

Description of the appointment process of a tenure track position (assistant/associate professor)

Digital Social Sciences

Location: School of Engineering Sciences, Department of Social Sciences, Lappeenranta campus

The rector has approved the description and initiated the appointment process on 4 June 2024.

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Applied statutes

Universities Act (558/2009)

Government decree on universities (770/2009)

Regulations of LUT University (8 December 2022, amended 5 April 2024)

Rector's decision: Academic career tracks of the Lappeenranta–Lahti University of Technology LUT (20 March 2023)

Additional information

Further information on the duties of the professor is provided by Matti Kojo, head of department and associate professor, tel. +358 50 30 23 920, matti.kojo@lut.fi

1 Background

Clean energy, water and air are life-giving resources for which we at LUT University seek new solutions with our expertise in technology, business, and social sciences. We help society and businesses in their sustainable renewal.

LUT University was established in 1969. Our entrepreneurially thinking scientific and international community comprises approximately 7300 students and 1400 experts engaged in scientific research and academic education. There are 98 nationalities present on our modern campuses in Lappeenranta and Lahti.

In our schools – the LUT School of Energy Systems, the LUT School of Engineering Sciences, and LUT Business School – we conduct research and provide education that are internationally recognised and relevant to both society and business.

In 2022, LUT University received the right to provide education leading to the degrees of B.Sc., M.Sc., and D.Sc. in social sciences and communication sciences. The university will fill professorships through open calls to establish research and education at its new social sciences department within the School of Engineering Sciences. The department will eventually detach and form an independent school of its own at the university. Approximately 50 scientists at LUT University's current schools already work at the interface of social sciences and technology or business.

LUT School of Engineering Sciences (LENS)

Our mission is to train problem-solvers in different fields of engineering and contribute to a wider understanding of our world through research in technology. Our research and education are characterised by an entrepreneurial, global, and sustainable mindset. The LUT School of Engineering Sciences serves industry and society with its international expertise in separation and process technologies, computer vision and pattern recognition, industrial mathematics and physics, industrial engineering and management, and software engineering. Our strength lies in our close collaboration with companies combined with strong theoretical and methodological expertise.

Our unit pursues a sustainable future in a world where climate change, diminishing natural resources, the availability of clean water, the use of materials, and environmental issues pose significant challenges. By specialising in our strengths, we create sustainable technologies and business for the future.

The Department of Social Sciences was founded in 2022 under LENS. The department understands society and human activities in relation to global sustainability problems and has two disciplines, social sciences and communication sciences. The core areas of the department's work are sustainable citizenship, people and technology, and societal renewal. The focus areas of the department are presented on its web page:

<https://www.lut.fi/en/about-lut/faculties/lut-school-engineering-sciences/social-sciences>
<https://www.lut.fi/en/about-lut/faculties/lut-school-engineering-science/yhteiskuntatieteet>

The researchers at the department come from different disciplines and often work in international interdisciplinary teams. In February 2024, the department employed 27

researchers, and the number is quickly increasing. In addition, the department has many visiting professors.

In autumn 2024, two master's programmes in social sciences and one in communication sciences will start at the department.

<https://www.lut.fi/en/studies/social-sciences/masters-programmes-social-sciences-and-communication-sciences>

The university's research in social sciences and communication sciences will also be further strengthened. With a significant public donation by the City of Lappeenranta, LUT University will be establishing a school of social sciences of a thousand students and a hundred researchers by the 2030s. LUT's research in social sciences and communication sciences is based on understanding society and human activities in relation to global sustainability problems. We believe that by engaging people and communities more strongly at the very start of problem-solving, we will bring about changes more quickly.

2 Vacant professorship

The assistant/associate professorship in digital social sciences falls under the social sciences programme at the Department of Social Sciences of the School of Engineering Sciences (LENS). The position is based in Lappeenranta, Finland. The Department of Social Sciences has identified its central targets as sustainable citizenship, enabling renewable societies, and the connections of people and technology. Understanding sociotechnical change and communication and how they interact with societal power structures is essential when attempting to induce systemic change and promote sustainable growth in existing energy, food, and water systems, among others.

We are looking for a future-oriented assistant/associate professor interested in digital social science, with a focus on how digitalisation changes societies and business and/or on developing methodologies for studying digitalised societies. The candidate's research vision should relate to the core research areas of our department and LUT University's strategic focus areas.

<https://www.lut.fi/en/about-us/introducing-university/strategy>

<https://www.lut.fi/en/about-lut/faculties/lut-school-engineering-sciences/social-sciences>

We are looking for a curious mind who is interested in a long-term academic career and is passionate about continuous learning and making the world a better place through science.

The ideal candidate has a doctoral degree in a field of social sciences and a research focus on digital social sciences. The assistant/associate professor is expected to demonstrate a high level of academic competence and have ambition for ground-breaking academic research in the field of digital social sciences. This requires the capability to publish in top-tier publications of this new and emerging field. The candidate should have good command of advanced quantitative methods – either traditional ones or methods involving machine learning.

