



GUIDELINES FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENT AT NATURAL SCIENCES ON APPOINTING POSTDOCS AND RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

Guidelines for heads of department on appointing postdocs and research assistants to advertised positions at Natural Sciences¹

Effective as of 1 January 2020

¹ Candidates with a personal (named) grant from councils, foundations or external non-government funders may **be employed without advertisement, and there must be a positive academic assessment.**

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1 OBJECTIVE

The objective of these guidelines is to describe the tasks and responsibilities of heads of department and centre directors in connection with the recruitment and hiring of postdocs and research assistants.

For the appointment process in brief please see Appendix A [here](#).

2 JOB ADVERTISEMENTS AND RECRUITMENT INITIATIVES

Within the framework of the department's and the grant recipient's budget, the head of department may advertise positions at research assistant and postdoc level.

The grant recipient prepares a proposal for the job advertisement and sends it to HR, along with information on financing and suggestions regarding where the position should be advertised. It is the grant recipient's responsibility that the head of department has endorsed the job advertisement before it is sent to HR. Please confer to the local guidelines at the department.

The job advertisement must be written in English and be advertised internationally. As a general rule, the application period is three to six weeks.

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. 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.

HR is responsible for ensuring that the head of department provides final approval of the job advertisement.

3 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.

Shortlisting is used in connection with the appointment of postdocs and research assistants to advertised positions. However, no advisory appointment committee is to be appointed.

Assisted by the chair of the assessment committee, the grant recipient selects applicants for an in-depth assessment of their professional qualifications based on an overall evaluation of which applicants (as documented in the application materials) best match and fulfil the qualifications and competencies described in the job advertisement. The head of department must approve the selected applicants and the assessments. The head of department has the authority to decide which applicants will not receive a thorough assessment of their professional qualifications by the assessment committee.

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 removed from 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, applicants are informed of the composition of the assessment committee. Each applicant has the option of commenting on the element of the assessment which relates to him or herself.

The selection of applicants to be offered an interview

On the background of the assessments, the grant recipient decides which applicants are to be offered an interview. The grant recipient is responsible for holding interviews and may involve others in the interviews as needed.

Recommendation for appointment

After the interviews, the grant recipient recommends a candidate for employment.

4 THE CHAIR OF THE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

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. According to an agreement between the dean and the Academic Council, the head of department approves the assessment committee in the case of appointments of postdocs and research assistants.

In connection with shortlisting, the chair of the assessment committee assists the grant recipient. See also [Guidelines for members of the assessment committee in connection with the appointment of postdocs and research assistants](#).

5 THE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

As a general rule, there are no external assessors for positions at this level. The assessment committee consists of at least one internal person at associate professor level or above. The assessment committee may consist of a maximum of five members at associate professor level or above if it is decided that a broader range of academic specialisations should be represented.

5.1 Disqualification of assessment committee members

To ensure that the assessment of applicants to academic positions is not affected by inappropriate considerations, no chair/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 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.

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.

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

The assessment of applicants' professional qualifications must be performed by the chair of the assessment committee. If the committee consists of more than one member, they must prepare the assessment together. However, individual members may 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, see also '[Guidelines for members of the assessment committee in connection with the appointment of postdocs and research assistants](#)'.

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 head of department, 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.
- 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

The decision of appointment is based on assessments and job interviews. Local guidelines must be followed regarding the endorsement of the appointment. After this, the appointment must be registered in the system (MSK).

Re-employment within six months

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

7 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.

8 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'.

9 RULES AND GUIDELINES

The legal basis for the rules can be found [here](#).

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](#).