



# **TENURE TRACK**

## Natural Sciences

## TENURE TRACK AT NATURAL SCIENCES

Natural Sciences Tenure Track at Aarhus University is an attractive career opportunity for promising researchers from all over the world.

Highly qualified candidates are employed at assistant professor/researcher level for a six-year period with advancement to associate professor/senior researcher level, under the assumption that there will be a positive evaluation at the end of the tenure track programme. The advancement is dependent on the tenure track candidate's own results and not on competition with other candidates.

By creating greater employment security and increasing the coherence in the academic career process, Natural Sciences Tenure Track contributes to:

- Attracting and retaining highly qualified, promising talents from all over the world
- Promoting the academic development and independence of researchers at an early stage of their career
- Creating transparency in the academic career process

### Process for the Natural Sciences Tenure Track:



## 1. Employment in the tenure track programme

In the appointment of tenure track candidates, Natural Sciences emphasizes that the candidate:

- has the potential to reach the highest international level within his or her academic field
- clearly is expected to be able to meet the criteria for permanent positions at Natural Sciences after the completion of the tenure track programme
- documents exceptional results and a high degree of independence in his or her previous education and employment
- has completed one or more productive stays at another university/research institution in addition to the research institution where the candidate's PhD degree was obtained, preferably in another country
- writes and speaks English at an academic level

### 1.1. *Application*

An application to Natural Sciences Tenure Track must contain:

- Curriculum vitae
- Examination diplomas
- A complete list of publications with an indication of the five most important works
- A description of previous and planned research activities
- Teaching portfolio and/or portfolio and documentation in relation to participation in public sector consultancy
- Description of participation in various committees and administrative forums
- Names and contact information of references

### 1.2. *Appointment Process*

The appointment process in Natural Sciences Tenure Track follows the standard procedure for employment in assistant professor/researcher positions at Natural Sciences, with the amendment that the assessment committee consists of at least three members, of which two are external. This is in order to ensure that only applicants with a very high academic level can be considered for the tenure track programme.

All employment in tenure track positions takes place following job postings and the employment process is electronically supported via the systems of the HR department.

In connection with the posting of tenure track positions as well as employment and reception of candidates in the position, it is important that the process supports a broad involvement of employees at the Department.

The appointment committee consists of relevant employees at the Department and is an advisory body for the Head of Department.

<b>Process summary:</b>	
<b>Employment in a tenure track programme</b>	
Job posting	
The Department*	Discusses the job posting Forwards the job posting as well as information on the financing and argumentation for the position to HR
The Dean's Office	Approves the job posting
Appointment of an assessment committee	
The Department*	Proposes members of the assessment committee. Proposals are sent to HR
Academic Council	Approves the assessment committee
The Dean's Office	Appoints the assessment committee
Application	
Applicant	Submits an application
Assessment	
Assessment committee	Conducts the assessment of applicants' academic level

<b>Employment</b>	
Appointment Committee (appointed by the Head of Department)	Selects candidates for interviews on the basis of the assessment committee's assessment Holds interviews Obtains statements from references Provides advice to the Head of Department regarding the employment
Head of Department	Submits recommendation on the appointment enclosing the appointment committee's recommendation and the assessment committee's assessment of the candidates
The Dean's Office	Makes the decision on the employment

\* ) Head of Department with the involvement of e.g. research committee or similar with a view to ensuring that there is a broad representation of research areas

## 2. During the tenure track programme

As part of Natural Sciences Tenure Track, it is expected that the candidate:

- Establishes and leads a research group
- Carries out creative and independent scientific work at the highest international level
- Participates in collaboration projects with other research groups, and, depending on the area, with consultancy institutions, business partners, or similar.
- Supervises graduate and PhD students
- Delivers teaching of high quality with satisfactory teaching evaluations and/or delivers high quality in consultancy tasks
- Participates in the Aarhus University teacher training programme for assistant professors or similar
- Obtains external funding

Aarhus University offers:

- Access to research infrastructure
- Teacher training programme for assistant professors
- Opportunity to develop research leadership competences
- Mentor or supervision programme
- Support to develop scientific networks and results
- Continuous follow-up, including an midterm evaluation

### 2.1. *Matching of Expectations*

At the beginning of the employment the Head of Department takes the initiative to conduct an interview with the new employee, such that he or she is aware of the requirements, guidelines and expectations associated with the tenure track programme.

### 2.2. *Midterm Evaluation*

After approx. three years of employment in the tenure track programme a midterm evaluation is initiated. The midterm evaluation will be carried out by the Department with contributions from two to three external reviewers, i.e. researchers within the field. The Department's representative in the Faculty's tenure committee is involved in the midterm evaluation.

