
GUIDELINES FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENT - POSTDOC APPOINTMENTS

AT HEALTH, AARHUS UNIVERSITY

Prepared by the faculty management team, Health. In
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1. General information on postdoc appointments

1.1 Delegation

The Dean is responsible for recruitment at Health and for ensuring that appointments take place in accordance with applicable laws, rules and guidelines. The Dean has delegated the recruitment authority to the Head of Department in accordance with these faculty guidelines.

1.2 Scope of the guidelines

These guidelines cover the appointment of postdocs at Aarhus University (AU), Health, regardless of geographical location.

The guidelines cover all appointments of postdocs, regardless of whether the appointment is financed by ordinary or external funding or is exempted from the requirement for job advertisement in accordance with the Appointment Order's section 8 (earmarked grants) and section 9 (appointment and renewal for up to one year).

1.3 Target group and legal framework

The target group for these guidelines are Heads of Department at Health. The guidelines are based on the following applicable legislation and guidelines:

- The University Act:
- Aarhus University's By-laws: <http://www.au.dk/en/about/organisation/index/rules-regulations/01/01-02-aarhus-university-by-laws/>.
- The ministerial order on appointment of academic staff at universities (The Appointment Order).
- Circular on the agreed minutes for certain terms of employment for academic staff at universities.
- Memorandum of 2013 on the job structure for academic staff at universities.
- Consolidation Act on Fixed-Term Employment.
- The salary scale of the Danish Ministry of Finance.

2. Appointment process for postdoc positions

Below is a general checklist for the appointment process for postdoc positions.

CHECKLIST: APPOINTMENTS TO POSTDOC POSITIONS	
The checklist also includes – with relevant modifications – positions that <u>are not advertised</u> in accordance with the Appointment Order's sections 8 (earmarked grants) and 9 (appointment and renewal for up to one year).	
JOB ADVERTISEMENT	
Department management team	Decides to advertise the position.
Department management team	Prepares a proposal for the academic content of the job advertisement. See the "Template for job advertisements for members of academic staff". Begins deliberation regarding the composition of the appointment committee and the assessment committee.
Head of Department	Approves the job advertisement. (For sections 8 & 9, approves the academic job description).
Head of Department	Sends the job advertisement text to HR.
HR	Provides advice on the formal requirements of the advertisement, media choice, schedule of the appointment process as a whole etc.
HR	Incorporates the content of the job advertisement in the e-recruitment system.
HR	Sends the advertisement text via the e-recruitment system for approval by the Head of Department.
Head of Department	Approves the job advertisement and informs HR of who is to have access to the management portal and thereby the job advertisement and applicants. (For sections 8 & 9, approves the academic job description).
HR	Publishes the job advertisement in the selected media always including AU's website and jobnet.dk.
HR	Gives the Head of Department and other relevant persons access to the management portal.
APPLICATION	
Applicant	Sends the application, along with supplementary material, electronically via a link in the job advertisement to HR via AU's website (the e-recruitment system).
HR	An automatic confirmation that the application has been received is sent to the applicant via the e-recruitment system.
SELECTION OF APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS	
HR	Send the names of the applicants after the deadline for the Head of Department via the e-recruitment system and requests that the Head of Department submit a proposal for the appointment of the committee, including the appointment of the chair of the committee. See section 3.2.1 for composition of the committee.

