

Guide to:  
PROGRAMME FOR PROMOTION TO PROFESSOR

Natural Sciences

September 2022, revised January 2025

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to describe the framework for and content of the programme for promotion from associate professor/senior researcher to professor at the Faculty of Natural Sciences (NAT).

The material may also serve to clarify the career path to a professorship and to support career dialogue, for example during a staff development dialogue (SDD), including for associate professors/senior researchers who have not been offered the promotion programme.

The basic purpose of the programme at NAT is to offer particularly talented associate professors/senior researchers the opportunity to participate in a programme for promotion to professor. The promotion programme supports the faculty's strategy for career development and clear career paths, and it is a supplement to the [Norms for recruitment of academic staff to permanent positions](#) with open and broad job advertisements, which will continue to be the primary recruitment method for senior-level researchers. Becoming a professor at NAT demands exceptional academic effort, whether through an open job advertisement or through the promotion programme. The programme is a career development programme and just one of several development opportunities for associate professors. The promotion programme is aimed at associate professors who, within the duration of the programme, can develop their professional qualifications according to NAT's appointment criteria for professors: the [ABC criteria](#).

In *exceptional circumstances*, the promotion programme can be offered:

- when recruiting candidates who have applied for an associate professorship/senior researcher position.
- to associate professors/senior researchers in connection with career development programmes.

In both cases, *exceptional circumstances* refer to a situation in which a particularly talented candidate is expected to develop his or her potential to meet the recruitment criteria at professor level (see section 2 below), and where the promotion programme is expected to have a positive influence on the candidate's career development.

## 2. Selection for the programme for promotion to professor

The process for selecting candidates for the promotion programme follows the faculty's current guidelines for academic appointments, including professional recognition and inclusion in the process.

Selection for the programme is closely linked with other appointments and employment planning, so the promotion programme is part of the department's recruitment plans and strategic considerations with regard to employment and talent development. In selection for the programme, emphasis will be on documented extraordinary academic initiatives and results. Considerations will also address how

the best qualified candidates can contribute to the strategic and long-term goals of the department, for example to improve professional knowledge, diversity, research, education and collaboration within a given academic area.

The final selection of associate professors/senior researchers for the promotion programme will be by the dean based on a recommendation from the head of department. The recommendation of candidates from the head of department to the dean is supported by the department's promotion committee, which consists of professors. The department is responsible for ensuring transparency of its promotion committee and its procedures.

The decision regarding selection and whether the promotion programme is to be applied depends on a specific assessment of the candidate's documented qualifications and development potential, focusing particularly on NAT's [ABC criteria](#):

- Leadership competences in both education and research, e.g. through development and support of well-functioning academic collegial environments
- Ability to create or innovate a research field
- Highly cited research publications in leading publication channels within the candidate's field
- Teaching activities and development of new research-based teaching, methods, and courses and PhD programmes
- Ability to promote and develop the careers of junior colleagues in both education and research
- Involvement in councils or committees, journal editing and similar
- Ability to communicate knowledge to the general public and to collaborate with businesses and the public sector

In addition, the candidate's relevance for strategic and long-term development of research, education and collaboration at the department within the designated subject area will be included in the assessment.

Associate professors/senior researchers who are already employed, are expected to discuss the possibility of promotion to professor with the head of department during their SDD. The recommendation of candidates from the head of department to the dean is supported by the department's promotion committee, which consists of professors. The department is responsible for ensuring transparency of its promotion committee and its procedures. In order to achieve coordination across the faculty and further strengthen how the promotion programme aligns with AU's code of practice for recruitment, already employed associate professors/senior researchers can only be recommended to the dean once a year. Recommendations to the dean are processed by an advisory committee at faculty level, which has been tasked to advise the dean on the final recommendation. The advisory committee consists of appointed professors at the faculty, the vice-dean for career development and innovation and a representative of the academic council (must be a professor). A further description of the advisory committee is under section 6. Collection of materials. The development plan must be in place by no later than three months after the enrolment to the programme has been offered. As a general rule, all program lengths are set to 3-5 years, but the candidate can request an earlier

evaluation. If no agreement can be reached on the development plan, the candidate will be taken off the programme.

