



GUIDELINES FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENT AT NATURAL SCIENCES ON APPOINTING PERMANENT ACADEMIC STAFF

Guidelines for heads of department on appointments to **permanent academic** positions (tenure track assistant professor/researcher, associate professor, senior researcher, and professor) at Natural Sciences, Aarhus University.

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1 OBJECTIVE

The objective of this guideline is to describe the tasks and responsibilities of heads of department and centre directors in connection with the recruitment and appointment of permanent members of academic staff (tenure track assistant professor/researcher, associate professor, senior researcher, senior adviser and professor).

Overview of the process - see [appendix](#)

2 JOB ADVERTISEMENTS AND RECRUITMENT INITIATIVES

Within the framework of the department's approved budget, strategy and recruitment plan, the head of department may advertise permanent academic positions (tenure track assistant professor/researcher, associate professor, senior researcher, senior adviser, and professor).

The department management team will initiate the search process and advertise positions within a given subject area in accordance with the recruitment plans stipulated in the department's approved strategy and budgets. In order to secure an adequate number of high-quality and diverse applicants (external applicants, international applicants and applicants of all genders), the department management team will implement various initiatives, including a search committee.

The head of department and the department management team prepare a draft of the job advertisement. The job advertisement is worded broadly to attract a broad range of applicants and the position advertised both nationally and internationally. The job advertisement is discussed in relevant fora, including the department's research committee. In addition, job advertisements should be made available for consultation among permanent members of academic staff, for example in the departmental forum, at staff meetings or by email. After the consultation, the head of department makes the final decision regarding the content of the job advertisement. The application period is at least 4-6 weeks, preferably longer.

The job advertisement must encourage under-represented genders to apply. At the same time, the job advertisement must also clearly state that the university does not practice preferential hiring in relation to under-represented genders. Furthermore, job advertisements must always state that all interested candidates, regardless of personal background, are encouraged to apply for the position, and that all applicants are evaluated on the background of their qualifications in relation to the requirements of the position.

It will be stated in the job advertisement that a shortlist of applicants will be selected after the deadline for applications, and that applicants will be informed whether their applications have been shortlisted for further assessment by an expert assessment committee.

Standard texts for job advertisements with shortlisting and rejection letters to applicants who are not shortlisted for in-depth expert assessment are available from AU HR.

The qualification requirements in the job advertisement must provide the basis for shortlisting, assessment and final recommendation and must therefore be considered very carefully.

The approved job advertisement is sent to HR.

2.1 Re-advertisement of positions

When the application deadline expires, the department management team will assesses whether the field of applicants comply with the norms for recruitment. Positions must be re-posted in the event of a well-grounded presumption that advertising the position a second time will attract a broader and more qualified pool of applicants. The dean is involved in assessment of this. The dean is always involved if there are fewer than four qualified applicants, or if there are no qualified applicants of several genders.

2.2 Appointment without advertisement

The dean can decide to appoint a person at professor level or associate professor without advertisement. However, this is only in exceptional circumstances, and only in cases where there is a particularly qualified candidate for the position, and an expert assessment shows that the person in question is clearly better qualified than any other who could be considered if the position were advertised under the normal process. Internal candidates may not be appointed without an advertisement. This means that even if the head of department or the department management team assesses that there is an internal candidate is qualified for a position, the position must be advertised under the normal procedure.

3 APPOINTMENT COMMITTEES

3.1 Selection of appointment committee members

The head of department is to appoint an appointment committee on which s/he serves as chair. It is the responsibility of the head of department to ensure that the composition of the appointment committee is discussed by the department management team and the department's research committee, and that its members are relevant permanent members of academic staff at the department. The appointment committee – with due regard for requirements regarding the necessary academic qualifications – must be broadly put together and gender-diverse. For positions that involve a significant amount of teaching (tenure track assistant professor, associate professor and professor), a member of the department's education committee must sit on the appointment committee. In connection with shortlisting, the chair of the assessment committee assists the appointment committee.

When composing an appointment committee, any conflicts of interest issues that might disqualify candidates must be assessed. It is the responsibility of both the head of department and the individual members to assess this. Conflict of interest issues must be assessed for all of the members of the committee and in relation to all applicants. All members of an appointment committee have a duty of confidentiality both during and after the recruitment process. For additional information on conflict of interest issues and the duty of confidentiality by the appointment committee, see '[Guidelines for members of appointment committees](#)'.

A member of the Dean's Office participates in the appointment committee for appointments of professors when it is deemed appropriate, but as a minimum in the final round of interviews.