SHORTLISTING	
Head of Department	Decides - with the assistance of the appointment committee and the chair of the assessment committee - which applicants should receive an academic assessment in accordance with the job advertisement. Please note that in the case of postdoc positions, the Head of Department may delegate responsibility for the decision.
HR	Sends notification immediately after selection to those applicants whose applications are not being sent for assessment. Final rejections are sent at the conclusion of the recruitment process.
APPOINTMENT OF ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE	
HR	After the expiry of the deadline for applications, sends the names of the applicants via the e-recruitment system to the Head of Department and requests that the Head of Department submit a proposal for the appointment of the committee, including the appointment of the chair of the committee. In addition, HR sends declaration of impartiality forms to the Head of Department. See section 3.3.3 for composition of the committee. See section 3.3.3 for composition of the committee.
Department management team	Sends the declaration of impartiality form to the members of the committee for signing.
Head of Department	Recommends the committee (via the link in the e-recruitment system) by registering the names of members of the committee together with the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of the name, position, place of employment, country and email address of the proposed member of the assessment committee. • CVs must be submitted via a URL.
Head of Department	Replies to the request from HR via the e-recruitment system for the appointment of a committee and attaches signed declarations of impartiality. The Head of Department has thereby registered the committee.
Head of Department	Approves and appoints the committee.
HR	Informs the applicants via the e-recruitment system of the composition of the committee and the deadline for completion of their assessment work.
HR	Sends an email to the members of the committee with access to the job advertisement and with the applicants' material via the e-recruitment system. The email also contains online access to the faculty's relevant guidelines and policies as well as current rules on assessment and appointments.
ASSESSMENT	
Committee	Assesses the applicants' academic level. For postdoc assessments, the committee has - depending on the number of applicants - six weeks to complete the assessment work, unless otherwise agreed.
Committee	Prepares a written assessment of each applicant.
Chair of the committee	Enters the committee's joint assessment of each applicant in an online form in the e-recruitment system.
HR	Sends all the assessments for validation by the committee with a deadline of two working days.
Committee	Validates the assessments.
HR	After two working days, HR sends the assessments for approval by the Head of Department.
Head of Department	Approves the assessments.

HR	Sends the individual assessment for each applicant.
RECOMMENDATION FOR APPOINTMENT	
Head of Department	Makes a decision about appointment on the basis of advice from the appointment committee. References may be obtained after agreement with the candidate.
Head of Department	Recommends the appointment via the employee registration system (<i>medarbejderstamkort</i>).
OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT	
Head of Department	Informs the chosen candidate of the offer of employment and that a salary offer will be prepared as soon as possible.
Head of Department	Discusses the pay level with HR prior to the salary negotiations.
HR	Prepares the salary offer and sends this to the selected candidate with a copy to the relevant union representative.
HR	Assists in salary negotiations.
Head of Department	Once the chosen candidate has accepted the salary offer, he or she informs any internal applicants as well as applicants who were invited to an interview that their applications were rejected.
Head of Department	Provides HR with the names of those who have been to a job interview or were internal applicants and informs HR that rejections can be sent to all other applicants.
HR	Prepares an employment contract and sends it to the candidate in question.
HR	Sends rejection letters to the other applicants via the e-recruitment system and as agreed with the Head of Department.
OTHER	
HR	Undertakes the required registering in AUHRA, HR Payroll, researcher recruitment statistics and files the relevant personnel case documents in Workzone.

3. General information on job advertisements, assessment committees and appointments

3.1 Job advertisements

In accordance with the department's appointment and recruitment strategy as well job position plans, the department management team decides which job to advertise.

The department management team can advertise postdoc positions.

Shortlisting

If shortlisting is used, it must clearly be stated in the job advertisement in question that shortlisting is possible.

Shortlisting refers to a process in which a small number of applicants are selected for an academic assessment from among the total pool of applicants. The applicants selected for this assessment are those who are - on the basis of an academic assessment - assessed as best able to meet the relevant qualifications, competences, experience and potential demanded in the job advertisement.

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

For further information about shortlisting see section 8 "Use of shortlisting".

3.1.1 Exemptions to the requirements for job advertisements

As a rule, all academic positions covered by the job structure must be advertised. However, the following exceptions apply¹:

- Pursuant to section 9 of the Appointment Order, appointments/extensions in all job categories can take place without prior advertisement for periods of employment of less than one year and subsequent extensions of one year (two years in total).
- Appointments for earmarked grants (see the appointment order, section 8).

3.2 Appointment committee

The selection of the appointment committee's members² takes place either concurrently with the preparation and finalisation of the job advertisement or immediately after the approval of the job advertisement.

3.2.1 Composition of the appointment committee

An appointment committee is set up³ which undertakes appointments to postdoc positions.

- The Head of Department or other manager (authorised by the Head of Department) is chair.
- The Head of Department appoints the other members after seeking relevant advice.