With regards to use of the programme in connection with recruitment of external associate professors/senior researchers, the head of department must inform the dean as soon as possible if there is a desire to offer an applicant a place on the programme for promotion to professor. The head of department will recommend the candidate for admission to the programme by sending material (see 2.1 Recommendation) to the dean, who will decide in consultation with the vice-deans. If the dean gives a positive response, the candidate may be offered admission to the programme for promotion to professor, and the length of the programme will also be determined. For candidates admitted in connection with recruitment, note that the development plan must be in place by no later than three months after appointment. If no agreement can be reached on the development plan, the candidate will be taken off the programme. Since it is possible that the development plan is not in place until three months after joining the programme, and the programme length must be included in the contract the candidate receives, it will be necessary to determine the length of the programme before the development plan is completed. Therefore, all programme lengths are generally set at five years, but the candidate can ask for an assessment earlier.

### 2.1 Recommendation

For both internal applicants and applicants in connection with recruitment (external), the recommendation to the dean from the head of department must include the items below and be submitted by using the template (see 6. Collection of materials). However, for external candidates, the head of department only needs to submit the strategic motivation and a description of the candidate's relevance for the department's strategic long-term development, as the other material is available in Empty Hire.

To be uploaded by the Head of Department:

- A description of the candidate's relevance to the department's strategic and long-term development of research, education, and collaboration within the designated field (use the application template).
- An assessment of the candidate's academic standing in relation to the international research level in the candidate's research areas (use the application template).
- The candidate's own reflection on this relevance for the department's strategic and long-term development of research, education, and collaboration within the designated field (use the application template).

To be uploaded by the candidate:

- CV
- A complete list of publications indicating the five most important works (single pdf or links)
- A description of previous research activities (summary of max 1 page) and a description of planned research activities
- Portfolio and teaching statement, along with a description of planned development projects within teaching and education

- A description of experience with leadership and participation in various committees and administrative forums, as well as a description of planned activities in leadership and participation in various committees and administrative forums

### 3. During the promotion programme

#### 3.1 Development plan

The head of department is responsible for drawing up the development plan in collaboration with the candidate. The immediate academic leader will be involved in drawing up the plan as required.

The vice-dean for career development will participate in drawing up the development plan and can otherwise be involved as required.

The development plan is approved by the dean and the approved development plan is sent to HR, who ensure reminders regarding the follow-up at an SDD.

As part of the development plan, and in dialogue with the candidate, the candidate will be assigned a professor as a sparring partner (possibly external), and an individual programme for the sparring sessions will be planned. Sparring partners must be selected by the immediate academic leader or head of department.

The nature and extent of the sparring programme, including meeting frequency, is agreed by the sparring partner and the candidate.

#### 3.2 Follow-up on the development plan

The head of department is responsible for following up on the development plan. The vice-dean for career development participates in the follow-up to coordinate consistent use of the programme. Follow-up is at least once a year and must be in continuation of the SDD. Besides the follow-up activities specified in the development plan, additional follow-ups may be agreed.

The development plan can be updated during the follow-up dialogue if relevant. The date of the follow-up meeting, as well as the participants at the meeting, are specified in the development plan, along with the overall status, or the status of each individual item. Any changes must be recorded, so that it is clear what has been changed and what was originally agreed. Substantial changes are discussed with the vice-dean for career development before they are decided by the head of department. If it is ascertained that the plan is not being followed and the candidate has not made relevant progress towards the goals in the development plan, the candidate will be discharged from the programme. No later than one month after follow-up, the candidate sends any updated development plan to HR, who adds it to the candidate's file.

## 4. Assessment for professorship

To ensure maximum alignment with the process for ordinary professor appointments, the candidate must be assessed academically according to the ordinary procedure in the assessment committee and assessed as suitable for a professorship by the dean's advisory committee. The final assessment of the candidate will be in accordance with NAT's ABC criteria. The candidate is expected to fulfil all A criteria within the agreed time frame. Furthermore, the advisory committee will assess other parameters in the recruitment process in the same way as an appointment committee.