Examples of desirable topical specialisations include:

- changes in society and the state due to digitalisation
- the joint digital and green transition in society
- governance of the impacts of digitalisation
- social science perspectives in infrastructure studies methodologies and approaches
- changes in social sciences research methods due to digitalisation

The assistant/associate professor is also expected to provide evidence of the ability to obtain research funding, establish and supervise a research group, cooperate with industry partners, and conduct research with societal impact.

The duties of the assistant/associate professor include basic and advanced education in key areas of digital social sciences. The exact educational responsibilities will be agreed on with the head of the degree programme. The appointed assistant/associate professor will teach, for example, in the Master's Programme in Digital Social Sciences.

<https://www.lut.fi/en/studies/social-sciences/masters-programmes-social-sciences-and-communication-sciences/masters-programme-digital-social-science>

The assistant/associate professor is expected to supervise master's theses and doctoral dissertations. Experience in curriculum planning is seen as a merit, as the appointed person might become the head of a master's or bachelor's programme in the near future. We also expect the candidate to participate in the activities of the discipline and to help build up the Department of Social Sciences.

Skills for collaborating both within LUT and with national and especially international partners are crucial to the position, and candidates are expected to provide evidence of successful international collaboration and networks. Preparations for national and especially international research and education projects are part of the work of professors at LUT University. We provide an inspiring community of scholars focusing on a sustainable future. We work in close collaboration with the scholars at LUT's two other schools and with our international partner institutions.

The duties of the assistant/associate professor also include societal engagement that serves industry, the economy, and our society, and general administrative work related to the university's operation.

A global perspective and international experience are strong merits, and applicants with international academic experience are especially encouraged to apply.

The general duties related to the field of research include the following:

- high-impact international research and publishing
- planning and implementation of bachelor's, master's, and doctoral education
- supervision and evaluation of final theses and doctoral studies
- acquisition of research funding
- cost-conscious leadership and project management
- preparation of national and international research
- preparation of international education projects
- communicating and networking actively, thereby increasing awareness in a way that serves LUT and its educational and industrial partners

- close collaboration and interaction with businesses in the field
- societal engagement: collaboration and interaction with related public-sector or international organisations
- taking part in the preparation of projects in other LUT units as an expert
- general administrative work related to the university's operation
- teamwork, as most of the research and work is conducted in research groups and teams

The position is at the assistant/associate professor levels of the tenure track and will be filled through an open call for a fixed term of four years. The tenure track system offers researchers a possibility to advance to a full professorship. LUT is committed to providing tenure track researchers the possibility to advance to the next level, provided they meet the requirements in the promotion reviews, are suitable for the position, and conduct research that fits LUT's strategy and operation.

More information on the LUT tenure track system:

<https://www.lut.fi/en/research/research-career-lut/tenure-track>

The position starts with a six-month trial period.

3 Qualifications

According to the administrative regulations of LUT University, adopted on 8 December 2022, assistant/associate professors are required to have a doctorate, high-level scientific qualifications, experience in heading scientific research, the ability to acquire funding, the ability to provide high-level instruction based on research, the ability to supervise final theses, proof of international cooperation in their field of research, and when relevant to the duties of the position, practical experience in the field of the professorship.

Practical experience in the field is not a requirement in this position.

The applicant must have research and teaching merits, proof of effective research and the acquisition of external research funding, and international experience. The appointed applicant will be the immediate supervisor of a research group and may need to perform other demanding management duties assigned by the university. Therefore, related skills will be taken into consideration in the appointment, and attention will be paid to the applicant's merits as defined in LUT's tenure track system (Annex).

Under the universities decree (770/2009), persons in teaching and research positions at universities are required to master the language, Finnish or Swedish, in which they teach. According to the university regulations, section 28, foreign citizens or naturalised Finnish citizens may be appointed to teaching or research positions even if they have not demonstrated skills in Finnish and/or Swedish. Applicants for professorships may demonstrate their language skills with a language certificate accepted by the academic council and/or in an interview.

According to the university regulations, section 28, assistant/associate professors are required to have the language skills needed for the successful completion of their duties.

In this position, spoken and written fluency in English is required. The appointed person is encouraged to acquire the necessary Finnish skills during the employment relationship. For that purpose, LUT offers in-house Finnish language courses to staff members.

4 Applying for the position

Application

The application must specify the tenure track level applied to. The deadline for applications is indicated in the vacancy announcement. The application and material for expert assessors should be submitted through the online recruitment system mentioned in the vacancy announcement.

Please submit your application together with the following required attachments through the university's online application system.

All application documents must be in English and in PDF format. The application must include:

- a curriculum vitae (max. 10 pages)
- a copy of the applicant's doctoral degree certificate
- a full list of publications including the applicant's Scopus and Google Scholar details: the Scopus ID and Google Scholar profile URL, the total number of publications, the total number of citations, and h-indices
- a separate list of the 10 publications selected for expert evaluation
- the 10 publications mentioned above
- a teaching portfolio or an equivalent account of the applicant's teaching qualifications, presenting courses taught by the applicant, related feedback, the applicant's pedagogical training and teaching philosophy, and courses that the applicant is able to or prefers to teach
- an account of the applicant's merits and activities of significance to the vacancy (max. 3 pages)
- an account of the applicant's vision on the development of education, external funding, research, and projects in the field of the professorship at LUT University (max. 3 pages)

Contact information

Applicants must give the university an e-mail address at which they can be reached. Applicants who do not wish to be contacted by e-mail must give a postal address at which they can be reached during the appointment process. The university prefers e-mail.

