



GUIDELINES FOR MEMBERS OF ASSESSMENT COMMITTEES AT NATURAL SCIENCES IN CONNECTION WITH THE APPOINTMENT OF POSTDOCS AND RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

Guidelines for members of assessment committees at Natural Sciences in connection with the appointment of postdocs and research assistants to advertised positions at Natural Sciences, Aarhus University

Effective as of 1 January 2020

1. OBJECTIVE

These guidelines are intended for the assessment committee in connection with the assessment of candidates to research assistant and postdoc positions at Natural Sciences, Aarhus University.

As a general rule, the assessment committee consists of at least one internal person at associate professor level or above. This person is chair of the assessment committee.

The task of the assessment committee is to assess applicants to postdoc and research assistant positions. Applicants must be assessed on the basis of the requirements described in the job advertisement and the general requirements described in ministerial order no. 899 of 1 July 2015 on the job structure for academic staff at universities in Denmark (*Bekendtgørelse om stillingsstruktur for videnskabeligt personale ved universiteter*) for the specific position in question. Read more at <http://www.au.dk/en/about/vacant-positions/rules-and-regulations/r/>

The task of the assessment committee is to provide an impartial, expert, non-prioritised written assessment of the applicants' professional qualifications in relation to the position applied for.

After receiving a recommendation from the grant recipient, the head of department, with the assistance of the chair of the assessment committee, will have selected a shortlist of applicants to be considered by the assessment committee. Applicants whose applications are forwarded to the assessment committee for consideration are informed of this. They are also informed regarding the composition of the appointment committee.

The rules regarding the appointment of the assessment committee are described in "[Guidelines for heads of department on appointing postdocs and research assistants to advertised positions at Natural Sciences](#)".

2. TASKS OF THE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

The assessment committee must prepare individual written assessments of all applicants on the shortlist within a maximum of one month. The committee must consider which applicants it considers to be qualified or unqualified in regard to research, teaching and/or public-sector consultancy tasks, as well as in relation to the other academic qualification requirements specified in the job advertisement.

The assessments must constitute a sufficient basis for appointing the best qualified applicant.

The entire assessment committee must prepare the expert statement together; the individual members may, however, prepare drafts subject to an agreed division of work. In the event of differences of opinion among the committee members, the assessment must clearly state who finds the individual applicant qualified and who does not, and the individual standpoints must in such case be accounted for separately.

It is not the task of the assessment committee to recommend who among the qualified applicants should be appointed, and the committee may not rank the applicants in any order of priority. Each committee member is responsible for familiarising him or herself with all of the available material, in order to ensure that all applicants to be assessed by the assessment committee are assessed on a sufficient basis.

2.1 Responsibilities of the chair

The chair of the assessment committee is selected by the head of department in accordance with the guidelines described in the Guidelines on appointing postdocs and research assistants to advertised positions at Natural Sciences for heads of department. Before the assessment committee begins its work, the chair of the assessment committee is responsible for assisting the grant recipient to select a shortlist of applicants.

The chair of the assessment committee is responsible for ensuring that an impartial expert assessment is prepared for each shortlisted applicant. The chair is responsible for the work carried out by the assessment committee, and for ensuring that the deadline for submission of assessments is observed.

- The chair is responsible for ensuring the following: That the assessment is rigorous, so that there exists clear correlation between the evaluation of the material submitted, the qualification requirements in the job advertisement and the description of the job structure, and the conclusions of the assessment committee.
- That a reasoned assessment of the applicant's qualifications is included in the conclusion. The conclusion must contain a summary of the assessment of the applicant's qualifications with regard to research, teaching, public sector consultancy and other areas contained in the body of the assessment.
- That the assessment committee's conclusion takes into account the wording of the job advertisement.
- That the conclusion clearly states that the applicant is assessed as qualified or not qualified.
- That the assessment is written clearly and coherently.
- That applicants are treated fairly and equally.

When the assessment committee has completed its work, the chair must ensure that the assessments are uploaded to the Empty Hire recruitment system via the link supplied by HR.

2.2 Approval of assessments

The head of department ensures that the formal requirements of the assessment are met. If the assessment does not constitute a sufficient basis for decision and/or does not meet the formal requirements, it must be returned to the assessment committee for additions or revision.

When the final assessment of each applicant is available, HR forwards each applicant a copy of the assessment of his or her application. Each applicant is given an opportunity to comment on the assessment.

An applicant may only proceed in the recruitment process if a majority of the members of the assessment committee have found the applicant academically qualified for the position.

The grant recipient decides which of the applicants who have been assessed as qualified are to be offered an interview, and subsequently conducts the job interviews, possibly with the assistance of others. Via HR, the grant recipient then sends a reasoned recommendation of appointment to the head of department for approval.

3. CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Only the members of the assessment committee may participate in the work of the committee, and all have a duty of confidentiality. There must be no contact between the members of the assessment committee and the individual applicants in matters of relevance to the assessment.

The identity of the applicants is confidential. The individual applicants do not thus receive information about the names of the other applicants for the position.

Applicants who are selected for assessment during shortlisting are only informed of the composition of the assessment committee and on how many applicants have applied for the position.

A member of the assessment committee has a duty to notify the chair immediately if there are conditions that may disqualify him or her from serving. If a member has doubts regarding his or her own or another member's eligibility to serve on the assessment committee, he or she should contact the chair of the assessment committee or HR.

To ensure that the assessment of applicants for academic positions is not affected by inappropriate considerations, no member of any assessment committee may be deemed legally incompetent or at risk of having a conflict of interest in relation to individual assessments. AU is subject to the Danish Public Administration Act's general rules regarding disqualification relative to a specific case.

A member may be disqualified if:

- that person has a personal or financial interest in the outcome of the case,
- that person's near relations or cohabitant has a personal or financial interest in the outcome of the case,
- that person is closely associated with a company, association or the like with a particular interest in the outcome of the case, or where other circumstances exist that may cast doubt on his or her impartiality, for example close friendship or evident enmity, or

- present or past joint publications or projects exist (see item 1 below 3.1).

In such cases, the dean or vice-dean for talent development is responsible for determining whether a conflict of interest exists in such cases.

In all cases, a concrete assessment of whether there are conflict of interest issues in relation to the committee member must be carried out. If the conclusion of the assessment is that the member is disqualified, a new member must be appointed in accordance with the rules for selecting members of assessment committees. Violation of the rules on conflict of interest and disqualification may result in the assessment committee's work being declared invalid.

3.1 Co-authorship

Co-authorship does not automatically entail disqualification. The crucial factor for the assessment is the scope of the co-authorship, the date of publication and the significance accorded the work in question in relation to the assessment. At Natural Sciences, members of assessment committees may only to a very limited extent be involved in joint publications and projects with applicants, and may not have been involved in any joint publications whatsoever within the past five years.

4. REMUNERATION

In order to receive remuneration for their participation, after the completion of the assessment process, external members of the assessment committee receive an email from HR containing a form to be filled out and returned. The remuneration rewarded depends on the type of position being filled and the number of assessments. For more information regarding remuneration, please contact HR. Members are defined as external who are not employed by AU. Honorary professors and honorary associate professors are considered internal members.

5. LEGAL BASIS

- The legal basis for the rules can be found here: <http://www.au.dk/en/about/vacant-positions/rules-and-regulations/>
- About the [teaching portfolio](#)
- The legal basis for the section regarding disqualification is based on the rules on disqualification in the [Danish Public Administration Act](#) Chapter 2.