The assessment must be initiated by no later than six months before the end of the agreed promotion programme. It can be agreed that the assessment is to take place earlier. The candidate in question must ask to be assessed. If the associate professor/senior researcher fails to request an assessment of his or her qualifications by no later than six months before the end of the promotion programme, or if the associate professor/senior researcher is assessed and found not to be academically qualified, his or her employment as an associate professor/senior researcher will continue outside the programme. It is possible to offer the associate professor/senior researcher an additional attempt at qualifying before the end of the promotion programme. A maximum of two academic assessments may be carried out.

The candidate must submit the following as assessment material. The head of department will be asked whether there are any special requests for material.

The candidate is requested to submit the following:

- CV
- A report on the status of the development plan and ongoing follow-up on the plan
- A complete list of publications indicating the five most important works (single pdf or links)
- A description of previous research activities (summary)
- A description of planned research activities
- Portfolio and teaching statement
- A description of participation in various committees and administrative forums
- A description of the work done so far to develop the department's subject area in a broad sense (research, education, internal and external collaboration, external funding, work environment and talent development)
- Any other material requested by the head of department

The development plan (possibly in updated form) from the candidate's HR file is included.

Following a positive assessment, the head of department submits a recommendation for transfer to a professorship for final decision by the dean. The dean makes a decision based on the advisory committee's assessment and ensures that the candidate's qualifications correspond to the appointment of professors by open job advertisement.

## 5. Process for the programme for promotion to professor

The programme for promotion to professor can be used to recruit candidates who have applied for an associate professor/senior researcher position, or as career development for existing associate professors/senior researchers. Admission to the programme is different for the two target groups, while the programme itself and assessment of transition to professor are the same.

### 5.1 Process for internal associate professors/senior researchers

Date	Step in the process
	<b>Process at the department</b>
At the SDD	All relevant employees should be familiar with the programme for promotion to professor and have an opportunity to request admission to the programme. This can be done during an SDD.
December - January every year	The departments are free to decide on the procedure for recommending candidates to the dean. However, there is a requirement for a transparent and inclusive procedure using the departments' promotion committees.
Early March every year	The head of department may recommend candidates to the dean. The content of the recommendation is described in section 2.1 Recommendation. The process is initiated by HR and the recommendation is sent to <a href="mailto:HR.Nat@au.dk">HR.Nat@au.dk</a> .
	<b>Recommendation for admission to the programme</b>
Mid-March every year	The dean and the advisory committee receive all recommendations for assessment from HR. The committee advises the dean on selection of candidates.
Mid-April every year	The advisory committee meets and assesses the candidates.
Mid-April every year	The dean decides which candidates are to be admitted to the programme and HR notifies them. If a candidate is not accepted, the candidate can reapply on equal terms with other associate professors/senior researchers.
1 June every year	Candidates are officially admitted to the programme on 1 June and must prepare a development plan
No later than 2 months after admission	The candidate sends a development plan using the <a href="#">AU template</a> to <a href="mailto:HR.nat@au.dk">HR.nat@au.dk</a> after involvement of the Vice-Dean for Career Development and Innovation.
No later than 3 months after admission	The development plan is approved by the dean. If no agreement can be reached on the development plan within 3 months of employment, it will not be approved, and the candidate will be taken off the programme.

## 5.2 Recruitment process for external candidates

<b>Date</b>	<b>Step in the process</b>
	<b>Recommendation of candidates</b>
Before or during recruitment	The head of department initiates dialogue with the dean regarding a request to offer a place on the programme for promotion to professor in connection with recruitment.
During recruitment	The dean gets access to the recruitment file in Emplay Hire and the head of department sends motivation for using the programme.
	The head of department is notified if the dean assesses that the programme can be used.
On employment	The employment contract states that the applicant has been admitted to the programme from the date of appointment. The length of the programme must as far as possible fit with the annual cycle for assessment of candidates on the programme, see the process in section 5.1.
No later than 2 months after employment	The candidate sends a development plan using the <a href="#">AU template</a> to <a href="mailto:HR.nat@au.dk">HR.nat@au.dk</a> after involvement of the Vice-Dean for Career Development and Innovation
No later than 3 months after employment	The development plan is approved by the dean.
	If no agreement can be reached on the development plan within 3 months of employment, it will not be approved, and the candidate will be taken off the programme.



