessment of current demand for researcher accommodation. For postdoctoral researchers with a three-year appointment, the rental period shall be three years from the commencement of the appointment.

Housing applicants who need accommodation for a longer period are encouraged to join a housing queue with an external party as soon as possible in order to get access to other housing before the end of the tenancy period.

Someone who has obtained a tenancy agreement and lives in Accommodation Service housing cannot change their housing during the tenancy period, unless special reasons exist. Nor are they permitted to transfer their subletting agreement.

A tenancy agreement can be terminated earlier than agreed, taking into account the notice period in the agreement.



4.5 Drawing up subletting agreements

Umeå University's Accommodation Service is the primary tenant for all rented housing. A subletting agreement is drawn up between the Accommodation Service and the tenant, which is signed by both parties.

The agreement shows the start and end dates, the rental amount, itemised additional costs and special terms and conditions. The agreement is sent to the housing applicant by email for digital signing, together with a welcome message containing practical information about the housing and rent payment.

If an applicant accepts a housing offer, their accumulated queue points are reset to zero.

4.6 Rent

The monthly rent is paid in advance, via a rental invoice that is sent out once a month by the Accommodation Service. Invoices are sent directly from the Raindance financial system.

If a tenant does not pay the rent and does not respond to reminders, the Accommodation Service can terminate the tenancy agreement early. In such cases, the International Office or the relevant department and a university legal officer will be contacted for investigation.

4.7 Changes during the tenancy period

Any requested changes in terms of the time of moving out, exchanges or extensions to agreements must be notified to the Accommodation Service in writing at least three months before the changes are requested to take effect. This ensures favourable conditions for good planning and access to housing.

In cases where an exchange student at second-cycle level (Master's level) needs larger housing due to their family situation, the Accommodation Service will try to change their housing from a student room to an apartment. The larger housing will be paid for by the student.

4.8 Damage to student rooms or apartments

Damage that occurs in housing that is rented out by the Accommodation Service is to be paid for by the tenant in accordance with the terms and conditions stated in the tenancy agreement. If the damage is only discovered after the tenant has moved out and left Sweden, the department will be responsible for reimbursing any costs if this relates to an employee. If it relates to an exchange student, their home university will be contacted.