The purpose of the midterm evaluation is:

- To ensure that the candidate is on the right track in relation to attaining a positive evaluation after the completion of the tenure track programme, in accordance with Natural Science's criteria for permanent employment
- To advise the candidate in relation to planning the remaining part of the tenure track programme
- To give the candidate an opportunity to receive feedback from internal and external assessors

The midterm evaluation normally takes place after three years of employment and supplements the continuous follow-up, which takes place in connection with supervision, Staff Development Interview (SDD), etc. The evaluation process is supported electronically via the HR systems.

The midterm evaluation is the first prelude to the tenure review and involves the following participants:

- 1) *The assessment committee* is appointed by the Head of Department and consults the Department's member of the Faculty's tenure committee as well as any other academically competent employee representatives. The Head of Department is chairman
- 2) *Two to three external reviewers* submit academic opinions and assess whether the candidate's research is on an international level
- 3) *The candidate* submits material for the assessment

<b>Process summary:</b>	
<b>Midterm evaluation (normally occurs after three years of employment)</b>	
The candidate	May propose one or two external reviewers
The assessment committee	Appoints two or three external reviewers
The candidate	Submits material for assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A complete list of publications with an indication of the five most important works</li> <li>• A description of previous research activities (summary)</li> <li>• A description of planned research activities.</li> <li>• Teaching portfolio and/or portfolio and documentation in relation to participation in public sector consultancy.</li> <li>• Description of participation in various committees and administrative forums (service)</li> <li>• Curriculum vitae</li> </ul> All documents are sent to external reviewers
The assessment committee	Collects and assesses the material from the candidate Forwards the relevant excerpts to external reviewers
External reviewers	Carry out written assessment on the basis of submitted material
The assessment committee	Obtains external reviews Carries out comprehensive assessment based on the criteria for permanent employment at Natural Sciences Invites the candidate to a feedback interview with focus on perspectives for the future

### 3. Tenure Review

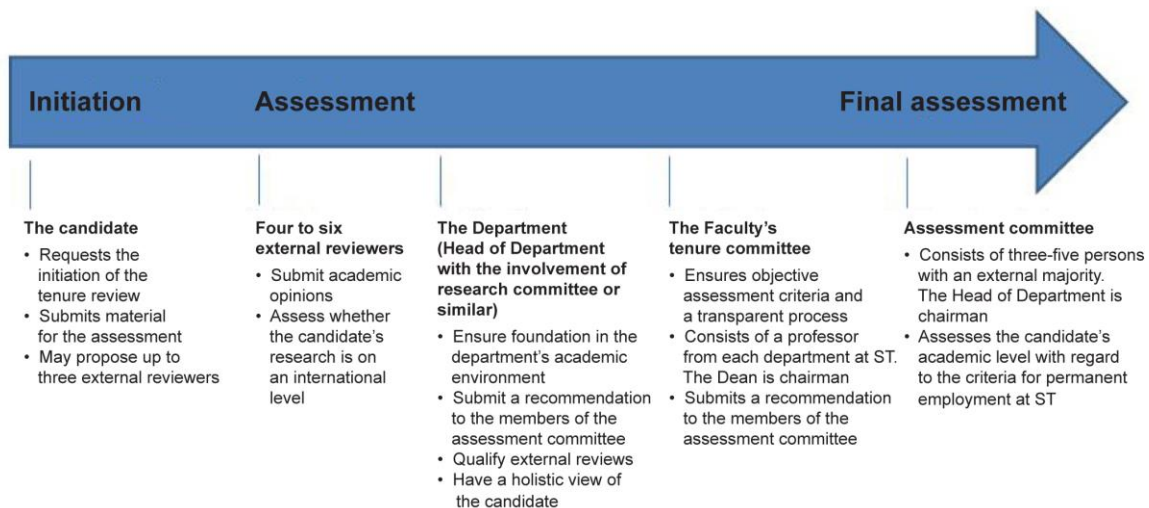
At the end of the tenure track programme a tenure review is initiated with a view to assessing whether the tenure track candidate is academically qualified to transfer to a senior researcher position/associate professorship.

