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Rules for search committees, shortlisting and assessments for the recruitment of academic staff at Aalborg University

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1. Foreword

This memorandum contains Aalborg University's rules for search committees, shortlisting and assessments for the recruitment of academic staff.

The rules were approved by the Executive Management on 10 February 2021 and take effect on 1 April 2021.

Item 6.2.3 (Clinical associate professor) is changed by the Executive Management on 20 August 2021.

1.1 Legal basis

The rules were drawn up in accordance with current legislation as well as the university's overall rules and staff policy, including:

- the job structure (Ministerial Order on the Job Structure for Academic Staff at Universities)
- the appointment order (Ministerial Order on the Appointment of Academic Staff at Universities)

1.2 Scope

The rules pertain to all types of positions covered by the job structure.



2. Job advertisements

The job advertisement must indicate that candidates will be shortlisted for assessment.

In addition, the job advertisement must indicate the limitation on the amount of material that applicants may include for assessment, according to § 5 of the appointment order. For the positions of professor, associate professor and senior researcher, a maximum of 10 publications may be attached. For other positions, a maximum of five publications may be attached.



3. Requirements on disqualification and confidentiality

Disqualification must be evaluated during the recruitment process, particularly for the composition of search committees, appointment committees and assessment committees.

In evaluating disqualification, Aalborg University refers to the rules in the Public Administration Act, Chapter 2. A committee member may be disqualified if:

- The member has a special personal or financial interest in the outcome of the case.
- The member has a close familial connection to a person who has such an interest.
- Other circumstances such as a matter of a close friendship – or hostility – regarding the person concerned.

Both the manager and the individual committee member are responsible for evaluating whether the committee member should be disqualified. Evaluations on disqualification are done for the members of the committees and all applicants.

Further information on this is in the [Code of Conduct in the Public Sector](#), Chapter 5.

All participants in the recruitment process are bound by confidentiality both during and after recruitment.



4. Search Committees

4.1 Purpose

The use of search committees aims to ensure a broad field of high quality, diverse applicants, i.e., an applicant field that includes qualified national and international applicants and represents more than one gender.

4.2 Task of the search committee

The search committee must find at least three candidates that as a group represent more than one gender. The list is confidential and is sent to the dean and the head of department.

If it is not possible to comply with the minimum requirement, dispensation must be obtained from the dean. Dispensation is only granted if the application is accompanied by a clear justification, i.e. an explanation that compliance involves exceptional and disproportionate work for the search committee.

4.3 Scope

Search committees must be used in recruiting academic staff for the position of permanent assistant professor (tenure track) as well as for appointment as an associate professor and professor for three years or more and employed at a rate of 50 percent or more.

4.4 Composition of the search committee

The search committee must consist of a chair and two members at least at the associate professor level. However, the chair must be at the professor level when recruiting for professor positions. The members of the search committee must have the necessary insight into the given educational/research area and be employed at Aalborg University or another university. However, the chair must be employed at Aalborg University.

There can be no overlap between members of the search committee and members of the assessment committee.

The head of department may be part of the search committee if he or she otherwise meets the requirements for serving on search committees.

In order to reduce unconscious bias, every effort must be made to ensure diversity in the composition of the search committee, including representing more than one gender. If this is not possible, the lack of gender diversity must be explained when the composition of the search committee is submitted for the dean's approval.

The composition of the search committee is submitted by the head of department for approval by the dean.

The members of the search committee may not buy out their time serving on the committee.

4.5 Work of the search committee

The work of the search committee begins once there is a draft job advertisement and is ongoing before the position is advertised. The search committee has three weeks to complete its work.

Based on the criteria stated in job advertisement, the search committee identifies the national and international market for potential candidates in the given area of education/research.

The search committee must not make an assessment, but rather an initial screening of potential candidates that match the profile desired. The screening should cover teaching, research and knowledge collaboration, to the extent that this information is readily available through online CVs, portfolios, databases, etc.



For teaching, the committee can look at whether the candidates have relevant teaching experience and ongoing pedagogical competence development, and whether they have received teaching awards, contributed to developing programmes, published textbooks or the like. For research, the committee can look at publication record and H-index via relevant recognised publication databases, and information on obtaining external funding. Finally, the search committee can look at the extent of value-creating knowledge collaboration, including relevant collaboration with companies and public sector partners both nationally and internationally, as well as whether the candidates have contributed to the public debate and/or given presentations at leading conferences in the given education/research area.

