

Search committees at the Faculty of Arts: Objective and composition of the committee and nature and scope of its work

Approved by the faculty management team on 14 September 2023

1. Objective

The objective of search committees is set out in [Aarhus University's third norm for recruitment of academic staff to permanent positions](#): "Search committees are used in order to ensure that the pool of applicants is highly qualified and gender-diverse" and in the [Action plan for gender equality, diversity and inclusion 2023-25](#): "To ensure a highly qualified applicant pool with excellent credentials and balanced gender representation for permanent academic positions". According to the guidelines for [Shortlisting in connection with the recruitment of academic staff at the Faculty of Arts \(January 2018\)](#), search committees must be used in connection with the appointment of:

- assistant professors
- associate professors
- professors.

According to the [Guidelines regarding advertising for, assessing and appointing academic staff at the Faculty of Arts](#), the head of school decides on (or delegates the task to the head of department) the composition of the search committee and the nature and scope of its work. The composition of the search committee and the nature and scope of its work must be determined in relation to the possibility of meeting the objective: to ensure a sufficiently large, diverse pool of high-quality applicants (external applicants, international applicants and gender diversity). In order to avoid an excessive use of resources, the composition of the search committee and the nature and scope of its work may vary.

The departments should pay constant attention to recruitment possibilities understood in the broadest sense. It would be an advantage if colleagues at the department would consider recruitment possibilities when inviting visiting lecturers, when attending conferences, etc. This knowledge can also be used when discussing appointment plans at the department, and when search committees explore possibilities.

2. Search committee tasks

The tasks of the search committee include:

- Advising on/contributing to job advertisements (the content is based on an agreement between the head of school and the head of department) and exploring/justifying the presumed pool of applicants
- Organising the distribution of advertisements to relevant networks and potential applicants
- Encouraging potential applicants to apply
- Acting as host in connection with any site visits.

3. Composition

In connection with job advertisements, search committees are set up by the head of school/head of department. The practice at Arts is as follows:

- The head of department may be a member.
- The employee representative on the appointment committee can advantageously be a member.
- The chair of the assessment committee should not be a member, but may be a member if there are no other options in the academic area in question.
- As a general rule, members must be found at the department or related departments (including emeritus professors); however, it is possible to recruit external members from Denmark or abroad.
- A balanced gender representation on the committee should be ensured.
- No requirements should be made regarding job level for members of the search committee, in the same way as for the assessment committee; however, members must be assistant professors, associate professors or professors.
- Members of the search committee may not apply for the position.

The number of members may vary; however, there must be at least one academic staff member in addition to the head of department. The head of department must assess the complexity of the task and determine the number of search committee members based on this.

4. Coordinator and contact person

The head of department appoints a coordinator for the search committee. Heads of department can appoint themselves as coordinator. The coordinator may function as the contact person in relation to the job advertisement.

5. Scope of the work (resources for search committees)

If the work is very extensive, the head of department may allocate up to 10 hours to the overall search committee work. The head of department decides how the allocated hours are to be divided between the members of the search committee. The head of department must set an exact starting and finishing time/date for the work, which typically extends over a few weeks. Administrative support is generally not provided for the search committee's work.

6. Nature of the work

According to the guidelines for [Shortlisting in connection with the recruitment of academic staff at the Faculty of Arts](#), "the search committee must actively search for potential national and international candidates – and in this connection focus on talents – within the school's defined academic area, and the search committee must also help advertise the vacant job in relevant forums." The head of department must decide what is meant by *search* in connection with the advertisement in question. It is firstly a matter of establishing that it is possible to ensure a pool of applicants that matches the criteria in the guidelines regarding more qualified applicants, balanced gender representation and external applicants.

The search committee must hold at least one meeting about the job advertisement (together with the head of department if the head of department is not a member) to determine whether the advertisement has been sufficiently distributed or whether a greater effort is needed. A key factor is the search committee's sense of what it takes to ensure a sufficiently large, diverse pool of highly qualified applicants.

Everyone can invite potential candidates to apply for a position. If this is done on behalf of the search committee, there must be consensus on the invitation. It is recommended that standard wording is used, such as the example below in Appendix 1. In this connection, it is important to point out to potential applicants that it is an open call and that you cannot guarantee the outcome.

7. **Statement** (the Rector's Office has been consulted and cannot say whether there will be a fixed form of reporting to AU level)

After the application deadline, the head of department will be asked to submit a brief statement on the search committee's work to the head of school. The statement must be no more than 1/2 page and must be written in bullet points. The purpose of such statements is to provide the head of school with information for the dean in connection with a recommendation for appointment. The head of school forwards the statement to the dean.

Appendix 1 Standard email text for potential applicants (example)

The Department of XX at the School of YY at Aarhus University is currently advertising a position as full professor in ZZ. The search committee has identified you as one of several potential candidates for this open call, and we would be very happy to receive an application from you. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to know more about the position.