

Guidelines regarding the appointment and assessment of postdocs at the Faculty of Arts

These guidelines describe tasks and responsibilities in connection with the recruitment and appointment of postdocs at the Faculty of Arts. The guidelines are aimed at hiring managers, grant holders (academic staff/principal investigators), heads of department and members of appointment and assessment committees in connection with the appointment of postdocs.

The dean has delegated the recruitment authority to the head of school, and the head of school can, within the framework of the school's budget and/or the grant holder's budget, decide to appoint a postdoc with or without prior advertisement.

The guidelines apply to all appointments of postdocs at the Faculty of Arts, regardless of whether the positions are financed by ordinary or external funding and/or are exempt from the requirement for prior advertisement in accordance with the Appointment Order's section 8 (earmarked grants for named individuals) and section 9 (appointment without prior advertisement for up to one year, with the possibility of an extension for up to one year).

Go to:

- [Appointments of postdocs without prior advertisement](#)
- [Appointments of postdocs with prior advertisement](#)

Postdoc as an academic job category

According to the job structure, a postdoc position is a fixed-term academic role which primarily involves research, along with some teaching obligations. The position may also, to a limited extent, include the performance of other tasks.

In order to qualify for the position, the applicant must possess qualifications that are at least equivalent to the PhD level. A postdoc position is not a principal position and is therefore not part of the coherent university career path. Several fixed-term appointments may take place, but the maximum total period of employment as a postdoc at Aarhus University is four years.

For all staff members with teaching obligations, the staff member and the relevant head of department/project manager must regularly discuss how the pedagogical and didactic competences can best be maintained and/or developed. In connection with appointments to postdoc positions, postdocs can be offered an upgrading of their teaching skills if the position in question includes teaching.

Postdocs can be appointed either without prior advertisement or with an open international advertisement.

Appointments of postdocs without prior advertisement

According to the Appointment Order, the requirement that positions must be advertised can be deviated from in the following two cases:

—

1. *Externally funded positions (section 8 of the Appointment Order)*

If foundations or councils or non-governmental funders have made at least half of the funding available for the appointment of a postdoc specified by name in the notice of award, the postdoc in question may be appointed without prior advertisement, provided that the postdoc is deemed academically qualified for the position.

—

2. *Fixed-term appointments (section 9 of the Appointment Order)*

Fixed-term appointments of postdocs can take place without prior advertisement for a period of up to one year, with the possibility of an extension for up to one year (total duration of employment of two years).

To be appointed, the applicant in question must be deemed academically qualified for the position.

The process regarding appointment without prior advertisement follows these guidelines.

Appointment committees in connection with appointments without prior advertisement

—

The appointment committee is set up by the head of school (or the person to whom the task has been delegated) and consists of the chair of the assessment committee (grant holder) as well as the head of department and possibly another expert academic staff member at least at the level of associate professor from within Aarhus University. Efforts are made to ensure participation of more than one gender.

As a general rule, the head of department is the chair of the appointment committee.

On the basis of the assessment, the appointment committee sends the head of school a recommendation on whether the candidate should be appointed, taking into account any conditions that may affect the start date.

Assessment committees in connection with appointments without prior advertisement

In connection with appointments and extensions without prior advertisement, the head of school (or the person to whom the task has been delegated) sets up an assessment committee consisting of one or two expert academic staff members at least at the level of associate professor from within Aarhus University. If it is not possible to find internal expert assessors with no conflicts of interest, the assessment may be conducted by one or two external experts at least at the level of associate professor. This requires the approval of the head of school.

In connection with assessments of postdocs, the assessment committee does not have to be approved by the Academic Council or the dean.

As a general rule, the relevant academic staff member/grant holder is the chair of the assessment committee, as long as there are no conflicts of interest (find the definition of conflict of interest at the end of these guidelines). The chair of the assessment committee must ensure that the assessment is impartial and academically justified in relation to the relevant appointment as a postdoc.

Deans, vice-deans and heads of school may not act as members of an assessment committee, as they are part of the management and therefore have the authority to make decisions regarding appointments.

Purpose of and requirements regarding academic assessments without prior advertisement

The purpose of conducting academic assessments of applicants for postdoc positions is to ensure that the appointment committee has an impartial, academically solid and carefully considered written basis for recommending the named applicant for the position.

The committee may not include any material other than that submitted/uploaded by the applicant for assessment before the application deadline. The applicant is responsible for uploading the correct material by the application deadline.

Recommendations and references may not be included in the assessment.

The assessment committee may not add additional qualification requirements to those stated in the project description and the job structure.

The assessment must be written in English, apart from cases in which all the assessment committee members can read/write Danish and the applicant has written the application in Danish.

Based on the submitted material, the assessment committee must assess whether the applicant is qualified in relation to the content of the position in question and the qualification requirements for postdoc positions in the job structure. The grant holder provides a brief description of the content of the position, against which the applicants are assessed. The description is added to Empty Hire.

Academic assessments must be based on the template below, ensuring that they clearly adhere to the premises for assessment and include a well-reasoned conclusion. Assessments must include:

- Brief presentation of the applicant's CV and academic career.
- Assessment of research-related academic qualifications on the basis of the list of publications and the attached publications (maximum two).
- Assessment of teaching qualifications, if the position includes teaching. In that case, the assessment is based on the submitted teaching portfolio or equivalent documentation.
- Assessment of other qualifications that may be relevant to the position.
- Concluding overall evaluation which clearly concludes whether and states the reasons why the applicant is either *qualified* or *not qualified* for the position in question, based on the points listed above, the criteria for the position, and the indication of academic level in the job structure.

Assessments of postdocs are generally 1/2-1 page.

On the basis of the assessment, the appointment committee sends the head of school a recommendation on whether the candidate should be appointed, taking into account any conditions that may affect the start date.

Appointments of postdocs with prior advertisement

Job advertisements

As a general rule, job advertisements must be written in English and advertised internationally. The application deadline is usually between two and six weeks after the posting.

The grant holder prepares the academic part of the job advertisement according to the school's template for advertisements for postdoc positions and sends the advertisement to the deputy head of school for approval.

The deputy head of school ensures the quality of the advertisement in collaboration with Arts HR, and HR posts the advertisement via AU's e-recruitment system and gives relevant people access to the recruitment process.

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

Appointment committees in connection with advertised positions

The head of school (or the person to whom the task has been delegated) sets up the appointment committee no later than immediately after the application deadline.

The appointment committee consists of the head of department, the grant holder and possibly other relevant academic staff members. As a general rule, the head of department is the chair of the appointment committee. Efforts are made to ensure participation of more than one gender.

On the basis of the assessment, the appointment committee sends the head of school a recommendation on which candidate should be appointed, taking into account any conditions that may affect the start date.

Shortlisting

After the application deadline, applicants are shortlisted, i.e. the most relevant applicants who meet the formal requirements are selected for further academic assessment.

The shortlisting is performed by the appointment committee.

The appointment committee selects, based on the submitted application material, the applicants who best match the qualifications and competences outlined in the advertisement, and these applicants are then shortlisted for an academic assessment.

At the postdoc level, there is no requirement for a minimum number of applicants for shortlisting.

On the condition that the candidates possess the necessary qualifications and competences, the gender diversity requirement also applies to applicants who are shortlisted.

The applicants who are shortlisted for assessment will receive an email from Arts HR informing them that they are on the shortlist, as well as informing them about the composition of the assessment committee and the timeframe for the assessment. When the assessment work is complete, Arts HR will send the individual assessments to each shortlisted applicant.

The applicants who are not shortlisted will receive an email from Arts HR informing them that they are not on the shortlist.

Re-advertising

If it is assessed that a sufficient number of qualified applicants cannot be shortlisted by the time the application deadline expires, the appointment committee may recommend that the position be re-advertised. The decision is made by the head of school or the person to whom the task has been delegated.

Assessment committees in connection with advertised positions

The head of school sets up an assessment committee consisting of two members at least at the level of associate professor from within Aarhus University. The committee does not have to be approved by the Academic Council and the dean. Efforts are made to ensure participation of more than one gender.

As a general rule, the grant holder is the chair of the assessment committee.

Deans, vice-deans and heads of school may not act as members of an assessment committee, as they are part of the management and therefore have the authority to make decisions regarding appointments.

Tasks and obligations of assessment committees

Academic assessments in connection with advertised positions

The purpose of conducting an academic assessment of applicants for postdoc positions is to provide the appointment committee with an impartial, academically sound and carefully considered written basis for selecting applicants for a possible interview and subsequent employment.

Academic assessments based on the specific qualification requirements in the job advertisement and the general qualification requirements regarding the PhD level stipulated in the job structure must:

- contain an academically justified assessment of the qualifications of the individual applicants in relation to the position
- constitute a valid and impartial decision-making basis for decision-makers on the appointment committee. The assessment must be produced in such a manner that the appointment committee does not need to consult the material that has been submitted by the applicants.

The assessment committee may not prioritise the applicants in relation to each other or rank the final individual conclusion.

— Assessments are conducted by the committee jointly. However, the committee may agree to divide the applicants between them, after which draft assessments can be drawn up, discussed and finalised by the entire assessment committee.

If an assessment committee cannot agree as to whether an applicant is qualified or not qualified, the reasons for these differences of opinion must be explained and stated in the assessment.

— Assessments of postdocs are generally 1/2-1 page.

Format of academic assessments

Academic assessments must be based on the template below, ensuring that they clearly adhere to the premises for assessment and include a well-reasoned conclusion.

The committee may not include any material other than that submitted/uploaded by the applicant for assessment before the application deadline. The applicant is responsible for uploading the correct material by the application deadline.

— Recommendations and references may not be included in the assessment.

The assessment committee may not add additional qualification requirements to those stated in the job advertisement and the job structure.

The assessment must be written in English, apart from cases in which all the assessment committee members can read/write Danish and the applicant has written the application in Danish.

Academic assessments must contain the following sections:

- Brief presentation of the applicant's CV and academic career.

- Assessment of research-related academic qualifications on the basis of the list of publications, the attached publications (maximum two) and the attached research plan, if such a plan is required in the job advertisement.
- Assessment of teaching qualifications, if the position includes teaching, cf. the job advertisement. In that case, the assessment is based on the submitted teaching portfolio or equivalent documentation.
- Assessment of other qualifications that may be relevant in relation to the specific job advertisement.
- Concluding overall evaluation which clearly concludes whether and states the reasons why the applicant is either *qualified* or *not qualified* for the position that has been advertised, based on the points listed above, the criteria of the job advertisement, and the indication of academic level in the job structure.

Detailed guidelines

Re. 1. Brief presentation of the applicants and their academic career

The applicant's name, the final academic degree, the year it was awarded and the name of the university that awarded it.

The main features of the academic career: years of previous employment and (when relevant) current employment, and periods of study or research of a certain duration.

Re. 2. Assessment of academic qualifications

The overall academic level of the applicant must be assessed based on the attached academic publications and list of publications.

a. List of publications

The overall production profile must be described and assessed in relation to the list of publications if it contains more than the uploaded publications.

b. Assessment of attached publications

The following information must be provided for each publication: title, year and place of publication, status (published/not published, peer reviewed etc.)

Any statements by co-authors should be mentioned with a view to documenting the contribution made by the applicant to the publication in question.

The academic publications must be assessed on the basis of the academic criteria stated in the job advertisement. All the attached publications must be included in the assessment, but they can be assessed collectively.

c. Research plan/project plan

If the job advertisement requires applicants to submit a research plan/project plan, the assessment must contain a brief evaluation of the plan and its perspectives in relation to the content of the position in question. If the job advertisement states that a research plan is required but no research plan has been provided, this must be stated in the assessment.

d. PhD degree or PhD level

The Danish job structure operates with the concept of PhD level and not just the awarded PhD degree. If the applicant has not earned a PhD degree, the assessment committee will determine whether the PhD level has been achieved based on the attached documentation.

Re. 3. Assessment of teaching qualifications

Teaching qualifications are assessed if it is stated in the job advertisement that teaching is included in the position and that the applicant must attach a teaching portfolio.

Re. 4. Other qualifications

With reference to the wording of the job advertisement, the applicant's other qualifications, such as knowledge exchange with society or language skills, are assessed based on the application, CV and any other attached material.

Ad 5. Concluding overall evaluation

The concluding overall evaluation must summarise the previous sections on research, teaching (if relevant) and other qualifications; and on this basis, there must be a clear conclusion as to whether the applicant is deemed to be qualified or not qualified for the position that has been advertised in relation to the content of the position and qualification level.

The assessment committee's conclusion must be clear and unconditional. Thus, no ranking of the assessment of qualifications may be made.

Further processing of assessments

In collaboration with the head of school or a member of staff appointed by the head of school, the HR partner carries out a legality check of the assessments. If the legality check reveals that the assessments do not comply with the guidelines described in this document, and that consequently they do not provide a satisfactory basis for the decision of the appointment committee, the committee (via the chair) will be asked to supplement and revise the assessments. Any amendments are subject to the approval of the entire assessment committee.

If there is still no adequate decision-making basis despite such revisions, the position cannot be filled.

Informing applicants about the wording of assessments

After final approval, the assessments are sent to the individual applicants. Any comments by applicants regarding their assessments should be sent to Arts HR, who will present them to the chair asking for the committee's response. Arts HR will inform the applicants in question of the committee's response to their comments. The appointment committee will be informed of any amendments.

As a general rule, comments made by applicants do not delay the appointment procedure.

Once the appointment procedure is completed, Arts HR will submit the final rejection to shortlisted and non-shortlisted applicants.

Confidentiality

Under the Danish Public Administration Act (*forvaltningsloven*), members of appointment and assessment committees have a duty of confidentiality with regard to the confidential information to which the task of assessment gives them access. This means that members of the assessment committee may not divulge any information about applicants to anyone who is not part of the recruitment process. Under the Danish Public Administration Act, information concerning the private circumstances of individuals is confidential. The information that a particular individual has applied for a position is confidential.

Pursuant to the Danish Penal Code (*straffeloven*), this duty of confidentiality does *not* cease to apply when the task of assessment for Aarhus University has been concluded.

Conflicts of interest

Aarhus University bases its decisions on the [general rules of the Danish Public Administration Act regarding conflicts of interest](#), which cover family relationships, friendships and particular personal, professional and financial interests which are deemed to be incompatible with the role of assessment committee member for the position in question.

The same may apply if assessors have supervised or co-published with applicants. The issue of conflicts of interest in relation to co-publications will be evaluated by the head of school and Arts HR with due consideration for the degree of co-authorship, the time of publication and the importance attached to the work concerned in the assessment.

The school will investigate the committee members with a view to discovering any conflicts of interest before the assessment committee is set up and approved. If any members of an assessment committee feel that they have a conflict of interest in relation to any applicants, or if they are in any doubt about this, they must inform the school and/or Arts HR, after which the issue of conflict of interest will be evaluated specifically.

When applicants are informed about the composition of their assessment committee, they are entitled to inform the school of any possible conflict of interest among the assessors, who will then be investigated by the head of school and Arts HR. Any assessment committee members with a conflict of interest will be replaced. Anyone with a conflict of interest is not permitted to participate in any part of the appointment process. Violation of the rules on conflict of interest may result in assessments being declared invalid.

During the assessment process, appointment and assessment committee members may not have any contact with applicants regarding issues relating to the assessment. All contact between applicants, appointment committees and assessment committees must go through Arts HR.

Fee for assessment work

The hours of work spent on the task by internal members of the assessment committee will be registered in accordance with the agreement on working hours at the Faculty of Arts and the schools' internally agreed common standard regarding the registration of hours of work for assessment tasks.

After the assessment work has been completed, any external members of the assessment committee will receive an email detailing what they need to do and how, so that Aarhus University can pay the fee for their assessment work.

Legal basis

Arts' guidelines

Guidelines regarding advertising for, assessing and appointing academic staff at the Faculty of Arts

Job structure

The qualification requirements and job content for each job category are stated in the [ministerial order on job structure for academic staff at universities](#) of 11 December 2019

Ministerial order on the appointment of academic staff at universities

The basis of the appointment procedure is the Ministry of Higher Education and Science's ministerial order on the appointment of academic staff at universities no. 242 of 13 March 2012 ([the Appointment Order](#)), which states the current rules governing job advertisements and the form and content of assessments.

Aarhus University

Aarhus University's requirements regarding the composition and impartiality of assessment committees are defined in:

[Guidelines in connection with the appointment of academic staff at Aarhus University](#)

[Norms for recruitment of academic staff to permanent positions](#)

[Guidelines regarding confidentiality and GDPR for appointment, assessment and advisory committees](#)