Also, the search committee considers advertising the position externally, including via social media.

4.6 [Contact with potential candidates](#)

Once the position is advertised, the chair of the search committee, the head of department or another person involved contacts the potential candidates, either by phone or email, to encourage them to apply for the position.



5. Selection of candidates for assessment – shortlisting

5.1 Purpose

When shortlisting, the chair of the assessment committee or the expert committee advises the head of department on which applicants best match the recruitment needs of the department and faculty. The head of department selects the applicants for in-depth assessment.

Shortlisting limits assessment to only the most qualified applicants. Thus, the members of the assessment committee can concentrate their efforts on the most relevant, competent applicants. The reduction in the number of applicants also means that the assessment process can be done more quickly; it may thus be easier to find members for assessment committees if the workload is reduced.

5.2 Scope

Shortlisting is used for all job categories.

5.3 Selection of candidates

Based on the advice of the chair of the assessment committee or the expert committee, the head of department decides which applicants to select for assessment. The head of department may not delegate this task.

For positions such as professor, associate professor/ senior researcher and permanent assistant professor (tenure track), the dean approves the selection.

5.4 Selection criteria

The selection of the applicants for assessment is based on an overall assessment of which applicants best match the recruitment needs of the department and faculty based on the qualifications, competences, experience and potential indicated in the job advertisement.

The assessment includes the applicant's qualifications in terms of research, teaching and knowledge collaboration based on the material presented in the application.

5.5 Guidelines on the number of applicants for assessment

At least three applicants must be selected for assessment.

In order to ensure the best candidates, every effort must be made to ensure diversity in the selection of candidates, including representing more than one gender if this is compatible with the required qualifications.

If there are fewer than three applicants, or there are fewer than three applicants remaining when manifestly unqualified applicants are dropped, all manifestly qualified applicants are assessed. Manifestly unqualified means applicants lack basic qualifications in terms of the job criteria indicated in the job advertisement. Examples include the lack of a PhD degree where this is required, no research experience, an external lecturer who does not have high-level practical experience in the subject and the like.

5.6 Notification to applicants

Applicants are notified if they are not selected for assessment in a letter stating that the decision was based on an overall assessment of which applicants best meet the criteria indicated in the job advertisement. Applicants who are not selected for assessment do not have the option of raising objections.

Once a decision has been made on the appointment of a candidate for the position, a rejection letter must be sent to all applicants, including those who were not selected for assessment.



Applicants selected for assessment are notified and are also informed of the composition of the assessment committee.

5.7 Deadlines

The head of department and the chair of the assessment committee or the expert committee have five working days to select candidates for assessment. The five working days are calculated from the end of the comment period on the composition of the assessment committee or from the application deadline.

5.8 Buy-out

There can be no buy-out or remuneration for the task of selecting candidates.



6. Assessment

6.1 Purpose

The purpose of assessment is to ensure impartial, qualified assessment of whether applicants possess the academic qualifications in research, teaching, dissemination, etc., stipulated in the job structure, and whether they fulfil the other requirements indicated in the job advertisement.

The rules are based on § 4 (1) of the appointment order.

6.2 Composition of assessment committees and expert committees

6.2.1 General guidelines

Members of assessment committees and expert committees must be knowledgeable in the area of the position at a level that at least corresponds to that required for the position, however not below the associate professor level. For example, members of an assessment committee for a professor position must themselves be at the professor level.

If an assessor is employed in a clinical position, they must be at least a clinical professor, regardless of whether they are assessing a position below the professor level.

Depending on the type of position, the assessment committee consists of both internal and external members. External members come from outside Aalborg University. Two external members may not be employed at the same institution.

The dean and the head of department may not be part of assessment committees or expert committees as they decide on appointment.

There can be no overlap between members of the search committee and the assessment committee.

An adjunct professor or associate professor may be an external member of the assessment committee or the expert committee. An assessment committee may not include professors/associate professors emeriti and part-time lecturers, unless there are special circumstances.

In order to avoid unconscious bias in the assessment of applicants for certain types of positions, the composition of the assessment committee or expert committee is required to reflect diversity, including representing more than one gender.