5 Expert evaluators

Selection of experts

The experts must be impartial. Before the selection of expert evaluators, the applicants must be provided the possibility to comment on their possible disqualification.

Based on the proposal of the selection committee, the dean invites at least three internationally recognised experts to submit a statement on the qualification of the applicants. The university's staff members may not be invited as expert evaluators. To the extent possible, the experts should be chosen with the applicants' fields of specialisation in mind and with a view to impartiality.

Sections 27–29 of the Administrative Procedure Act (434/2003) apply to the disqualification of an expert evaluator.

Applications forwarded to expert evaluators

The selection committee may limit the number of applications forwarded to expert evaluators if there are four applicants or more. At least three applications must be forwarded to the experts. The applications may be limited to the most suitable candidates for the position in the view of the person making the decision. The selection committee must state the grounds for its decision. The applicants will be informed if any applications are excluded from the evaluation.

Expert statements

The expert evaluators must give their statements in writing within five weeks. More specific dates will be sent to the evaluators along with instructions. In their statement, the experts must evaluate especially the scientific qualification of the applicant, and if possible, also other merits related to the professorship, and rank the applicants in order of preference.

Expert evaluators may not take part in the appointment process at a later stage.

The statement must be submitted to the university (separate instructions issued) by the deadline.

6 Interview and trial lecture

Applicants deemed qualified for the position by the experts will be invited to an interview. The selection committee may ask the applicants to give a public trial lecture.

7 Appointment

The selection committee makes an appointment proposal to the tenure track committee which then makes its own proposal to the dean. The dean then makes a proposal to the rector on

filling the position or leaving it vacant. The proposal shall be based on the merits presented by the applicants, expert statements, possible trial lectures and other related matters.

The evaluation of the applicant's qualifications takes into account scientific publications and other research results with scientific value, pedagogical expertise, teaching experience, teaching-related merits, a trial lecture if needed, the number of supervised dissertations, and management and leadership skills. In addition, the applicant's activity in the scientific community, success in raising research funding, scientific work abroad and international positions of trust are considered.

The rector decides either to appoint an applicant or to leave the position vacant.

The appointment proposal may be made or let lapse even if all of the experts have not submitted their statements, provided that the time limit for the statements has expired, at least three experts have submitted their statements, and the impartial treatment of the applicants is not compromised by doing so.

After the rector has made the appointment decision, an employment contract is concluded with the appointed person. If no employment contract is concluded, the rector may, based on the proposal by the dean, make a new decision and appoint another applicant. The rector may also leave the position vacant. When the employment contract is concluded with the person appointed, the final decision is made known to all applicants.

Tenure track appointment criteria

The positions below require a doctorate in an applicable field, a research field that fits the LUT strategy (see LUT Strategy 2030), a goal-oriented plan for the work in question, teaching experience and an up-to-date account of teaching merits (teaching portfolio).

In 2022, LUT joined the international Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment, which emphasises qualitative assessment in appointments to specialist positions and in promotions. This is highlighted especially in the evaluation of peer-reviewed scientific publications. We require high-level publications. The quality of publications is evaluated based on their content, such as novelty and impact. High-level publications have also passed a high-level peer review, where only the best manuscripts are accepted for publication. In the tenure track criteria below, we apply the classification of the Finnish Publication Forum (JUFO) as a guiding indicator of high-level publications (ratings 2 and 3), but applicants always select their best publications for a qualitative evaluation by experts.

In international recruitments, the evaluation must take into account that applicants from beyond Finland and Europe may not have been involved in Finnish or European research projects and may not have taken into consideration the Finnish Publication Forum classification. Such applicants are evaluated in terms of their success in acquiring competitive funding through their own national channels or through international ones and in terms of impact factors of scientific journals in their own field. Only in promotion and tenure reviews are the same criteria applied to them as to Finnish persons.

The following qualifications are to be considered in the recruitment of researchers for different levels. LUT University's tenure track appointment criteria have been prepared from the viewpoint of technology and business. Experts should compare the candidate's qualifications to typical ones of professors in the field of social sciences.

Assistant professor:

- peer-reviewed scientific publications
- contacts with the international scientific community in the field
- the ability to take part in applying for external funding in the research group and for fellowships of the Research Council of Finland
- the ability to participate in teaching and final thesis supervision

Associate professor:

- successful publication history after the doctoral defence, target of three high-level publications a year
- proof on international cooperation
- successful acquisition of external funding and acting as, e.g., a project manager in externally funded projects
- applying for the Research Council of Finland's research fellow positions
- participation in the supervision of doctoral students
- participation in the commercialisation of research results

- participation in teaching, the development of teaching and the supervision of final theses