3.2 Tasks of the appointment committee

In general terms, the tasks of the appointment committee are as follows:

- To advise the head of department regarding shortlisting, i.e. selection of applicants to be considered for the position.
- To advise the head of department regarding selection of applicants to interview
- Participation in interviews.
- To advise the head of department regarding which candidate should be recommended for appointment.

Shortlisting

The objective of shortlisting is to shorten the recruitment process and to reduce the workload of members of the assessment committee, who thus are free to focus their efforts on the most relevant and qualified applicants.

The head of department has decision-making authority to decide which applicants will not receive a thorough assessment of their professional qualifications by the assessment committee. With the assistance of the appointment committee and the chair of the assessment committee, the head of department selects which applicants are to receive a thorough assessment of their professional qualifications on the background of an evaluation of which applicants (as documented in the applications submitted) best match the department's and the faculty's recruitment needs and who possess the qualifications, competencies, experiences and potential described in the job advertisement, including the faculty's criteria for permanent employment as described in "[Criteria for evaluating candidates for scientific positions](#)". In the assessment of qualifications, there is particular emphasis on the A criteria.

The role of the appointment committee in the shortlisting process is solely to advise the head of department regarding which applicants the committee considers to be relevant to recommend for further assessment. This means that the appointment committee neither decides which applicants are to be assessed by the assessment committee nor considers whether individual applicants are qualified or not qualified.

On the condition that the candidates possess the necessary qualifications, the gender diversity requirement also applies to applicants who are shortlisted.

A minimum of five applicants must be shortlisted for a thorough assessment of their professional qualifications, unless there are fewer applicants to the position after obviously unqualified applicants have been left out of consideration.

HR is responsible for informing applicants that their applications have not been shortlisted for assessment immediately after the shortlist has been completed. Final rejections are sent at the conclusion of the recruitment process.

HR informs the applicants who are shortlisted for a thorough assessment of their professional qualifications by the assessment committee. At the same time, each

applicant will be informed of the composition of the assessment committee and of the possibility to comment on the aspects of the assessment process that relate to him or herself later in the process.

The selection of applicants to be offered an interview

On the basis of the assessments, the appointment committee advises the head of department regarding the selection of applicants to be offered an interview. The head of department is responsible for conducting the interviews.

On the condition that the candidates possess the necessary qualifications, the gender diversity requirement also applies to applicants offered job interviews.

Prior to the interviews, the head of department may invite the applicants to an event at the department, for example a lecture, a meeting with permanent academic staff, or (where relevant) a meeting with the department's education committee or public-sector consultancy committee in order to gain an impression of the applicants in relation to the department and the tasks involved in the position.

The appointment committee participates in the interviews. The presence of the department's HR partner is optional. Please note that it is a good idea to book a meeting with the AU Relocation Service: relocation@au.dk. They can help with issues relating to housing, jobs for spouses, schools for children, etc.

Advising the head of department on appointments

After an interview has been held, the appointment committee advises the head of department regarding which applicant is to be recommended for appointment. Next, the head of department must discuss the recommendation with the department management team, after which the head of department makes a decision regarding which applicant is to be recommended for appointment. HR then forwards the head of department's reasoned recommendation to the dean and the relevant vice-dean (see Section 6).

On the basis of the merits of the qualified applicants and the position's requirements, the appointment committee considers how the best qualified applicants can contribute to gender balance in the department/school/unit. When the applicants for a position are equally qualified, the gender balance of the unit should be an element taken into consideration in the final choice of applicant.

For additional information regarding other tasks of the appointment committee, see '[Guidelines for members of appointment committees at Natural Sciences](#)'.

4 THE CHAIR OF THE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

The head of department appoints the chair of the assessment committee on the background of discussions with the department management team and the department's research committee. The chair is appointed simultaneously with the selection of appointment committee members and must be approved by the Academic Council. The

proposed chair must be consulted before the formal request is forwarded by HR to the Academic Council for approval. The council has a three-day deadline for objections. The chair of the assessment committee assists the assessment committee with shortlisting. See also '[Guidelines for members of assessment committees](#)'.

5 THE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

After the shortlisting process is complete, the head of department proposes external members of the assessment committee. The composition of the assessment committee is discussed by the department management team as well as the department's research committee, and must be approved by the Academic Council. The proposed members of the assessment committee must be consulted before the formal request is forwarded by HR to the Academic Council for approval. The council has a three-day deadline for objections.

