
GUIDELINES FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENT - APPOINTMENT OF POSTDOCS

AT HEALTH, AARHUS UNIVERSITY

Prepared by the faculty management team, Health.
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1. General information on postdoc appointments

1.1 Delegation

The Dean is responsible for recruitment at Health and for ensuring that appointments take place in accordance with applicable laws, rules and guidelines. The Dean has delegated the recruitment authority to the Heads of Department in accordance with these faculty guidelines.

1.2 Scope of the guidelines

These guidelines cover the appointment of postdocs at Aarhus University (AU), Health, regardless of geographical location.

The guidelines cover all appointments of postdocs, regardless of whether the appointment is financed by ordinary or external funding or is exempted from the requirement for job advertisement in accordance with the Appointment Order's section 8 (earmarked grants) and section 9 (appointment and renewal for up to one year).

1.3 Target group and legal framework

The target group for these guidelines are Heads of Department at Health. The guidelines are based on the following applicable legislation and guidelines:

- [The University Act](#) (in Danish)
- [Aarhus University's By-laws](#)
- [The ministerial order on appointment of academic staff at universities](#) (The Appointment Order) (in Danish)
- [Circular on the agreed minutes for certain terms of employment for academic staff at universities](#) (in Danish)
- [Ministerial Order on Job Structure for Academic Staff at Universities](#) (in Danish)
- [Consolidation Act on Fixed-Term Employment](#) (in Danish)
- [Salary Agreement Catalogue for Health](#)
- Medarbejder- og Kompetencestyrelsens lønoversigt (Salary Scale in Danish)

2 Schematic checklist over the recruitment process

CHECKLIST: EMPLOYMENT IN POSTDOC POSITIONS

The checklist also includes – with relevant modifications – positions that are not advertised in accordance with the Appointment Order's Sections 8 (earmarked grants) and 9 (appointment and renewal for up to one year).

JOB ADVERTISEMENT

Department management team	Decides to advertise the position and prepares a proposal for the academic content of the job advertisement (Danish/English). Reference is made the process plan (Danish/English), which is a tool for the manager making the appointment. The process plan is intended to help with deadlines during the appointment of postdocs. The department management team considers the need for shortlisting and begins deliberation regarding the composition of the appointment committee and the assessment committee.
Head of Department	Approves the job advertisement. (For sections 8 & 9, approves the academic job description).
Head of Department	Sends the job advertisement and relevant job information to HR in order to initiate the recruitment process in the e-recruitment system. This is to be sent to the relevant joint mailbox for Health HR .
HR	Assists with advice on the formal requirements of the advertisement text, choice of media, schedule for the whole appointment process etc. As a rule, postdoc positions must be advertised for a minimum of 2 weeks.
HR	Sets up the position in the e-recruitment system and publishes the job advertisement in the selected media, including always on the AU website and at jobnet.dk. HR also provides access to the e-recruitment system for the Head of Department and other relevant persons.

APPLICATION

Applicant	Sends the application, along with supplementary material, electronically via a link in the job advertisement to HR via AU's website (the e-recruitment system), before the application deadline.
HR	An automatic confirmation that the application has been received is sent to the applicant via the e-recruitment system.

AFTER THE EXPIRY OF THE DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS

Process	If shortlist has not been selected , move on to the bar "WITHOUT SHORTLIST – APPOINTMENT OF APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE AND ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE". If shortlist has been selected , move on to the bar "WITH SHORTLIST – APPOINTMENT OF APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE AND CHAIR OF ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE".
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WITH SHORTLIST - APPOINTMENT OF APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE AND CHAIR OF ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

HR	The Head of Department has access to the applicants and their material in the e-recruitment system. HR requests that the Head of Department/the manager or authorized, registers the members of the appointment committee ¹ as well as the chair for the assessment committee.
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¹ An appointment committee is a *possibility* in the case of postdoc positions, but they are a *requirement* when using shortlisting.