### 5.3 Process for annual follow-up

Date	Step in the process
	<b>Follow-up on the development plan</b>
Every year	<p>The follow-up on the development plan is part of the SDD for all candidates on the programme. The development plan is included. The head of department is responsible for convening the follow-up meeting between the vice-dean for career development and innovation, the head of department and the candidate. The candidate presents a status report on their development.</p> <p>The candidate and the head of department assess together whether the candidate is following the plan and whether any changes should be made to the plan. The candidate sends the presented status and any changes in the development plan to <a href="mailto:HR.Nat@au.dk">HR.Nat@au.dk</a>.</p>

### 5.4 Process for assessment for professorship

Date	Step in the process
	<b>Assessment</b>
End of November every year	HR sends a reminder to the head of department and the candidate regarding the deadline for the assessment
Early December every year	The candidate asks their head of department to initiate the assessment.
	The head of department submits the request to HR.
	HR informs the candidate of the materials to be submitted within a deadline of approx. one month. There is a description of the assessment materials in section 4. Assessment for professorship. The head of department is asked whether there are any special requests for material.
In parallel	The head of department appoints an assessment committee in accordance with the faculty's current guidelines. See the guidelines for heads of department on hiring permanent academic staff under the links.
	HR sends information on the composition of the assessment committee to the candidate.
	HR sends the information on the composition of the assessment committee to the Academic Council for approval.
End of January each year	Deadline for the candidate's submission of assessment material to HR.
End of January every year	HR sends the full assessment material to the assessment committee, which has 6 weeks to make an assessment based on NAT's ABC criteria. The specific requirements for the position described in the development plan, and the follow-up on these, form part of the assessment.

	HR submits the assessment to the candidate, who is given a deadline of one week to submit comments on the assessment. At the same time, the head of department informs the candidate of the outcome.
	A maximum of two academic assessments may be carried out.
Mid-March every year	If the academic assessment is positive, the head of department sends a recommendation to HR for consideration by the dean's advisory committee. Conversely, if the candidate is not deemed suitable by the academic assessment committee, the candidate is taken off the programme and continues his/her employment as an associate professor/senior researcher.
Mid-March every year	The advisory committee meets and evaluates candidates with a positive academic assessment.
Early April each year	If the dean approves the candidate's level, HR notifies the heads of department, who enter the date of the new job type in MSK. HR initiates salary negotiations and sends a new employment contract.

In the event of absence due to maternity/paternity or adoption leave or in the event of long-term illness, the programme may be extended subject to a specific agreement.

## 6. Collection of materials

The promotion programme is based on the job structure and governed by a framework decided by the senior management team and further developed and implemented at NAT.

- [Template for candidate recommendation](#) (see the section "HR")
- [Ministerial order on job structure for academic staff at universities \(\*Bekendtgørelse om stillingsstruktur for videnskabeligt personale ved universiteter\*\)](#)
- [The senior management team's decision of 24 November 2021](#)
- [NAT's ABC criteria for evaluating candidates for scientific positions](#)
- [Terms of reference for the dean's advisory committee with regards to the use of the programme for promotion to professor](#)
- [Development plan](#)
- [Mentorship agreement](#)
- [Book on mentoring](#)
- [Guidelines for heads of department on the appointment of permanent academic staff](#) (on the establishment of assessment committees)

This guide was adopted at the NAT faculty management meeting on 30 September 2022 and is valid from 1 November 2022. The guide was revised in January 2025. Contact: Kristian Mørch Abell ([krab@au.dk](mailto:krab@au.dk))