
GUIDELINES FOR EXPERT COMMITTEES IN CONNECTION WITH THE APPOINTMENT OF ACADEMIC STAFF AT HEALTH, AARHUS UNIVERSITY

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1. PURPOSE

This guideline is intended for the chair and members of the expert committee. Applicants may benefit from reading the instructions in order to get an insight into the actual process.

The purpose of the expert committee's work is to prepare an expert statement that assesses applicants for academic positions.

An expert statement may be prepared in connection with appointments in the following cases:

- Career-track positions¹ of up to one year's duration (excluding professorships)
- Non career-track positions² regardless of length of employment (postdoc, teaching assistant professor and teaching associate professor, though only up to one year of employment).

The expert statement on applicants to academic positions must constitute a satisfactory basis for the subsequent task of the department head and dean leading to the appointment of the best qualified applicant.

2. THE COMMITTEE'S TASKS:

The task of the expert committee is to assess which applicants are regarded as being qualified or not qualified for the position.

The expert statement must be 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 expert statement must provide a comprehensive and substantiated basis for the work of finding the most 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 expert statement for each applicant, which complies with the requirements set out in these guidelines. The chair is responsible for the work carried out by the committee and must ensure that the deadline for submission of the statement is observed.

Each member of the committee must review all available material and ensure that all applicants are assessed.

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 expert statement must clearly state who finds the individual applicant qualified and who does not, and the individual standpoints must in this case be explained separately³.

At the time of the final wording of the expert statement, the committee should ensure that the linguistic expressions are uniform and coherent.

When the work of the expert committee has been completed, the chairman must ensure that the expert statements are entered into in the PeopleXS recruitment system via a previously submitted link from Health, HR.

¹ Career-track positions: Assistant professor, researcher, tenure track positions, associate professor, clinical associate professor, senior researcher, professor with special responsibilities (MSO), clinical professor, professor.

² Non-career track positions: Teaching assistant, research assistant, clinical assistant, postdoc, visiting scholar/visiting scientist/guest lecturer, teaching assistant professor, teaching associate professor, part-time lecturer, clinical instructor and senior clinical instructor of dentistry.

³ 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 expert committee, and all have a duty of confidentiality.

The identity of the applicants is confidential. The individual applicants shall not thus receive information about the names of the other applicants for the position. The applicants are only informed of the expert committee's composition and the number of applicants for the position in question.

Members of the committee and the individual applicants must not have contact with one another in regard to matters relating to the expert statement. Any contact between applicant and the expert committee must take place via HR, Health.

Before the work begins, all members of the committee must return a signed declaration of impartiality to the department – see "Declaration of impartiality". All members of the committee have a duty to immediately notify the chairman if there are circumstances that may lead to their own or another member's disqualification, unless it is completely apparent that the matters in question are of no importance to the expert statement.

A member may be disqualified⁴, if:

- That person has a personal or financial interest in the decision.
- That person's relatives or cohabitant has a personal or financial interest in the decision.
- That person has a close affiliation with a company, association or the like with a special interest in the decision, or that other circumstances exist which may cast doubt on that person's impartiality, including for example close friendship or ascertainable enmity.
- That person is or has been involved in joint publications or projects with one of the applicants (see Section 3.1. Co-authorship below).

In all cases, a specific assessment of whether there is an issue of disqualification is carried out. The decision in such cases is made by the chair of the expert committee. If the question of disqualification relates to the chair, the decision is made by the department head/dean. If a member is deemed to be disqualified, a new member shall be appointed. Violation of the rules on disqualification may result in the assessment work being adjudged invalid.

3.1. Co-authorship

Co-authorship does not automatically entail disqualification. What is crucial for the assessment is the scope of the co-authorship, the date of the work and the weight which the work in question is conferred in the expert statement. At Health, members of a committee may only have joint publications and projects with the applicants to a very limited extent and may only **in exceptional cases** have had joint publications within the past five years⁵.

4. EXPERT STATEMENT

The committee must ensure an impartial and qualified expert statement on all applicants to a given position.

The expert statement on the individual applicant will be sent to the person in question and must be suitable to be included in the grounds for the department head/dean's appointment decision in accordance with the Danish Public Administration Act.

4.1 Requirements and content

The expert statement 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/om/stillinger/love-og-regler/ add link).
- The content of the position, as described in the words of the job advertisement/the academic description of the position.

⁴ 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.3.

⁵ 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.

4.2. Form

An expert statement will always depend on an overall assessment of the applicant. The elements constituting the assessment must be viewed in the light of the individual applicant's active research time (including the length of any periods of leave) and the subject area in question.

The expert statement contains the following academic elements (if relevant with regard to job category):

- A presentation of relevant excerpts from the curriculum vitae
- An assessment of academic qualifications
- An assessment of other qualifications (see the submitted teaching portfolio)
- An assessment of other qualification requirements (specified in the relevant job advertisement/academic text)
- A concluding overall assessment of the applicant, stating whether the applicant is deemed qualified for the position or not

Requirements for the content and design of an expert statement are stated in the "Template for expert statement".

4.3 Period of validity

The expert statement for positions with employment for up to one year are valid for a period of one year. If the total period of employment with extension exceeds one year, an assessment must be made that is equivalent to what is applicable for periods of employment of more than one year. Exceptions to this rule are visiting scientists, where an expert statement will be applicable to all future visiting appointments for the person in question.

Non-career track positions:

- Expert statements are valid for the whole period of employment in cases where employment is within the same job category, and where there are no significant changes to the position. If the content of the position changes significantly, the changes in the position will be equated with a new appointment.
- Expert statements for visiting scientists and guest lecturers are also applicable for future visiting and guest appointments for the person in question.
- However, for postdocs, teaching assistant professors and teaching associate professors, they are only applicable for one year. After this time, an assessment is made corresponding to those which apply to appointments for more than one year.

Career track positions:

- Expert statements for positions with up to one year of employment (including extensions) are applicable for one year (though with the exception of professorships).

4.4 Approval

The department head ensures that the formal requirements for the expert statement are met.

If the expert statement does not constitute a satisfactory basis for decision and/or does not meet the formal requirements, it is returned to the expert committee for supplementing or revision.

The applicants will receive the final expert statement once it is available. The expert statement is sent by HR, Health via email.

4.5. Remuneration

Upon completion of the assessment process, the external members of the committee will receive an email with a form attached, which must be completed and returned, so that they can be remunerated for their participation.

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.

<http://jobsys.au.dk/link2/ansaettelsesbekendtgoerelsen>

The qualification requirements and job description are stated in the "Memorandum on Job Structure for Academic Staff at Universities" of 28 June 2013.

<http://jobsys.au.dk/link2/stillingsstrukturnotatet>.

Requirements for teaching portfolios are stated in the Rector's memo of 7 October 2004 on the teaching portfolio for appointments to academic positions (<http://www.au.dk/da/politik/portfolio>) and the job advertisement for the position in question.

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=142955>