See the "Guidelines for appointment committees" for more information on the committee's tasks.

3.3 Assessment committee

The Appointment Order lays down the general rules for the appointment of academic staff in accordance with section 4:

Section 4. *"The university determines the rules for the academic assessment of applicants for academic positions.*

(2) The academic assessment committee must decide whether the applicants possess the required academic qualifications within research, teaching, communication, etc., as prescribed by the job structure, and whether they meet any other qualification requirements specified in the job advertisement. A non-prioritised, substantiated, written assessment of the applicants' qualifications must be submitted to the rector. If there are any differences of opinion between the members of the assessment committee, this must be stated in the assessment."

The senior management team at AU has laid down the overall guidelines for the selection of members of assessment committees at AU in the spring of 2013. The guidelines should be seen as a framework. Each faculty has had the opportunity to add its input to and possibly narrow down this framework.⁴

Pursuant to the Ministerial Order on Appointment of Academic Staff at Universities and AU's general guidelines for academic assessment in connection with the appointment of academic staff (with/without advertisement) as well as extensions, the faculty management team at Health has adopted the following guidelines for the composition of assessment committees. (See section 3.3.3).

The appointment of assessment committees should seek to ensure an equal distribution of men and women.

¹For appointments and extensions in accordance with sections 8 and 9, the ordinary rules for the appointment of assessment committees are used.

²If shortlisting is used, there is a formal requirement for an appointment committee to be appointed.

³An appointment committee is a *possibility* in the case of Clinical Associate Professor appointments, but they are a *requirement* when using shortlisting.

⁴See the memo on the composition of assessment committees at Health in accordance with AU's internally agreed framework of 9 August 2013, section 1.

3.3.1 Definition of an assessment committee

Assessment committee:

An assessment committee prepares an assessment.

3.3.2 Eligibility requirements for assessment committees

To ensure that the assessment of applicants for academic positions is not affected by irrelevant considerations, no member of the committee may be judged unqualified to serve or at risk of having a conflict of interest in relation to individual assessments. Health bases its decisions on the regulations in the Danish Public Administration Act concerning impartiality, which relates to e.g. family relations, friendships and special personal and financial interests.⁵

This may, for example, include co-publication, supervisor relations or other types of cooperation, which cannot be considered compatible with the role as assessment committee member in relation to the advertised position.⁶

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 years⁷ (Declaration of impartiality).

Furthermore, Deans, Vice-deans and Heads of Department may not act as members of an assessment committee, as they are a part of the management and therefore have authority to make decisions regarding appointments.

3.3.3 Composition of committees

For the composition of committees for the appointment of a postdoc, irrespective of the length of employment, an assessment committee must be established to prepare a postdoc assessment.

Postdoc

An **assessment committee** is established consisting of two internal members at associate professor level as a minimum, including one member from another department.

3.3.4 Recommendation of members to the assessment committee

Internal assessors may not be part of the managerial structure at the department in question, as they make decisions regarding appointment.

Recommendations of members of the assessment committee for postdocs **must** include the following:

- Statement of the name, position, place of employment, country and email address of the proposed assessor.
- CVs must be submitted via a URL.

3.3.5 Approval of an assessment committee

The Head of Department approves committees for all postdoc positions and ensures that the rules for the composition of committees have been complied with.

The proposed members of the committee must be consulted and have signed a declaration of impartiality before the proposal is sent to HR.

⁵ See the Danish Public Administration Act, section 3 (1) (on disqualification).

⁶ See the memo on the composition of assessment committees at Health in accordance with AU's internally agreed framework of 9 August 2013, section 3.

⁷ 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.

3.3.6 Assessment

An assessment **must be** prepared for the appointment of a postdoc regardless of the period of employment.

3.3.6.1 Requirements and content

The assessment must be prepared on the basis of the material submitted by the applicant, which is 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/).
- "Criteria for appointment - postdoc" and "Template for assessment - postdoc".
- The position as described in the wording of the job advertisement/the academic description of the position.

