
GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSMENT COMMITTEES ON THE APPOINTMENT OF ACADEMIC STAFF

AT AARHUS UNIVERSITY, HEALTH

Prepared by the faculty management
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Table of contents

- 1. Purpose.....3
- 2. Tasks of the assessment committee3
 - 2.1 Responsibilities of the chair3
- 3. Confidentiality and disqualification.....4
 - 3.1. Co-publication.....4
- 4. Assessment.....4
 - 4.1 Requirements and content5
 - 4.2 Form.....5
 - 4.3 Period of validity6
 - 4.4 Approval6
 - 4.5. Remuneration.....6
- 5. Legal basis.....7

1. Purpose

These guidelines are written for the chair and members of the assessment committee. Applicants may benefit from reading the instructions in order to get an insight into the assessment process.

The purpose of the work of the assessment committee is to assess applicants for academic positions and academic staff who transition to another job category.

2. Tasks of the assessment committee

The assessment committee has the task of assessing which applicants are regarded as being qualified or not qualified for the position. The assessment must be carried out based on the material submitted by the applicant, which is assessed in relation to the qualification requirements for the position in question. The individual applicant must be assessed separately.

The assessment of applicants for academic positions must constitute a satisfactory, justified basis for the subsequent work of the Head of Department/Vice-dean for Research's leading to the appointment of the best qualified applicant.

It is not the task of the committee to recommend who among the qualified applicants should be appointed, and the committee may not rank the applicants in any order of priority or in other ways indicate a degree of qualification.

2.1 Responsibilities of the chair

The chair must ensure that the committee produces an assessment for each applicant which complies with the requirements set out in these guidelines. The chair is responsible for the work carried out by the assessment committee and must ensure that the deadline for submission of the assessment is observed.

All committee members are obliged to familiarise themselves with all available material, so that all applicants are assessed on the basis of the submitted material.

The committee members must prepare the assessment together; the individual members may, however, prepare drafts subject to an agreed division of work. In the final editing of its assessment, the committee should eliminate any editorial and linguistic inconsistencies resulting from the division of tasks by committee members.

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 then be substantiated separately¹.

When the assessment committee has completed its work, the chair must ensure that the assessments are uploaded to the e-recruitment system.

Shortlisting – tasks for the chair

If shortlisting is used, the chair of the assessment committee, together with the appointment committee and the Head of Department, assists in the selection of applicants for an academic assessment. The Head of Department has the decision-making authority to select applicants for an assessment. The selection takes place on the basis of an overall assessment of which applicants (as documented in the application material) are the best match for the department's and the faculty's recruitment needs and meet the qualifications, competences, experience and potential that is described in the job advertisement, including the faculty's criteria for appointments.

¹ See Section 4(2) (on assessment) of the Ministerial Order on Appointment of Academic Staff at Universities.

3. Confidentiality and disqualification

Only the chair and the members may participate in the work of the assessment committee, and all have a duty of confidentiality. The identity of the applicants is confidential. The individual applicants are thus not informed of the names of the other applicants for the position. The applicants are only informed about the composition of the assessment committee and the number of applicants who have applied for the position.

There must be no contact between the members of the assessment committee and the individual applicants in matters of relevance to the assessment. Any contact between applicant and assessment committee must go through HR.

As a member of the assessment committee, and before the work of the committee begins, you must return a signed declaration of impartiality to the department. As a member of the assessment committee, you have a duty to immediately notify the chair if there are circumstances that may lead to your own or another member's disqualification, unless it is completely apparent that the matters in question are of no importance to the assessment.

A member may be disqualified due to conflicts of interest if²:

- That person has a personal or financial interest in the outcome.
- That person's relatives or cohabitant has a personal or financial interest in the decision.
- 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.
- There exist present or past joint publications or projects (see 3.1 on Co-publication).

In all cases, a specific assessment of whether there are conflicts of interest issues in relation to the committee member must be carried out. Such a decision must be made by the chair of the assessment committee. If the question of disqualification relates to the chair, the decision is made by the Head of Department/Vice-dean for Research. If a member is deemed to be disqualified, a new member must be appointed. Violation of the rules on conflict of interest and disqualification may result in the assessment committee's work being declared invalid.

3.1. Co-publication

Co-authorship does not automatically entail disqualification. The crucial factor for the assessment is the scope of the co-publication, the date of publication and the significance accorded the work in question in relation to the assessment.

At Health, members of an assessment committee may only to a very limited extent be involved in joint publications and projects with applicants, and **only in exceptional cases** may have been involved in any joint publications within the past five years³.

4. Assessment

The purpose of the work of the assessment committee is to ensure an impartial and competent assessment of all applicants.

The individual assessment will be sent to the applicant, and this assessment must be suitable for inclusion in the grounds for the Head of Department/Vice-dean for Research's decision to appoint in accordance with the Danish Public Administration Act.

² See Section 3(1) (on disqualification) of the Danish Public Administration Act, as well as the Memo on the composition of assessment committees at Health in accordance with AU's internally agreed framework from 9 August 2013, p.1.

³ See The memo on the composition of assessment committees at Health in accordance with AU's internally agreed framework of 9 August 2013, section 1.

