Guidelines for search committees for the recruitment of permanent academic staff

AT HEALTH, AARHUS UNIVERSITY

Prepared by the faculty management team, Health.
In force from 15 September 2018.

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**Delimitation of the task**

Search committees are used in the recruitment of permanent academic staff. In addition, search committees are used in the recruitment of:

- Permanent assistant professors (tenure track)
- Associate professors and professors with an employment contract of three years or more and an employment rate of 50% or more at Aarhus University
- Clinical professors and chairs at the Department of Clinical Medicine.

Positions, which are not advertised in the public domain, are exempt from the requirements for a search committee.

The search committee must find at least three potential candidates. Gender balance is strived for. Only potential candidates for the position are identified and not necessarily persons who have explicitly expressed an interest in the position, or who have otherwise indicated interest.

The list of candidates is confidential and is sent to the Head of Department.

**Appointment of search committees**

Search committees are appointed by the Head of Department prior to the position is advertised. When appointing the search committee, it is a good idea for the department management to involve relevant research managers at the department. The search committee must consist of a chairperson and two members of at least associate professor level. Members of the search committee must possess the necessary insight into the study programme and research area in question. When recruiting for the position of professor, the chair must as a starting-point be a professor.

The chair of the search committee must be an employee of Aarhus University. Other members of the search committee must be employees of Aarhus University or another university.

In order to counteract unconscious bias, the search committee must have a diverse composition, including representation of more than one gender. It is also recommended that one of the members is international, e.g. an honorary professor.

Members of the search committee may also be members of the recruitment committee, which however is usually broader than the search committee, due to the desire for a strong subject-specific knowledge of the field. The Head of Department may be a member of the search committee if he or she otherwise complies with the requirements towards members of the search committee.

The search committee reports to the Head of Department, who determines the composition of the search committee, its time frame and reporting requirements.

An external recruitment agency may only be used with the Dean’s approval.

**The search committee’s task**

The search committee starts its work when a draft job advertisement is available, and thus commences work prior to the advertising of the position. The search committee must have an opportunity to comment on the job advertisement and then have at least three weeks to complete the list of potential candidates.

The search committee examines the national and international market by contacting its own network, scientific associations and the like in the relevant field. In relation to a possible match with the position, emphasis is placed on:

- Research area
- Research impact
- Teaching experience
- Co-operation with external parties, e.g. the business sector
- Knowledge dissemination to the public
The search committee will at the same time consider relevant external advertising for the position, including via social media.

**Contact with potential candidates**
Once the Head of Department has approved the search committee’s final list of potential candidates, and the position has been formally advertised, the candidates can be contacted. It is important that the search committee agrees on how each candidate on the list will be contacted, and by whom. The contact may be undertaken by the Head of Department, the chair of the search committee, members of the search committee or other relevant professionals.

When contacting potential candidates, it is important to point out that this is an open call and that the outcome cannot be guaranteed. The contact may be made by telephone or e-mail.

**The search committee’s report to the Head of Department**
Upon completion of the search committee’s work, the chair of the committee is responsible for sending a brief report to the Head of Department. The report should be approximately one half-page in length, and in bullet form.

The purpose of these reports is to provide the Head of Department with the necessary information for the Dean and faculty management team, for use in the annual status report on recruitment work at Health.

**Annual evaluation by the faculty management team**
Each year, the work and results of the search committees are presented to the faculty management team, who decides whether this gives cause for a revision of practice.