Department management team	Sends the declaration of impartiality form (Danish/English) to the chair of the assessment committee for signing. The department management team and the chair of the assessment committee can agree on a deadline for the submission of the assessment.
Department management team	Nominates the members of the appointment committee and the chair of the assessment committee, via the e-recruitment, by registering the names of the members of the committees. With the nomination of the chair of the assessment committee the following must also be registered: • CV must be submitted via a URL or uploaded as a document in the e-recruitment system
HR	HR sends the chair of the assessment committee for final approval by the Head of Department.
Head of Department	Approves and appoints the chair of the assessment committee.
WITH SHORTLIST – THE SHORTLISTING PROCESS	
Head of Department	Decides – with the assistance of the appointment committee and the chair of the assessment committee – which applicants should receive an academic assessment in accordance with the job advertisement. The Head of Department declares this in the e-recruitment system.
HR	Sends notification immediately after selection to those applicants whose applications are not being sent for assessment. Final rejections will be sent after the recruitment process has ended. HR also informs those applicants who have proceeded to the assessment of their professional qualifications.
WITH SHORTLIST – APPOINTMENT OF OTHER MEMBERS OF THE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE	
HR	Requests that the Head of Department submits a proposal for the appointment of the other members of the assessment committee ² . See section 3.3.3 for the composition of the committee.
Department management team	Sends the declaration of impartiality form (Danish/English) to the other members of the assessment committee for signing.
Head of Department	Nominates the other members of the assessment committee, via the e-recruitment system, by registering the names of the members of the assessment committee together with the following information: • CV must be submitted via a URL or uploaded as a document in the e-recruitment system
HR	HR sends the list of the other assessment committee members for final approval by the Head of Department.
Head of Department	Approves and appoints the other members of the assessment committee.
Process	Move on to the bar “THE INITIATION OF ASSESSMENT”.
WITHOUT SHORTLIST – APPOINTMENT OF APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE AND ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE	

² An emeritus cannot be a member of an assessment committee. The holder of an honorary title can be a member of an assessment committee.

HR	Notifies the Head of Department, via the e-recruitment system, that the deadline for applications has expired and request that the Head of Department appoints the appointment committee ³ as well as the assessment committee ⁴ , including the chair of the assessment committee. See section 3.3.3 for the composition of the committee.
Department management team	Sends the declaration of impartiality form (Danish/English) to the members of the assessment committee for signing. The department management team and the assessment committee can agree on a deadline for the submission of the assessment.
Head of Department	Nominates the assessment committee, via the e-recruitment system, by registering the names of the members of the assessment committee together with the following information: • CV must be submitted via a URL or uploaded as a document in the e-recruitment system
HR	HR sends the list of assessment committee members for final approval by the Head of Department.
Head of Department	Approves and appoints the assessment committee.
THE INITIATION OF ASSESSMENT	
HR	Informs the applicants, via the e-recruitment system, of the composition of the assessment committee and the deadline for completion of their assessment work.
HR	Gives the assessment committee access via e-mail to the position in the e-recruitment system, including access to the job advertisement. The email also contains a link to the faculty's relevant guidelines and policies as well as the current rules on assessment and appointments.
ASSESSMENT	
Assessment committee	Assesses the applicants' academic level. When assessing applicant for other academic staff, the committee has - depending on the number of applicants - 6 weeks to complete the assessment work, unless otherwise agreed.
Assessment committee	Prepares a written assessment of each applicant by using the "Template for assessment - postdoc" in Danish or English .
Chair of the committee	Enters the committee's joint assessment of each applicant in an online form in the e-recruitment system.
HR	Sends the assessments for approval by the Head of Department.
Head of Department	Approves the assessments.
HR	Sends the individual assessment for each applicant.
JOB INTERVIEWS AND RECOMMENDATION FOR APPOINTMENT	
Department management team	Selects applicants for interview on the basis of the committee's assessment. The appointment committee (by the Head of Department/Secretary) invites applicants for an interview. The Head of Department obtains relevant references after agreement with the candidate. The appointment committee advises the Head of Department on the recommendation for appointment.
Head of Department	Selects candidate for employment in the e-recruitment system and recommends for appointment via the employee registration system (<i>Medarbejderstamkortet</i>).
OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT	
Head of Department	Informs the chosen candidate of the offer of employment and that a salary offer will be prepared as soon as possible.

³ An appointment committee is a *possibility* in the case of postdoc positions, but they are a *requirement* when using shortlisting.

⁴ An emeritus cannot be a member of an assessment committee. The holder of an honorary title can be a member of an assessment committee.

Head of Department	Discusses the pay level with HR prior to the salary negotiations.
HR	Prepares the salary offer and sends this to the chosen candidate. Next, the salary negotiations are underway.
Head of Department	Once the chosen candidate has accepted the salary offer, the Head of Department informs any internal applicants as well as applicants who were invited to an interview that their applications were rejected.
Head of Department	Provides HR with the names of those who have been to a job interview or were internal applicants and informs HR that rejections can be sent to all other applicants. This takes place via the e-recruitment system.
HR	Prepares an employment contract and sends it to the candidate in question.
HR	Sends rejection letters to the other applicants via the e-recruitment system and as agreed with the Head of Department.
OTHER	
HR	Undertakes the required registering in HR- and payroll systems and files the relevant personnel case documents in Workzone.

3. General information on job advertisements, assessment committees and appointments

3.1 Job advertisements

In accordance with the department's appointment and recruitment strategy as well job position plans, the department management team decides which job to advertise.

The department management team can advertise postdoc positions.

3.1.1 Shortlisting

If shortlisting is used, it must clearly be stated in the job advertisement in question that shortlisting is possible. Once it has been decided to use shortlisting, it cannot later in the recruitment process be deselected.

Shortlisting refers to a process in which a small number of applicants are selected for an academic assessment from the total pool of applicants. The applicants selected for this assessment are those who are – based on an academic assessment – assessed as best able to meet the relevant qualifications, competences, experience and potential demanded in the job advertisement.

The qualification requirements in the job advertisement must provide the basis for shortlisting, assessment and final recommendation and must therefore be considered very carefully.

For further information about shortlist, including the shortlisting process, please see ["Shortlisting in connection with recruitment"](#).

3.1.2 Exemptions to the requirements for job advertisements

As a rule, all academic positions covered by the job structure must be advertised. However, the following exceptions apply⁵:

- Pursuant to section 9 of the Appointment Order, appointments/extensions in all job categories can take place without prior advertisement for periods of employment of less than one year and subsequent extensions of one year (two years in total).
- Appointments for earmarked grants (see the appointment order, section 8).

3.1.3 Minimum number of hours in the position (employment rate)

At Health, it is not a wish to have part-time positions with an employment rate of less than 20%.

⁵ For appointments and extensions in accordance with sections 8 and 9, the ordinary rules for the appointment of assessment committees are used.

In other words, positions must have a minimum of 7.4 hours per week, corresponding to 20% of a full-time position. The Vice-dean may, however, after a specific and individual assessment, grant exemptions from the requirement for an employment rate of at least 20%.

3.2 Appointment committee

The selection of the appointment committee's members⁶ takes place either concurrently with the preparation and finalization of the job advertisement or immediately after the approval of the job advertisement.

3.2.1 Composition of the appointment committee

An appointment committee is set up⁷ which undertakes appointments to postdoc positions.

- The Head of Department or other manager (authorized by the Head of Department) is chair.
- The Head of Department appoints the other members after seeking relevant advice.

For further information about appointment committees, including information about the appointment committees' work, please see ["Guidelines for appointment committees"](#).

For further information about the appointment committees confidentiality and GDPR, please see ["Guidelines regarding confidentiality and GDPR for appointment, assessment and advisory committees"](#).

3.3 Assessment committee

The Appointment Order lays down the general rules for the appointment of academic staff in accordance with section 4:

Section 4. *"The university determines the rules for the academic assessment of applicants for academic positions.*

(2) The academic assessment committee must decide whether the applicants possess the required academic qualifications within research, teaching, communication, etc., as prescribed by the job structure, and whether they meet any other qualification requirements specified in the job advertisement. A non-prioritised, substantiated, written assessment of the applicants' qualifications must be submitted to the rector. If there are any differences of opinion between the members of the assessment committee, this must be stated in the assessment."

The senior management team at AU has laid down the overall guidelines for the selection of members of assessment committees at AU in the spring of 2013. The guidelines should be seen as a framework. Each faculty has had the opportunity to add its input to and possibly narrow down this framework.⁸

Pursuant to the Ministerial Order on Appointment of Academic Staff at Universities and AU's general guidelines for academic assessment in connection with the appointment of academic staff (with/without advertisement) as well as extensions, the faculty management team at Health has adopted the following guidelines for the composition of assessment committees. (See section 3.3.3).

The appointment of assessment committees should seek to ensure an equal distribution of men and women.

3.3.1 Definition of an assessment committee

Assessment committee:

An assessment committee prepares an assessment.

3.3.2 Eligibility requirements for assessment committees

To ensure that the assessment of applicants for academic positions is not affected by irrelevant considerations,

⁶ If shortlisting is used, there is a formal requirement for an appointment committee to be appointed.

⁷ An appointment committee is a *possibility* in the case of appointments as postdoc, but they are a *requirement* when using shortlisting.

⁸ 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.

no member of the committee may be judged unqualified to serve or at risk of having a conflict of interest in relation to individual assessments. Health bases its decisions on the regulations in the Danish Public Administration Act concerning impartiality, which relates to e.g. family relations, friendships and special personal and financial interests.⁹

This may, for example, include co-publication, supervisor relations or other types of cooperation, which cannot be considered compatible with the role as assessment committee member in relation to the advertised position.¹⁰

At Health, members of an assessment committee may only to a very limited extent be involved in joint publications and projects with applicants, and **only in exceptional cases** may have been involved in any joint publications within the past five years¹¹ (see Declaration of impartiality ([Danish/English](#))).

Furthermore, Dean, Vice-deans and Heads of Department may not act as members of an assessment committee, as they are a part of the management and therefore have authority to make decisions regarding appointments.

3.3.3 Composition of committees

For the composition of committees for the appointment of a postdoc, irrespective of the length of employment, an assessment committee must be established to prepare a postdoc assessment.¹²

Postdoc

An **assessment committee** is established consisting of two internal members at associate professor level as a minimum, of which one member may be from another department.

For further information about the assessment committees', including information about the assessment committees' work, please see ["Guidelines for assessment committee"](#).

For further information about the assessment committees' confidentiality and GDPR, please see ["Guidelines regarding confidentiality and GDPR for appointment, assessment and advisory committees"](#).

3.3.4 Recommendation of members to the assessment committee

Internal assessors may not be part of the managerial structure at the department in question, as they make decisions regarding appointment.

Recommendations of members of the assessment committee for postdocs **must** include the following:

- Statement of the name, position, place of employment, country and email address of the proposed assessor
- CVs must be submitted via a URL

The proposed members of the committee must be consulted and have signed a **declaration of impartiality** ([Danish/English](#)) before the proposal is sent to HR.

3.3.5 Approval of assessment committees

The Head of Department approves committees for all postdoc positions and ensures that the rules for the composition of committees have been complied with.

3.3.6 Assessment

An assessment **must be** prepared for the appointment of a postdoc regardless of the period of employment.

⁹ See the Danish Public Administration Act, section 3 (1) (on disqualification).

¹⁰ See the memo on the composition of assessment committees at Health in accordance with AU's internally agreed framework of 9 August 2013, section 3.

¹¹ 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.

¹² An emeritus cannot be a member of an assessment committee. The holder of an honorary title can be a member of an assessment committee.

3.3.6.1 Requirements and content

The assessment must be prepared based on 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 [Ministerial Order on Job Structure for Academic Staff at Universities](#) (in Danish)
- "Criteria for appointment - postdoc" ([Danish/English](#)) and "Template for assessment - postdoc" ([Danish/English](#)).
- The position as described in the wording of the job advertisement/the academic description of the position.

It should be noted that the "Criteria for appointment - postdoc" supplement the qualification requirements in the job structure in the case of appointments to postdoc positions. It is important to emphasize that the criteria are intended as a guide and that they are not rules. An assessment will always be based on an overall assessment of the applicant, just as all criteria must be viewed in the light of the individual applicant's active research time (including the length of any periods of leave), potential and the academic area in question.