An assessment **must** be prepared, regardless of the period of employment, for appointments to the following types of positions: teaching assistant; research assistant; clinical assistant; part-time lecturer; clinical instructor; senior clinical instructor of dentistry; teaching assistant professor; teaching associate professor; postdoc; assistant professor; associate professor; tenure track associate professor; associate professor; clinical associate professor; professor; professor with special responsibilities; clinical professor; and clinical professor and chair.

4.1 Requirements and content

The assessment must be prepared on the basis of the material submitted by the applicant, and this must be assessed in relation to the following:

- The qualification level of the position in question, as described in the job structure (see more at au.dk/en/about/vacant-positions/rules-and-regulations/).
- The criteria for appointment of the type of position in question at Aarhus University (AU), Health.
- The content of the position, as it appears in the wording of the job advertisement.

The criteria for appointment for the type of position in question at Aarhus University, Health supplements the qualification requirements in the job structure. It is important to emphasise that the criteria are intended as a guide and that they are not rules.

An assessment will always be based on an overall assessment of the candidate, just as all criteria must be viewed in the light of the individual applicant's active research time (including the length of any periods of leave) and the academic area in question.

4.2 Form

The assessment committee will receive an email with a link to AU's e-recruitment system as well as a guide on how to upload the assessments in the e-recruitment system. The assessment committee must log into the e-recruitment system, where they will be able to access the respective applications. The chair of the assessment committee must upload the committee's joint assessment of each individual applicant in the e-recruitment system.

The assessments are prepared in a special template for the different types of positions (see the templates on the website). The overall assessment must be based on the qualification requirements in the job advertisement, the provisions of the memorandum on the job structure for academic staff at universities in relation to the individual job categories, and the additional qualification requirements in the criteria for appointment to the type of position in question at Aarhus University, Health. The overall assessment must relate to the applicant's competences in relation to the requirements that the specific position requires.

The conclusion of the overall assessment of the applicant must include a summary of the assessments made of the applicant's qualifications in relation to the relevant position. In connection with the overall assessment, the assessment committee must state the reasons for stating whether the applicant is qualified or not for the position. The assessment committee's statement on whether the applicant is qualified or not must be unambiguous and unconditional. There must be no doubt about the assessment of qualifications (for example, "highly qualified").

If the assessment committee is in agreement that the applicant is not qualified for the position, the committee may in this case limit itself to briefly stating the qualification requirements that are not fulfilled.

In the event of disagreement in the assessment committee, it must be clearly stated who considers the applicant qualified and who does not, and the individual standpoints of the members of the committee must be explained separately⁴. Thereafter, the Head of Department has the decision-making authority to make the final decision on whether or not the candidate is assessed as qualified or unqualified.

⁴ See Section 4(2) (on assessment) of the Ministerial Order on Appointment of Academic Staff at Universities.

The chair of the assessment committee has overall responsibility for ensuring the quality of the assessments, including the following points of attention:

- That the assessment is clearly, uniformly and coherently written.
- That the assessment is stringent, such that there is a clear correlation between the evaluation of the material submitted and the conclusion of the assessment committee.
- That the conclusion includes a reasoned assessment of the applicant's qualifications. The conclusion must contain a summary of the prior assessment of the applicant's qualifications in the areas of research, teaching, cooperation and any other (for the position) relevant areas.
- That the conclusion indicates whether the applicant is qualified or not qualified without the use of graduations.
- That the assessment committee's conclusion relates the wording of the job advertisement.
- That there is detailed argumentation for the PhD level, if this is not documented by a positively assessed PhD dissertation (only relevant for positions where a PhD level is a separate criterion).
- That the assessment committee does not include information in the assessment which has been accessed by the committee in any other way.
- That the applicants are treated fairly and equally.

Requirements for the content and design of an assessment are stated in the template for assessments of the specific type of position.

4.3 Period of validity

Assessments carried out in accordance with these guidelines for fixed-term positions will remain valid as long as the appointment is within the same job category, if there are no significant changes to the position (though for a maximum period of five years).

A new assessment for fixed-term positions is thus only carried out in the case of transition from one job category to another or if there is a change of position that entails significant changes to the position, or in cases where the assessment is five years old. If it is the case that the content of the position changes significantly, the changes in the position will be equated with a new appointment.

In the case of permanent (tenured) positions, the assessment is valid throughout the period of employment.

4.4 Approval

For positions under professor level

The Head of Department ensures that the formal requirements that apply to 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 with a view to additions or revision.

For positions at professor level

The Vice-dean for Research that the formal requirements that apply to 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 with a view to additions or revision.

Once the final assessment is available, the applicant will receive the committee's assessment. The assessment will be sent electronically by HR.

4.5. 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 containing a form that must be filled out and returned.

5. Legal basis

The legal basis for the appointment procedure is described in Ministerial Order no. 242 of 13 March 2012 on the appointment of academic staff at universities (the Appointment Order) under the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education: <https://www.retsinformation.dk/eli/lta/2012/242>.

Qualification requirements and the content of the position appear are specified in the "Ministerial Order on Job Structure for Academic Staff at Universities" of 1 July 2015: <https://www.retsinformation.dk/forms/R0710.aspx?id=172954>.

Teaching portfolio for appointments to academic positions:
<http://www.au.dk/en/about/uni/policy/portfolio/>

The legal basis for the section on disqualification is based on the general regulations contained in the Danish Public Administration Act concerning impartiality, see. the ministerial order in the Danish Public Administration Act: <https://www.retsinformation.dk/forms/r0710.aspx?id=161411>.