



UCL IMPACT STUDENTSHIPS 2010

Two fully-funded PhD studentships in Swedish-English Translation

A collaboration between UCL Scandinavian Studies and the Embassy of Sweden in London. Sponsored by Mr Stefan Olsson, London; the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation, San Francisco; the Swedish Academy, Stockholm; and the UCL Impact Studentship Scheme.

A condensed version of the information in this document can be found in the UCL Vacancies database. Visit <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/jobs/> and search under Swedish-English Translation Impact Studentships or enter reference 1143976.

Vacancy Information

Two 3-year PhD studentships sponsored by Mr Stefan Olsson, London, the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation, San Francisco, the Swedish Academy, Stockholm, and the UCL Impact Studentship scheme are available in the UCL department of Scandinavian Studies, starting in September 2010. The studentships cover tuition fees at the UK/EU rate and provide each student with an annual stipend in the range £15,747 - £16,545.

Summary of the project

This research project is one element in an ongoing programme instigated by Carl Otto Werkelid, the Cultural Counsellor of the Embassy of Sweden, to raise the profile of Swedish literature in the UK and re-invigorate the Swedish-English translation and publishing scene. On the one hand, Swedish literature has perhaps never been so popular in the UK as it is currently, as the phenomenal interest in the crime fiction of Stieg Larsson and the Henning Mankell 'Wallander' series attests. On the other hand, this interest seems to be confined to a rather narrow range of authors in one particular genre. Translation of Swedish literature into English tends to happen piecemeal, emphasizing (a) literary classics of the nineteenth century and (b) popular detective/crime fiction. The great wealth of high-quality contemporary literature in Swedish is largely overlooked by publishers. We propose two IMPACT studentships that will benefit the work of the institutions responsible for the promotion of Swedish literature in the UK, ranging from the Swedish Arts Council through to trade magazines such as *Swedish Book Review*.

Studentships description

1. One studentship will undertake a historical survey of the translation of Swedish literature (understood to encompass literary texts as well as non-fiction) into English. Depending on the specialism of the successful applicant, this is likely to take the form of a 'reception history', an established mode of enquiry in the field of Translation Studies. Case studies (the focus and scope of which will, again, depend on the specialism of the applicant) will be used to track the development of stylistic and commercial trends in publication of Swedish-English translations. Broadly, the aim of this PhD project is to contextualise historically, culturally and economically the fluctuations in the fortunes of Swedish literature in the UK and, if appropriate, comparable markets, with a view to enabling cultural institutions and publishing houses to make informed decisions about the translation and promotion of Swedish literature in the UK.

2. The second studentship is more text-based in nature and will focus on the translation of contemporary literature which is concerned with the re-negotiation of Swedish identity. In the last decade, the most ground-breaking (and in many cases best-selling) literature in Sweden has been characterized by its concern with emerging hybrid forms of Swedishness, and their expression in prose that experiments with dialects and sociolects, genre hybrids, and linguistic and formal innovation. The translation of such literature, which relies on the melding of locally-specific language varieties, is a problem that translation theory has not yet managed to solve. The aim of this PhD project is to determine the operations of such texts and establish translation strategies based on similar developments in anglophone and other fiction (there are parallels with, for example, contemporary literature in Scots dialect).

In both cases, the plan of work will be negotiated with the successful candidates in conjunction with the design of the project (as is typical in the Arts and Humanities, the student's interests and specialisms necessarily inform the shape of the project).

The impact of the research

The research projects are designed to draw on extant translation theory to tackle gaps in current knowledge and practice with a view to better informing the work of three groups in the UK: (a) Anglo-Swedish cultural agencies (e.g. the Cultural Section of the Embassy of Sweden; the Swedish Institute; *Swedish Book Review* magazine; the Swedish-English Literary Translators' Association); (b) established and emerging Swedish-English translators, who are often proactive in promoting particular texts to publishers; (c) small specialist Anglo-Scandinavian publishers such as Norvik Press, and, potentially, larger presses interested in publishing Swedish-language fiction in English to capitalize on the success of crime fiction. Furthermore, the holders of the two studentships will have the task of coordinating an ambitious programme of events, master-classes and summer schools – designed in consultation with the Culture Section of the Embassy of Sweden in London and UCL's Public Engagement Unit – with the aim of (a) broadening public interest in Swedish literature in the UK and (b) recruiting a new generation of Swedish-English translation professionals. The Swedish-English Literary Translators' Association reports a dearth of qualified Swedish-English translators near the beginning of their careers; our project therefore responds to the urgent need to ensure the professional and commercial sustainability of Swedish-English translation activity in the UK. An estimated 50,000 ex-patriot Swedes live in London; we would like to reach some of them and engage them in these activities.

The supervisory and advisory team

Each student will have a primary and a secondary supervisor selected according to the students' respective specialisms and interests. Supervisors will be drawn from a pool including: Dr Claire Thomson (Lecturer and Head of Department; holds a Master of Science in the Theory and Practice of Translation as well as a PhD in Scandinavian literature); Dr Mary Hilson (Senior Lecturer in Scandinavian History and a specialist on Swedish national identity); Dr Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen (from autumn 2010 Lecturer in Scandinavian Literature, and a specialist in book history, reception, and global media); Professor Theo Hermans (Director of the MA programme in Translation Theory and Practice and MA Comparative Literature); and other members of Faculty as appropriate. A small advisory team of stakeholders from the translation, publishing and cultural sectors will be established to support the research supervisors and the students.

The application process

The successful applicants will need to have at least an Upper Second Class Honours degree or equivalent in a relevant discipline. S/he will have demonstrable experience in the practice and/or theory of translation, and native or near-native speaker competence in Swedish. Experience in events organisation will be an advantage.

Potential candidates must satisfy the eligibility criteria (academic and residency) and person specification above. The award provides funding for tuition fees at the UK/EU rate and a student stipend within the range of £15,747 - £16,545 for three years.

To apply for a studentship, please send a covering letter and curriculum vitae, including the names of at least 2 academic referees. The letter should include a two-page research proposal detailing how you would undertake one of the two research projects (as outlined in the section 'Studentships description', above).

The two successful candidates will be required to apply for places as MPhil/PhD students at UCL using the standard application procedure, and they will be guided through this process by the Department after the interviews. The research proposal submitted as part of the studentship application procedure will form the basis of the subsequent application to UCL.

Applications can be sent by email to the Departmental Administrator, Ms Karin Charles, at k.charles@ucl.ac.uk, or by post to Department of Scandinavian Studies, UCL, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT, UK. Tel: (+44)(0)20 7679 7176.

Informal enquiries are welcome, and should be addressed by email to the Head of Department, Dr Claire Thomson (claire.thomson@ucl.ac.uk).

Closing Date: 14 Jul 2010, 4pm

Interview date: 21-23 July 2010

Studentship Start Date: 1 Sep 2010

UCL Taking Action for Equality