It should be noted that the "Criteria for appointment - postdoc" supplement the qualification requirements in the job structure in the case of appointments to postdoc positions. 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 applicant, 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), potential and the academic area in question.

Requirements for the content and design of an assessment are stated in the "Template for assessment - postdoc".

3.3.6.2 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.

A new assessment for fixed-term employment only takes place 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.

3.3.7 Approval of assessments

The Head of Department ensures that the formal requirements in a postdoc assessment are met (see the checklist in Section 2.).

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 committee for additions or revision.

If there is disagreement among the members of the assessment committee, the Head of Department has the final decision-making authority. Any differences of opinion between the members of the assessment committee must be stated in the assessment, following which the Head of Department makes the final decision on whether the candidate is assessed as being qualified or not qualified.

Once the final assessment is available, the applicant will receive the committee's assessment of this. This is sent electronically by HR.

4. Recommendation for interview and participation in interview

The department management team - possibly with the help of the appointment committee - decides on the selection of candidates for job interviews and conducts these once the assessments have been received. It is not a requirement that interviews are held in connection with postdoc positions.

5. Recommendation and decision regarding appointment

When appointing postdocs, the Head of Department makes the final decision. The Head of Department recommends the appointment via the employee registration system (*medarbejderstamkort*).

6. General recruitment information

6.1 Expenses in connection with recruitment

Expenses (advertising, fees and official travel expenses) are paid by the department.

6.2 Objections regarding assessment

If HR receives objections from applicants regarding the committee's composition:

HR refers the objection to the Head of Department and the Vice-dean for Research. Objections may be made according to the Danish Public Administration Act, as the appointment process is an administrative act. HR assists with the case processing.

If the Head of Department receives objections regarding the committee's composition:

The Head of Department immediately forwards the objection to HR who will take further action, including involving the Vice-dean for Research.

If HR receives objections from applicants concerning the assessment:

HR requests a statement from the committee. The objection is sent to the chair of the committee, who coordinates the committee's statement and sends its response return to HR as soon as possible and within eight days. The Head of Department and the Vice-dean for Research are notified and agree on the procedure to be followed.

If the Head of Department receives objections, including the committee's assessment of the complainant's qualifications:

The Head of Department immediately forwards the objection to HR who will take further action, including involving the Vice-dean for Research.

6.3 Duty of disclosure upon request

Applicants to all academic positions have a right (upon request) to be informed of the names of the persons (Head of Department and Vice-dean for Research/Dean) who have participated in the decision regarding the appointment. Applicants also have the right to information on the names of persons who have had a consultancy role in the appointment process.

7. Earmarked grants

In the case of earmarked grants, the specific position is not advertised. Postdoc positions where **at least 50 % of the position is externally financed and earmarked for a named person**, are exempt from the requirement of being advertised. If the position is not advertised, then the desired candidate is requested to upload an application including CV, list of publications etc. via a specific application link.

The appointment process for postdoc is subsequently followed, as described above (see the checklist in section 2).

8. Use of shortlisting

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

8.1 Prerequisites for the use of shortlisting

It must clearly be stated in the job advertisement in question that shortlisting may be utilised. Shortlisting refers to a process in which a small number of applicants are selected for an academic assessment from among the total pool of applicants. The applicants selected for this assessment are those who are - in accordance with an initial academic review - assessed as best able to meet the relevant qualifications, competences, experience and potential demanded in the job advertisement.

8.2 Shortlisting process

The Head of Department has decision-making authority to select applicants for an assessment of their academic qualifications by the assessment committee. With the assistance of the appointment committee and the chair of the assessment committee, the Head of Department selects those applicants who will receive an assessment of their academic 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, competences, experience and potential described in the job advertisement, including the faculty's criteria for appointments.

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 are selected for an academic assessment, unless there are fewer applicants or fewer applicants than this after obviously unqualified applicants have been left out of consideration. HR will immediately notify the applicants who do not proceed to the academic assessment immediately after the shortlisting. HR also informs the applicants who proceed to the academic assessment. At the same time, these applicants will be informed of the composition of the assessment. Final rejections are sent to the applicants who have been selected for assessment after the recruitment process is completed.