6.2.2 Unadvertised positions

Regardless of the level of position, when filling positions that have not been advertised, according to § 9 of the appointment order, the assessment is done by an expert committee consisting of one to two internal members, approved by the manager who has hiring authority (cf. Rector's Scheme of Delegation).

However, international staff members who simultaneously hold an academic position at the same level at a university recognized by Aalborg University may be employed for up to three months without assessment.



6.2.3 Advertised positions

Position type	Composition of committees
Professor Clinical Professor Associate Professor employed in a promotion programme Associate professor / senior researcher Senior advisor Permanent assistant professor employed in a tenure track position	Assessment committee. An internal chair and two external members. At least one of the external members comes from abroad. The composition of the committee must represent more than one gender.
Assistant professor / researcher Clinical associate professor	Assessment committee. An internal chair and two external members. The composition of the committee must represent more than one gender.
Postdoc	Assessment committee. An internal chair and one external member. The composition of the committee must represent more than one gender.
PhD fellow	Expert committee. Two internal members. The composition of the committee must represent more than one gender.
Teaching assistant professor / teaching associate professor Teacher in social theory and methods in the social work programme	Expert committee. Two internal members.
Research assistant Teaching assistant Part-time lecturer Clinical instructor Clinical assistant	Expert committee. One internal member.

6.2.4 Approval of members of assessment committees and expert committees

Members of assessment committees are appointed by the head of department and approved by the Academic Council.

If it is necessary to replace members of the assessment committee, for example due to disqualification, then the Academic Council must re-approve the members of the assessment committee.



The Academic Council may waive the rules governing the composition of assessment committees (cf. item 6.2.1, after a specific evaluation). In this case, the department must justify to the Academic Council why a waiver is necessary.

Members of expert committees are appointed by the head of department and approved by the manager who has hiring authority (cf. Rector's Scheme of Delegation).

Only designated persons may participate in the assessment work.

6.2.5 Informing applicants on the composition of the assessment committee

Applicants are informed on the composition of the assessment committee. If applicants believe that there are members of the assessment committee who should be disqualified, they have the option to raise objections within five working days.

6.3 Disqualification with particular focus on assessment

The members of the assessment committee or expert committees must perform an unbiased, impartial assessment. Thus, committee members must not be found disqualified or at risk of a conflict of interest in relation to the individual assessments.

The rules on impartiality are described in more detail in section 3.

Examples of a disqualification issue include co-publication, supervisor relationships or other forms of collaboration considered incompatible with the role of assessment committee member relative to the position advertised.

For example, typically, an applicant's former principal supervisor and co-supervisor may not serve on the assessment committee.

Co-authorship does not automatically mean disqualification. The decisive factors are the extent of the co-authorship, the time period, and the weight that the works in question are given in the assessment. Typically, assessors who have published with one or more applicants in the past five years are not approved.

If there is an issue likely to mean their own or another member's disqualification, members of the assessment committee must inform the committee or chair without delay unless it is completely clear that the issue has no bearing on the assessment.

Disqualification is determined by the assessment committee based on a specific evaluation and, as a general rule, the person concerned may not participate in the examination or determination of disqualification.

If the member is deemed disqualified, he or she may not take part in the committee's work; a new member is thus appointed. Violation of the rules on disqualification may result in the assessment work being declared invalid.

6.4 Work of the assessment committee

The assessment committee is tasked with ensuring an independent, qualified, non-prioritised written assessment of the applicant's qualifications with a description of the applicant's qualifications in research, teaching, dissemination and other relevant areas.

The committee is not tasked with prioritising the best qualified applicant. The assessment must only indicate the extent to which each applicant is qualified or unqualified for the position concerned. Each applicant must be assessed separately.



The chair is tasked with ensuring that the committee draws up an assessment that fulfils the function and requirements that follow from these rules.

The chair of the assessment committee is responsible for the committee's work and for complying with the deadline set for submission of the assessment.

Each member of the committee is responsible for familiarising themselves with all available material so that all applicants are assessed by all committee members.

If one or more of the applicants has submitted material in Danish or another Scandinavian language, the chair evaluates whether it is necessary for the committee's assessment work that the material be translated in full or in part into English.

The committee members must jointly write the assessment, provided that drafts can be written by each member according to an agreed division of labour. If there are differences of opinion among the members of the committee, the assessment must clearly indicate who considers each applicant to be qualified or unqualified, and each viewpoint must then be justified separately. In the final formulation of the assessment, the committee should eliminate editorial and linguistic inconsistencies that may result from the division of labour.

