

## Guidelines for tenure track at Health

Tenure track at Health is an attractive career opportunity for promising researchers from around the world. Highly qualified candidates can be employed as a tenure track assistant professor for a period of up to 6 years with the prospect of being promoted to associate professor. Provided a positive assessment the tenure track assistant professor is promoted to associate professor without a prior call for candidates (advertisement). The promotion is based solely on the tenure track assistant professor's own achieved results.

### Purpose

Aarhus University offers tenure track positions in order to increase career path transparency and coherence. At the same time, the tenure track positions primarily apply in areas where competition for the most promising researchers is particularly high. Employment in fixed-term assistant professorships will thus continue to be the most common form of employment for assistant professors.

At Health, the ambition is a tenure track-model that:

- Is an attractive career offer for promising researchers regardless of nationality or gender
- Contributes to career clarification among younger researchers
- Supports professional development through greater security in employment

### Supervisor

The Head of Department appoints a supervisor (i.e. the immediate supervisor or line manager) for the tenure track assistant professor for the duration of the tenure track employment period.

### Decision on advertisement

A decision on tenure track advertisements in the coming year is reached at the Head of Department's quarterly discussions with the Dean. The decision is made on the basis of financial leeway and strategic priorities to promote certain subject areas as well as retention and recruitment of particularly talented young researchers. The decision to advertise must also be based on considerations regarding staff composition and academic profile at the department as well as the need to strengthen teaching and/or research within specific subject areas, if applicable.

### Advertisement

Positions are advertised as max. 6-year positions at assistant professor level and the [Template for job advertisement – tenure track assistant professor](#) must be used. The advertisement must state that the employee – without a prior call for candidates and provided a positive assessment for associate professor – will be promoted to associate professor. The advertisement must also clearly state the criteria that the assessment will be based upon.

Advertisements must be worded in broad terms and published both nationally and internationally. A search committee is used to ensure that the pool of applicants is highly qualified and gender-diverse.

### Recruitment

The recruitment process - job advertisements, requirements for the application, assessment of applicants, criteria for employment, negotiation of salary, etc. - takes place in accordance with the general rules for assis-

tant professorships, including the rules of the Ministerial Order on Job Structure for Academic Staff at Universities and the Faculty of Health's supplementary rules regarding recruitment process and employment criteria. This is to ensure that only highly qualified candidates are considered.

Tenure track positions are usually aimed at candidates who have not previously held an assistant professor position. When assessing applications for tenure track positions Health especially values:

- Documented independent research of high international standard
- Published research results of high quality
- Experience with teaching at university level
- International experience, including stay/employment at a research institution abroad
- Potential to reach the highest international level
- Potential to qualify for associate professor employment

The Certificate of Employment includes an addendum that states the rules for employment as tenure track assistant professor, the conditions for transition to associate professor employment, and the requirements for preparing a development plan (tenure track plan).

### **Development plan (tenure track plan)**

Within 2 months of employment the tenure track assistant professor prepares a personal plan, specifying concrete goals and tasks for the tenure track employment period in alignment with the expectations of the department.

The tenure track assistant professor prepares the plan in dialogue with the supervisor and the Head of Department (or Vice-Head of Research) using the 'Template for development plan' provided in the addendum to the Certificate of Employment. The plan is added to the employment file upon approval by the Vice-Dean of Research.

During the tenure track employment period, the tenure track assistant professor is expected to:

- Establish and head their own research group
- Attract external funding
- Achieve a clear research profile via publications of high quality
- Obtain experience with research and prepare a teaching portfolio
- Complete the university pedagogical programme
- Establish international collaborations, ideally also a stay abroad
- Contribute to the department and the faculty ('academic service')
- Obtain Danish language skills at a relevant level

### **Biannual status meetings**

The Head of Department (or Vice-Head of Research) ensures that the supervisor and the tenure track assistant professor have biannual status meetings. The supervisor initiates the meetings as a supplement to daily dialogue on progress. At the meetings the progress of the tenure track assistant professor is measured in relation to the development plan and future and, if applicable, remedial actions are discussed. The meetings can be held in connection with the annual staff development dialogue (SDD).

### **Mid-term evaluation**

After consultation with the supervisor, the Head of Department (or the Vice-Head of Research) can decide to hold a mid-term evaluation after approx. 3 years of employment. The purpose of the evaluation is to ensure that the tenure track assistant professor is progressing towards promotion.

The evaluation panel is comprised of the Head of Department (or the Vice-Head of Research) and min. two recognized researchers at the level of associate professor or full professor. The researchers can be either in-house or external depending on impartiality, competence, diversity, and availability.