AU's senior management team has laid down the overall guidelines for the selection of members of assessment committees at AU. The guidelines should be considered as a general framework, and Nat has decided to establish more detailed guidelines within this general framework. At Nat, the following applies in connection with appointment of permanent members of academic staff:

- The members of the assessment committee are selected by the head of department in accordance with the faculty's guidelines.
- The assessment committee must be independent of management¹
- The assessment committee must consist of three (in exceptional cases, five) members², including no more than one internal² member and at least one member from a foreign university or research institution.
- It is only possible to serve as a member of assessment committees for applications to positions at the same level or higher than one's own. However, members of assessment committees must be at associate professor/senior researcher level at a minimum.

In all cases, assessors must have documented high international qualifications, and efforts must be made to ensure gender balance.

[Disqualification of assessment committee members](#)

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

¹ A section manager from a different section than the section for the appointment to can be a member of the assessment committee if the person in question is not otherwise disqualified.

²In situations with applicants who have many academic specialisations, it may be appropriate to include five members in the assessment committee. However, it is most likely that this will rarely be necessary after the prior shortlisting.

regarding disqualification relative to a specific case.

A member may be disqualified if:

- That person has a personal or financial interest in the outcome.
- Their close relatives or cohabitant have/has a personal or financial interest in the outcome of the case.
- They are 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 their impartiality, for example close friendship or evident enmity.
- Present or past joint publications or projects exist.

At Nat, members of assessment committees may only to a very limited extent be involved in joint publications and projects with applicants, and no joint publications whatsoever within the past five years.

The shortlisting process is intended to ensure a limitation in the number of applicants who are assessed by the assessment committee, in order to allow the members of the assessment committee to focus their efforts on the most relevant and competent applicants. The limitation on the number of applicants to be assessed also means that finding members to serve on assessment committees becomes easier, both with regard to eligibility requirements and workload.

5.2 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 not qualified 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. In assessing the individual applicant, the committee must base its assessment on the faculty's criteria for permanent employment as described in the ["Criteria for evaluating candidates for permanent positions"](#). In the assessment of qualifications, there is particular emphasis on the A criteria.

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

The committee members 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.

For more information on the assessment committee, please see '[Guidelines for members of assessment committees](#)'.

5.3 Template for recommendation of appointments to assessment committee

To ensure uniformity in connection with the recommendation of members of assessment committees to approval by the Academic Council, the faculty management team has approved a template specifying what information regarding the proposed members of the assessment committee a recommendation must include:

- Statement of the name, position, place of employment, country of residence and email address of the proposed assessor.
- Short description of academic qualifications of a high international standard (background, expertise and international level)
- Statement of total number of peer-reviewed publications as well as citation frequency (H-index or the like).
- Brief description of internal members' teaching experience (and/or public sector consultancy)
- Assessors' individual statements confirming their impartiality: members of assessment committees may only to a very limited extent be involved in joint publications and projects with applicants, and no joint publications whatsoever within the past five years.
- Internal members must not be part of the management of the department in question.³
- External assessors must be independent of the department.

5.4 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.

6 RECOMMENDATION AND DECISION REGARDING APPOINTMENT

³ A section manager from a different section than the section for the appointment to can be a member of the assessment committee if the person in question is not otherwise disqualified.

On the background of the appointment committee's advice and discussions with the department management team, the head of department may decide:

- To recommend a candidate for appointment.
- Not to recommend a candidate for appointment (even in cases where there are qualified applicants).

If the head of department decides to recommend a candidate for appointment, the head of department sends a reasoned recommendation to the dean and the relevant vice-dean through HR. [Click here](#) to see the current guidelines for recommendation.

HR attaches the assessment committee's assessment of the recommended candidate as well as the relevant application materials.

HR forwards the recommendation to the dean and the relevant vice-dean, after which the dean and the vice-dean decide whether the recommendation for appointment can be accepted.

6.1 Meeting between the new employee and the dean

Immediately after the appointment of a professor, the person will be called to a meeting with the dean and the head of department. The dean is responsible for setting up the meeting.

7 RE-EMPLOYMENT WITHIN SIX MONTHS

If a position becomes vacant within six months of having been filled, following a recommendation by the head of department, the dean can decide to appoint one of the other applicants who were found qualified for the position by the assessment committee.

8 DETERMINING SALARY

Salary is determined by the head of department, who negotiates with the union representative in close collaboration with HR within the framework of the salary agreement catalogue. If the salary agreed is outside the framework set by the salary catalogue, the dean must approve the salary.

9 IN GENERAL

HR is responsible for ensuring compliance with applicable rules in connection with appointments, including in relation to applicants who are found 'not qualified'.

10 RULES AND GUIDELINES

The legal basis can be found here: [Legislation and rules](#)

On [teaching portfolios in connection with appointments for academic positions](#)

The legal basis for the section regarding disqualification is based on the rules on disqualification in the [Danish Public Administration Act](#).