The purpose of the tenure review is to ensure that the tenure candidate lives up to Natural Science's criteria for permanent employment, including:

- that the candidate's research is - and has the potential to continue to be - on a high international level
- that the candidate has undergone a positive development and through this has achieved a high level in all relevant areas, e.g. research management, collaboration, teaching, supervision and/or consultancy

In the event of a positive assessment the tenure candidate is transferred to permanent tenure as associate professor/senior researcher. In the event of a negative assessment a dismissal is initiated, though with the possibility of the employee continuing at the workplace for up to one year with a view to completing the programme and finding other employment.<sup>1</sup>

#### Participants in the tenure review process:



By involving a broad range of participants in the tenure review, the university ensures

- That there is support for permanent tenure among both international external assessors, internal assessors as well as management and colleagues

<sup>1</sup> It appears from the Memorandum on the Job Structure for Academic Staff at Universities 2013 that a dismissal is implemented in accordance with the regulations of the collective agreement, in case the candidate does not register him or herself for assessment, or in case that the assessment is negative (p.6). This will typically mean term of notice of approximately six months. Rejected tenure track candidates will - if possible - be offered a one year period to phase out their area and to find new employment.

- That there is a high degree of quality in all processes associated with the tenure track programme - with a view to ensuring that only the most talented candidates are employed (checks and balances)

### 3.1. *Initiation of Tenure Review*

The tenure review is formally initiated on the initiative of the tenure candidate. Natural Sciences ensures that the employee is familiar with the deadlines and regulations regarding the initiation of the tenure review, and HR is responsible for reminding the Head of Department and the candidate about the timing of the initiation.

The tenure review normally commences after five-and-a-half years of employment in the tenure track programme, though the preparations are initiated already after five years of employment, including the appointment of external reviewers and an assessment committee. The tenure review is normally carried out during a period of three months.

The employee is free to register for earlier academic assessment within the first four years. If this assessment is negative, the employee can register for a second assessment within the final six months of the employment. This means that academic assessment can take place maximum twice.<sup>2</sup>

<b>Process summary:</b>	
<b>Tenure review</b>	
Appointment of an assessment committee	
The Department*	Proposes members of assessment committee The Head of Department is chairman of the assessment committee Submits proposals for members of the assessment committee to HR
Academic Council	Approves the assessment committee
The Dean's Office	Appoints assessment committee
Appointment of external reviewers ( <i>normally after five years of employment</i> )	
The tenure candidate	Proposes up to three external reviewers
The Department*	Appoints external reviewers (4-6 external persons)
Assessment ( <i>usually initiated after 5½ years of employment</i> )	

<sup>2</sup> The option of registering for the early academic assessment is stated in the Memorandum on the Job Structure for Academic Staff at Universities 2013 (p. 6). Normal practice at Natural Sciences will be that the employees are encouraged to await the tenure review after five-and-a-half years of employment.



The candidate	<p>Submits material for assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A complete list of publications with an indication of the five most important works</li> <li>• A description of previous research activities (summary)</li> <li>• A description of planned research activities (summary)</li> <li>• Teaching portfolio and/or portfolio and documentation in relation to participation in public sector consultancy</li> <li>• Description of participation in various committees and administrative forums (service)</li> <li>• Curriculum vitae</li> </ul> <p>All documents are sent to external reviewers</p>
The Department*	<p>Collects and assesses the material from the candidate</p> <p>Forwards the relevant excerpts to external reviewers</p>
External reviewers	<p>Carry out written assessment on the basis of submitted material<sup>3</sup></p>
The Department*	<p>Collects and comments on external reviews</p> <p>Submits a recommendation to the members of the assessment committee on the basis of the candidate's material and external reviews</p>
The Faculty's tenure committee	<p>Receives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the candidate's material</li> <li>• external reviews</li> <li>• the Department's recommendation</li> <li>• the Head of Department's description of the tenure track process, including a summary of the midterm evaluation, reasons for the appointment of external reviewers and assessment committee</li> </ul> <p>Submits a recommendation to the members of the assessment committee on the basis of the candidate's material and external reviews</p>
The assessment committee	<p>Receives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the candidate's material</li> <li>• external reviews</li> <li>• Recommendation from the Department</li> <li>• Recommendation from the Faculty's tenure committee</li> </ul> <p>The assessment committee may also carry out a site visit</p> <p>Carries out academic assessment</p> <p>Informs the Head of Department and the Dean of the outcome of the assessment</p>

<sup>3</sup> A template for external reviews is being prepared, and will be sent to the external reviewers together with the candidate's material.

In case of a positive assessment	
The Head of Department	<p>Informs the candidate of the outcome of the assessment.</p> <p>Invites the candidate to a meeting with a view to providing information on the basis of the assessment</p> <p>Informs HR of the transition to senior researcher/associate professorship</p>
In case of a negative assessment	
The Head of Department	<p>Informs the candidate of the outcome of the assessment</p> <p>Invites the candidate to a meeting with a view to providing information on the basis of the assessment</p>
The candidate	Has the opportunity to submit complaints concerning factual errors and legal deficiencies
The Head of Department	Informs HR of the dismissal

\*) The Head of Department with the involvement of any research committee or similar with a view to ensure that there is a broad representation of research staff