

## A gender-equal academic world?

### Current situation

Today's higher education landscape is characterised by the temporary nature of research and teaching jobs, staff hunting for grants to fund their own salaries and lack of clear career paths for young scientists.

About as many women as men graduate as PhDs. Of them, more men become professors and careers take longer for women. Female early stage researchers do not seek research funding to the same extent as young men. Fewer women than men gain qualifying employment positions.

Today, 26% of Sweden's professors are women, and the rate of increase has slowed down. One third of the senior teaching and research staff – a higher proportion of women than men – are employed on fixed-term contracts. More women than men leave the academic world because of poor working conditions.

### Analysis

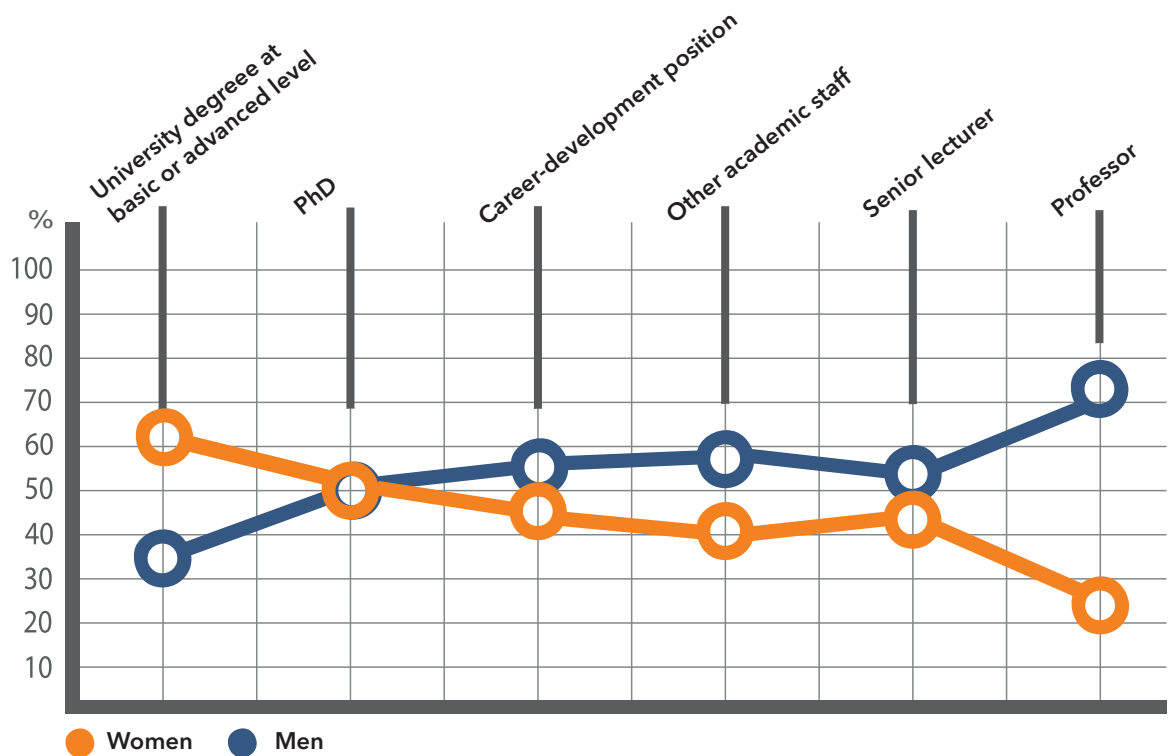
An increasing share of Sweden's research is financed by external funding with fixed-term contracts as a result. Everyone suffers, but women more than men because they often have the primary responsibility for children and because men researchers still prioritise other men over women.

Research shows that transparent procedures for appointments promote gender equality. Unfortunately, too few of the jobs available in the Swedish academic world are properly advertised. Requirements for open calls where the jobs are applied for and assigned in open competition are only partially complied with and there are few jobs for researchers at the beginning of their careers. The working environment and the lack of permanent employment mean that women leave academia for permanent jobs that use open recruitment procedures.

Funding in general, and the financing problems for female-dominated fields of research in particular, help to gradually deplete the academic world of women. Add to that the limited opportunities to combine a family with an academic career and it becomes clear why the number of women is reduced at each career step with a continuing imbalance of power and influence as a result.

### Measures for a more gender equal academic world

- Increase the share of basic funding to enable proper recruitment through open calls to proper positions with foreseeable career paths. This promotes equality and improves quality. Basic grants must be allocated on a long-term basis and not be exposed to competition.
- Create attractive career paths in academia where women and men can pursue their careers on equal terms.
- Ensure that the requirements for open calls and transparent appointment processes are complied with. Clear criteria and transparency promotes gender equality and reduces risk of nepotism.
- Employ all doctoral candidates from day one. Ban grants as payment for work. Regardless of gender, security of employment also secures the opportunity for gender-equal parental leave.
- Increase the proportion of female professors by ensuring that recruitments are long term and are not dependent on external funding, which we know are not awarded gender equally.
- Give all teachers time for research in their jobs to guarantee a close relationship between research and teaching. Research as an integral part of a job description would lead to more women gaining the opportunity to qualify for professor posts.



The proportion of women in academic careers at different career stages. For details and breakdown by discipline, see *Forskningens framtid - Jämställdheten i högskolan* and *Vetenskapsrådets Forskningsstöd*, 2015 page 25.



Action for gender equality benefits the entire collegiate and contributes to a better working environment. Please share your suggestions for action on the SULF Facebook page or use the hashtag #jämställdakademi



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