



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

Guidelines for heads of department in connection with appointments to permanent academic positions (tenure track assistant professor/researcher, associate professor, senior researcher, senior adviser, professor with special responsibilities (MSO) and professor) at Natural sciences.

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1 OBJECTIVE

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

The appointment process in brief: [See "Annex: Handling advertised appointments"](#)

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, professor with special responsibilities (MSO) and professor).

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

The head of department and the department management team together draw up a draft job advertisement. The job advertisement should be worded broadly and advertised nationally and internationally. The job advertisement is submitted for discussion to relevant fora, including the department 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.

It must 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 regarding employment and must therefore be considered very carefully.

The approved job advertisement should be sent to HR.

Readvertisement of positions

After expiry of the deadline for applications, the department management team assess whether an adequate number of qualified applications have been received. If this is not the case, the position should be advertised again or reconsidered.

Appointment without an advertisement

The dean may decide to recruit a person at professor level without a job advertisement. However, this may only be in exceptional circumstances and only when there is a particularly qualified candidate for the position and an expert assessment deems that the person in question is clearly better qualified than any others who could be considered if the position were advertised as usual. This procedure cannot be applied for internal candidates. This means that, even if the head of department/department management team assess that there is a qualified internal candidate for a position, the position must be advertised.

3 THE APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE

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. In the case of positions that involve a significant amount of teaching (tenure track assistant professor, associate professor, professor with special responsibilities (MSO) 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 is to provide support for 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 the assessment of conflict of interest issues and the duty of confidentiality, see '[Guidelines for members of appointment committees](#)'.

A member of the Executive Team participates in the appointment committee for appointments of professors when it is deemed appropriate, although as a minimum at the final round of appointment interviews.

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 (the selection of applicants to be considered for the position).
- To advise the head of department regarding the 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 described in [Criteria for evaluating candidates to permanent positions](#). Assessment of qualifications should place particular emphasis on 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.

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 whose applications are not 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.

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.

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 takes 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 vice-dean for talent development (see Section 6).

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. As far as possible, the chair must be appointed simultaneously with the selection of the appointment committee members. The chair 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 in connection with shortlisting. See also '[Guidelines for members of assessment committees](#)'.

5 THE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

After the shortlisting process is complete, the head of department must propose 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 understood as a general framework, and Natural Sciences has decided to establish more detailed guidelines within this general framework. At Natural Sciences, the following thus 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 management.
- The assessment committee must consist of three (in exceptional cases, five) members¹, including no more than one internal 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 at a lower level 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 to academic positions is not affected by inappropriate considerations, no member of any assessment committee may be judged unqualified to serve 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

¹ In 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.

- on his or her impartiality, for example close friendship or evident enmity.
- present or past joint publications or projects exist.

At Natural Sciences, 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.

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 are found 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 [Criteria for evaluating candidates for permanent positions](#). Assessment of qualifications should place particular emphasis on 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](#)'.

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 project 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.
- External assessors must be independent of the department.

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

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 vice-dean for talent development through HR. The recommendation from the head of department must include a detailed account of the following:

- The reasons for filling the position, including the position's value in the strategy, recruitment plan and budget. The significance of the position in relation to the realisation of the department's/centre's visions and goals.
- Frame of reference for the position. Description of international top-10 level for the job category and research field (qualifications in terms of publications, teaching, consultancy,

etc.). Which 5-10 research environments are considered to be the world's best in the field?

- Search and advertisement process, including the composition of the search committee, detailed description of the search committee's efforts and results, job advertisement text and a list of job advertisement platforms used.
- Description of how staff and relevant departmental bodies were included in the process in connection with the advertisement, etc.
- The number of applicants, the number of shortlisted applicants, the number of qualified applicants among the shortlisted applicants, as well as the number of applicants invited to an interview. In addition, information on gender balance as well as distribution of Danish and international applicants in the four categories.
- The process in connection with job interviews, including the composition of the appointment committee as well as any participation of applicants in lectures, meetings of applicants with departmental staff, committees, etc.
- Detailed account of why the applicant in question is being recommended for appointment, including how the applicant in question will make a significant contribution to the realisation of the department's/centre's visions and goals.

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

HR sends the recommendation to the dean and the vice-dean for talent development, who consult with the faculty's Tenure and Promotion Committee, after which the dean and the vice-dean decide whether to accept the recommendation regarding appointment. The faculty's Tenure and Promotion Committee has an advisory function, and the dean and vice-dean may decide not to follow the committee's recommendation.

For additional information about the faculty's Tenure and Promotion Committee, please see [Tenure and promotion committee](#).

The new employee's meeting with the dean

Immediately after the appointment of a professor/professor with special responsibilities (MSO), he or she will be called to a meeting with the dean in which the head of department also participates. The head of department 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, the dean may, on the recommendation of the head of department and the advice of the faculty's Tenure and Promotion Committee, 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 GENERAL INFORMATION

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 for the rules can be found here: <http://www.au.dk/en/about/vacant-positions/rules-and-regulations/>

Read more 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](#).