The evaluation is based on the tenure track assistant professors results, activities and development up until the evaluation and concludes with written feedback to the tenure track assistant professor including recommendations for future and, if applicable, remedial actions.

If the outcome of the evaluation is concern over the lack of progress towards promotion, the Head of Department (or Vice-Head of Research) can decide that status meetings be held each quarter with the possibility of follow-up meetings with the Head of Department (or Vice-Head of Research).

In preparation for the mid-term evaluation, the tenure track assistant professor provides to the panel:

- CV incl. full list of publications
- Teaching portfolio
- Status statement regarding the tenure track-plan
- A summarized description of research activities
- A description of planned research activities
- A description of participation in committees, forums, boards etc.

### **Assessment for associate professor**

The assessment for associate professor employment, including composition of the assessment committee, is carried out in accordance with the Ministerial Order on Job Structure for Academic Staff at Universities as well as the supplementing rules at the Faculty of Health regarding recruitment and appointment criteria as described in [Criteria for appointment – associate professor](#).

In transitioning to associate professor employment, Health places special emphasis on<sup>1</sup>:

- Independent research of high international quality and experience in heading research projects
- Peer-reviewed publications of high international quality reflecting a clear research profile
- Ability to lead, supervise and inspire other researchers
- Interdisciplinary collaborations
- International collaborations, ideally also a stay abroad
- Teaching experience, ideally international, and a completed university pedagogical programme
- Qualifications in research dissemination
- Academic appointments and other contributions to the department and faculty ('academic service')

The assessment includes an estimation of the potential of the candidate based on documented research results, visions for the position, teaching experience, funding grants, prizes, etc.

The assessment is carried out based on materials provided by the candidate as prescribed in [Guidelines for applicants - academic positions](#), for example:

- Motivated application
- CV incl. list of publications
- Research- and teaching plan
- Teaching portfolio

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<sup>1</sup> The assessment will at all times be conducted in reference to the document 'Criteria for appointment – associate professor'

The assessment for employment as associate professor is carried out upon request from the tenure track assistant professor no later than 6 months before expected transition to associate professor employment:

- If the assessment is positive, the Head of Department recommends to the Vice-Dean of Research that the tenure track assistant professor be employed as associate professor
- If the assessment is negative, dismissal is initiated subject to the terms of notice set out in the collective agreement
- If the tenure track assistant professor fails to register for assessment before the sixth year of employment, dismissal is initiated subject to the terms of notice set out in the collective agreement

After consultation with the Head of Department, the tenure track assistant professor can request an earlier assessment within the first four years of employment. If the assessment is positive, the tenure track assistant professor is recommended for employment as associate professor. If the assessment is negative, the tenure track assistant professor will remain employed and can register for a second assessment within the final six months before the expected transition to associate professor. A candidate can only be assessed twice.

### **Extension**

In case of absence due to maternity/paternity/adoption leave or long-term illness the tenure track employment period is extended corresponding to the length of the period of absence.

### **Mentor**

It is recommended that the tenure track assistant professor seek mentorship for informal and confidential discussions of career related choices. A mentor can – but does not have to – be matched via mentor schemes at the university. A mentor can be internal or external, depending on subject field, career plans, and availability.

### **In relation to international recruitment**

Internationally the term 'tenure' refers to a permanent position as university professor, where dismissal can only take place with reference to a special cause, e.g. inappropriate behavior, and 'tenure track' refers to the process from assistant professor via associate professor to full professor ('tenured professor'). International applicants must thus be expected to associate 'tenure' with a permanent position (as professor) on terms that include greater job security than is the case in a Danish labor market context.

When recruiting from abroad the person hiring must therefore pay attention to the fact that a tenure track position is not the same as tenure, nor the same as a position with the intent of getting tenure. The Danish tenure track model makes it possible to promote a candidate from a fixed-term position as assistant professor to a non-fixed term position as associate professor provided a positive assessment, but the promotion does not exclude the possibility of dismissal and does not include promotion to full professor.

### **Reference documents**

This guideline document is prepared in accordance with:

- The University Act (2013)
- The Ministerial Order on Job Structure for Academic Staff at Universities (2019)
- Aarhus University Guidelines for Tenure Track (2014, rev. 2021)
- Aarhus University Norms for Recruitment of Academic Staff to Permanent Positions (2020)
- Faculty of Health employment criteria for assistant and associate professors (2018, rev. 2021)
- Faculty of Health recruitment procedures (2018, rev. 2021)

Fig. 1:

