

Guidelines for assessment committees at Aalborg University (applicable from 1 September 2013)

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Purpose of the assessment committee

The purpose of the assessment committee is to assess applicants for academic positions and for academic staff in transition to a different job category. Applicants must be assessed on the basis of the requirements listed in the job advertisement, and on the basis of general requirements of the individual academic job types mentioned in the Job Structure.

The task of the committee is to ensure an unbiased, qualified, non-prioritised written assessment of the academic qualifications of an applicant for a position, with a description of the applicant's academic qualifications within research, knowledge dissemination and other areas relevant for the position.

It is not the task of the committee to prioritise the candidate best qualified for the job. Each candidate must be assessed individually.

Confidentiality and incapacity

Only the chairperson, committee members and possibly secretarial assistant(s) may take part in the work of the assessment committee, and they are all under a duty of confidentiality.

The identities of applicants are confidential. Therefore applicants will not be informed of the identities of the other applicants for the position. Applicants will only receive information regarding the composition of the assessment committee.

No contact is allowed between assessment committee members and individual applicants regarding matters pertaining to the assessment. Any contact between an applicant and the assessment committee must be made through the relevant contact person at the faculty secretariat/Danish Building Research Institute secretariat.

Members of the assessment committee are obliged to inform the committee or the chairperson immediately of any issues which might result in their own incapacity or that of another member, unless it is evident that the issue in question is of no significance to the assessment. A committee member may be incapacitated if:

- the member has a vested or financial interest in the outcome of the recruitment process
- the member is closely related to or cohabiting with a person who has a special interest in the outcome of the recruitment process
- the member is closely affiliated with a company, an association etc. which has a special interest in the outcome of the recruitment process
- any other circumstances exist which may raise doubts about the impartiality of the member, including for instance close friendship or ascertainable animosity.

Decisions concerning possible incapacity will be made by the assessment committee, and the member must not, as a main rule, take part in the discussion or decision-making process regarding the issue of incapacity.

In all cases, a concrete evaluation of the incapacity issue must be made. If it is determined that a member is incapacitated, this member must not take part in the work of the committee, and a new member must be appointed. Failure to comply with the rules regarding incapacity may result in the assessment work being deemed invalid.

Typically, a former primary or secondary supervisor of an applicant cannot be a member of the assessment committee.

Co-authorship does not automatically result in incapacitation. The decisive factor regarding in this regard is the extent of the co-authorship, the point in time and the weight attached to the co-authored publications in the assessment procedure. Typically, assessors who have co-published work with one or a number of applicants within the preceding five years will not be accepted.

Tasks of chairperson and committee members

It is the task of the chairperson to ensure that the committee prepares an assessment report which complies with the function and the requirements laid down in these guidelines.

The chairperson of the assessment committee is responsible for the work of the assessment committee, and for meeting the stipulated deadline of submission of the assessment report. Upon application, the Dean or the Director of the Danish Building Research Institute may under special circumstances extend the deadline of submission.

Each individual committee member must acquaint themselves with all material provided, so that all applicants are assessed by all committee members.

In case one or a number of applicants have submitted material written in Danish or another Scandinavian language, the chairperson must determine (if this has not already been determined by the faculty secretariat/Danish Building Research Institute secretariat) whether it is necessary for the committee's assessment work to have the entire material or parts of it translated into English.

Committee members must prepare a joint academic assessment report; however, individual members may prepare drafts for the final report according to work-sharing agreements made by the committee members. If deviations in opinion occur between committee members, it must be stated explicitly in the report which members consider the individual applicant to be qualified/not qualified for the position, and individual opinions must be substantiated separately. In the final preparation of the assessment report, the committee must delete any editorial and linguistic irregularities caused by the work being shared between committee members.

In case of disagreement regarding the preparation of the assessment report or the inclusion of non-cited material, the decision will be made by a simple majority vote, unless otherwise explicitly agreed. Any deviations in opinion among committee members must, in all cases, be explicitly stated in the individual assessment.

Preparation of assessment report

The typical contents of the individual assessment will be:

1. A description of the applicant's previous career, typically prepared on the basis of a CV
2. An assessment of the applicant's qualifications as a researcher. This includes (1) a description of the publications submitted for assessment and (2) an assessment of these publications (and possibly other submitted information regarding research-related qualifications) as regards the content of the position.

3. An assessment of the applicant's teaching qualifications. This includes (1) a description of the materials submitted for documentation of such qualifications and (2) an assessment of the applicant's qualifications as regards the content of the position.
4. An assessment of the applicant's qualifications as regards the dissemination of knowledge. This includes (1) a description of the material submitted for documentation of research qualifications and (2) an assessment of the applicant's qualifications as regards oral dissemination, when giving a lecture, for instance.
5. An assessment of the applicant's qualifications as regards research management, if the applicant has engaged in this. This includes (1) a description of the material submitted to document qualifications and/or experience of research management and (2) an assessment of the applicant's qualifications as regards research management.
6. An assessment of the applicant's qualifications as regards public sector services, if this is relevant for the position.
7. An overall conclusion establishing whether the applicant is qualified for the position. It is decisive that there is a clear correlation between the premises of the assessment (items 1-5) and the conclusion.

As regards item 3, the assessment committee is encouraged to obtain documentation for and/or evaluation of the teaching qualifications of applicants, including information regarding the place where such teaching took place.

Termination of assessment process

The chairperson of the assessment committee must send the completed assessment report to the relevant secretary/ HR contact person at the faculty secretariat or the Danish Building Research Institute secretariat, who will ensure that formal requirements are complied with. Subsequently, the HR contact person must present the assessment to the Dean or the Danish Building Research Institute Director, and send it to the head of department for their information.

If the assessment report fails to comply with the formal criteria or does not constitute a satisfactory basis for a decision to be made by the Dean or the Danish Building Research Institute Director, the HR contact person will return the assessment report to the chairperson of the assessment committee for supplementation or amendment.

Once the assessment report has been presented, the HR contact person will send to each individual applicant the part of the assessment which applies to that person. Applicants now have an 8-day objection period as regards the assessment. If objections are received to an assessment, contact is made to the chairperson, who, in consultation with and on behalf of the assessment committee, will prepare a response to the objection and possibly a new assessment. Not until objections have been attended to and a response has been sent to the applicant submitting the objection can a decision be made as regards appointment for the position.

Prior to making a decision to appoint, the head of department may ask one or a number of applicants to come for an interview and/or to give a trial lecture.

The head of department recommends the desired candidate to the Dean, who makes the decision to appoint. An applicant can only be appointed for a position if a majority of committee members consider the applicant to be academically qualified for the position. The Dean may decide not to fill the position, even in a case where candidates have been assessed to be academically qualified.

Applicants who are not offered employment, will receive a rejection letter from the Faculty secretariat.

Remuneration

On completion of the assessment process, external members of the assessment committee will receive an email with a form which they must complete and return in order to receive remuneration for their committee work.

Deadline

According to the Appointment Order, a decision regarding appointment must be made no later than six months after expiry of the application deadline, and in principle, the assessment process should proceed without undue delay. Therefore it is important that the assessment committee meets the deadlines for submission of the assessment report stipulated by the Dean.

Underlying rules

- Executive Order on the Appointment of Academic Staff at Universities (the Appointment Order) (Order No. 242 of 13.03.2012)
- Government Circular on the Appointment Structure for Academic Staff at Universities (Circular of 13.06.2007, xx No. 055-07)
- Statutes of Aalborg University, 20 June 2012
- Aalborg University's Rules for academic assessment of candidates for academic positions at Aalborg University
- Code of conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, EUR 21620