If there is disagreement on the formulation of the assessment or the inclusion of material that was not requested, the committee decides by a simple majority of votes, unless expressly provided otherwise. Any disagreement among the members of the committee must always be clearly stated in the individual assessment.

There should be no contact between the members of the assessment committee and the individual applicants in matters relating to the assessment. Any contact between the applicant and the assessment committee must go through the relevant contact person in the HR Department.

6.5 Preparation of the assessment

The assessment must provide a sufficient, well-argued basis for the head of department and dean to appoint the best qualified applicant. The assessment committee must assess which applicants are considered qualified or unqualified for a given position by an impartial, qualified assessment.

The assessment must be based on the description in the job advertisement and the qualification requirements set out in the job structure. The assessment committee may not add additional qualification requirements.

The assessment must be based on the material submitted by the applicant at the time of application.

The applicant must be assessed individually and without reference to the other applicants. The assessment must be sufficiently detailed and clear so that the reader can follow the logic from premises to conclusion. The language must be neutral.

The individual assessment will typically include the following:

1. A description of the applicant's career path, which is typically based on the CV.
2. An evaluation of the applicant's research qualifications. This includes: (1) a description of the publications submitted for assessment and (2) an evaluation of these publications (as well as any other information submitted on research qualifications) in relation to the content of the position.
3. An assessment of the applicant's teaching qualifications. This includes: (1) a description of the materials submitted documenting the applicant's teaching qualifications as well as the applicant's reflection on his or her own pedagogical work, its objectives, methods and implementation, and (2) an assessment of the applicant's qualifications in relation to the content of the position.



4. An assessment of the applicant's dissemination qualifications. This includes: (1) a description of the materials submitted documenting research qualifications and (2) an assessment of the applicant's qualifications in terms of oral communication such as talks.
5. An assessment of the applicant's qualifications in research management, if applicable. This includes: (1) a description of the material submitted documenting qualifications and/or experience in research management and (2) an assessment of the applicant's qualifications on research management.
6. An assessment of the applicant's qualifications in research-based public sector services, if relevant to the position.
7. An overall conclusion assessing whether the applicant is qualified for the position. It is crucial that there is clear coherence between the premises of the assessment (items 1-6) and the conclusion.

6.6 Completion of the assessment process

The chair of the assessment committee sends the final assessment to the relevant contact person in the HR department who ensures that the formal requirements are met.

If the assessment does not meet the formal criteria or does not constitute a satisfactory basis for decision making by the appointment committee, the HR contact person sends the assessment back to the chair of the assessment committee for supplementation or revision.

Once the assessment has been approved by the manager with hiring authority, the HR department sends each applicant the part of the assessment that relates to them. Applicants then have five working days to submit objections to the assessment.

In assessments involving objections, the chair prepares a response to the objection and possibly a new assessment, in consultation with and on behalf of the committee. Each applicant is informed of the outcome of this review. The assessment is not considered complete until any objections from applicants have been reviewed by the assessment committee and the applicant has been informed accordingly; therefore, final appointment may not take place.

Any subsequent formal complaint to the dean or rector does not have a suspensive effect on the further recruitment process.

6.7 Deadlines for the work of the assessment committee

According to the appointment order, appointment should be decided within six months of the expiration of the application deadline and the assessment process should take place without unnecessary delay. It is thus important that the assessment committee complies with the deadlines for submitting assessments.

The following deadlines are set:

Position type	Number of cases to be assessed	
	1-7 cases	8- cases
Professor Clinical Professor Associate Professor employed in a promotion programme	6 weeks	9 weeks
Associate professor / senior researcher Senior advisor Clinical associate professor Permanent assistant professor employed in a tenure track	4 weeks	7 weeks



position		
Assistant professor / researcher Postdoc PhD fellow Teaching assistant professor / teaching associate professor Teacher in social theory and methods in the social work programme	3 weeks	6 weeks
Research assistant Teaching assistant Part-time lecturer Clinical instructor Clinical assistant	2 weeks	5 weeks

6.8 Remuneration and buy-out

After the assessment process has been completed, external members of the assessment committee receive a form that must be completed and returned in order to be paid for their participation.

Internal members of the assessment committee may not buy out their time serving on the committee.