Requirements for the content and design of an assessment are stated in the "Template for assessment - postdoc" ([Danish/English](#)).

3.3.6.2 Period of validity

Assessments carried out in accordance with these guidelines for fixed-term positions will remain valid as long as the appointment is within the same job category, if there are no significant changes to the position.

The assessment applies for fixed-term appointments extended without advertisement pursuant to the Appointment Order¹³, provided the extension is within the same job type and with no significant change in job content. If the appointment is extended following an advertisement with other applicants for the position, all applicants must be assessed.

In the case of transition from one job type to another, or if there is a change of position that entails significant changes to the job content of the position, the new employment will require a new assessment.

3.3.7 Approval of assessments

The Head of Department ensures that the formal requirements in a postdoc assessment are met.

If the assessment does not constitute a sufficient basis for decision and/or does not meet the formal requirements, it must be returned to the committee for additions or revision.

If there is disagreement among the members of the assessment committee, the Head of Department has the final decision-making authority. Any differences of opinion between the members of the assessment committee must be stated in the assessment, following which the Head of Department makes the final decision on whether the candidate is assessed as being qualified or not qualified.

Once the final assessment is available, the applicant will receive the committee's assessment of this. This is sent electronically by HR.

4. Recommendation for interview and participation in interview

The department management team - possibly with the help of the appointment committee - decides on the selection of candidates for job interviews and conducts these once the assessments have been received. It is not a requirement that interviews are held in connection with postdoc positions.

For further information about the selection of candidates for job interviews, please see [Guidelines for appointment committees](#).

¹³ Sections 7 (appointment without advertisement), 8 (earmarked grants) and 9 (appointment and renewal for up to one year)

4.1 References

References should be obtained as part of the efforts to employ the best qualified applicant. Obtaining references requires the consent of the applicant.

For further information about obtaining references, please see ["Guidelines for obtaining references"](#).

5. Recommendation and decision regarding appointment

When appointing postdocs, the Head of Department makes the final decision. The Head of Department recommends the appointment via the employee registration system (*Medarbejderstamkort*).

6. General recruitment information

6.1 Expenses in connection with recruitment

Expenses (advertising, fees and official travel expenses) are paid by the department.

6.2 Objections regarding assessment

If HR receives objections from applicants regarding the committee's composition:

HR refers the objection to the Head of Department and Vice-dean for Research. Objections may be made according to the Danish Public Administration Act, as the appointment process is an administrative act. HR assists with the case processing. The recruitment is suspended while the objection is being processed.

If the Head of Department receives objections regarding the committee's composition:

The Head of Department immediately forwards the objection to HR who will take further action, including involving the Vice-dean for Research. The recruitment is suspended while the objection is being processed.

If HR receives objections from applicants concerning the assessment:

HR notifies the Head of Department and the Vice-dean for Research and agree on the procedure to be followed. HR requests a statement from the assessment committee by sending the objection to the chair of the committee, who coordinates the committee's statement and sends its response to HR as soon as possible and within eight days. The recruitment is suspended while the objection is being processed.

If the Head of Department receives objections from applicants concerning the assessment:

The Head of Department immediately forwards the objection to HR who will take further action, including involving the Vice-dean for Research. HR requests a statement from the assessment committee by sending the objection to the chair of the committee, who coordinates the committee's statement and sends its response to HR as soon as possible and within eight days. The recruitment is suspended while the objection is being processed.

6.3 Duty of disclosure upon request

Applicants to all academic positions have a right (upon request) to be informed of the names of the persons (Head of Department and Vice-dean for Research/Dean) who have participated in the decision regarding the appointment. Applicants also have the right to information on the names of persons who have had a consultancy role in the appointment process.

7. Earmarked grants

In the case of earmarked grants, the specific position is not advertised. Postdoc positions where **at least 50 % of the position is externally financed and earmarked for a named person**, are exempt from the requirement of being advertised. If the position is not advertised, then the desired candidate is requested to upload an application including CV, list of publications etc. via a specific application link.

The appointment process for postdoc is subsequently followed, as described above.