SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
AARHUS UNIVERSITET

Guidelines for Assessment Committees

Aarhus BSS

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Please note that this document is a composition of the former documents "Guidelines for assessment committee, School of Business and Social Sciences (November 2012)" and "Guidelines on criteria for assessing academic job applicants, School of Business and Social Sciences, Aarhus University (March 2014)".

This document contains a set of indicative guidelines and criteria regarding the assessment of candidates for academic positions at School of Business and Social Sciences, Aarhus University (Aarhus BSS). They cover all academic positions from the level of Postdoc and beyond, at all departments and associated units of Aarhus BSS.

Academic positions include Postdoc Fellowships, Assistant Professorships, Associate Professorships and Professorships and all positions at these levels, both permanent and fixed-term positions.

The purpose of these guidelines and criteria is to be of use to members of assessment committees, department heads, dean and vice-deans, and others who assess candidates for academic positions and to assist candidates in evaluating their own prospects for obtaining an academic position at Aarhus BSS.

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1. Basic Rules

The appointment procedure is based on Executive Order no. 242 of 13 March 2012 on the Appointment of Academic Staff at Universities (In Danish: Ansættelsesbekendtgørelsen*)*, which states the current rules applying to job advertisements, the composition of assessment committees, and the form and content of assessments.

Qualification requirements and job content for each type of position are stated in the Executive Order on the Job Structure for Academic Staff at Universities 2019 (in Danish: Stillingsstrukturen) and the Circular on Terms of Employment for Academic Staff at Universities 2015 (In Danish: Cirkulære om protokollat om visse ansættelsesvilkår for videnskabeligt personale ved universiteter, 18. september 2015).

Enclosed for the chairman of each assessment committee is a copy of the job advertisement in question along with the Aarhus BSS guidelines on the compulsory use of teaching portfolios, as well as a copy of these guidelines for assessment committees including assessment criteria and a link to the relevant Aarhus BSS policies. Any doubts concerning the basis of the work of an assessment committee must be submitted to the dean through the relevant contact person in Aarhus BSS' HR department as soon as possible upon establishment of the committee.

2. Purpose of the assessment

The assessment committee serves to ensure an impartial and competent assessment of all applicants.

The main task of the assessment committee is to identify candidates who are considered qualified in terms of research and teaching, but also in terms of other academic qualification requirements stated in the job advertisement.

The assessment must document that all applicants have been assessed in an unbiased and competent manner, and the assessment must provide the dean with the necessary information which will ensure that the best qualified candidates are identified and appointed. Each candidate will be informed of his/her own personal assessment, and such individual assessment must be suitable to form part of the dean's final decision on appointment. Such decision must be in accordance with the Danish Public Administration Act (in Danish: Forvaltningsloven).

The assessment must form a complete basis for the dean's decision since s/he may not be a specialist in the field of the vacancy. The assessment must be composed in such a way that it allows the dean to follow the line of argument from premises to conclusion. The assessment must be phrased in a clear and precise manner so it can be read and understood without consulting applications or documents enclosed with applications. Although it is not the task of the committee to prioritise the candidates, it is important to Aarhus BSS that the individual assessments provide the dean with a clear indication of the candidate's standing in relation to the formal qualification requirements through detailed and thorough evaluations. This may be accomplished by supplementing conclusions by phrases such as highly qualified, well qualified, qualified by a wide margin, qualified, just qualified, barely qualified, not qualified, etc.). In the final conclusion, however, it must be clearly stated whether the applicant is qualified or not qualified for the position advertised in terms of research and teaching (see below section 5: Form of assessment).

It is important to note that while satisfaction of the set of criteria outlined below implies that the individual candidate is qualified, it does not imply the offer of a job. The latter always depends on the competition among qualified candidates and is not a decision taken by the assessment committee, but by the dean.

3. Committee responsibilities

The identity of applicants and their assessments are confidential, and the members of the assessment committee must keep confidentiality.

There must be no contact between the members of the assessment committee and the individual applicants in matters of relevance to the assessment. Any contact between the applicant and the assessment committee must take place through the relevant contact person in Aarhus BSS' HR department.

If the committee wishes to allow applicants to submit additional academic material, the chairman will approach the dean through the relevant contact in HR for a decision on this issue. The chairman is responsible for ensuring that deadlines are observed. If a deadline needs to be extended in exceptional circumstances, the chairman will ask the dean for permission to do so through the relevant contact in HR.

The assessment of the committee may either be unanimous or split between a majority and a minority. Any differences of opinion and the reasons for such differences must be stated clearly in the assessment.

The chairman's task is to ensure that the assessment made by the committee fulfills the function and requirements set out in these guidelines. The chairman of the assessment committee is responsible for the work carried out by the committee and for ensuring that the deadline for submission of the assessment is observed.

4. Criteria for assessment

The committee must provide a detailed assessment of each candidate's qualifications based on an overall evaluation of their fulfilment of the following set of criteria relating to research, teaching, and other academic qualifications stated in the advertisement. In particular, the committee must assess current and recent productivity and take into account the number of years at present academic level in order to evaluate each applicant's future potential in terms of research and teaching. Hence, the research qualifications of the applicant must never be measured solely by the sum of total research production to date (such as number of titles) but instead in recent and current research productivity (that is, output per year and taking the quality of the work into account). The committee must consider any duration of leave stated in the application including maternity/paternity leave without research activity, as research activities should be assessed in proportion to the actual time spend on research activities.

Typically, applicants will differ somewhat in their profiles and experience (e.g., length of publication list, breadth and depth of teaching experience, etc.). Hence, the assessment of some candidates may be relatively certain, whereas the assessment of others may be more uncertain. Therefore, every individual assessment must include an indication of this uncertainty. This is important since Aarhus BSS wants to encourage recruitment of senior faculty based predominantly on the candidate's potential and recent productivity rather than only on past performance.

Furthermore, the heterogeneity of the academic fields covered by Aarhus BSS requires that the implementation of these general guidelines respects differences in publication patterns, educational program delivery and funding composition across the variety of academic fields, institutions and associated units.

To guide the committee and prospective applicants in the assessment of qualifications, the academic assessment criteria have been divided into three (A/B/C) categories reflecting their significance at the different levels of academic employment:

- A criteria are very important, and should be considered as (near) necessary conditions.
- B criteria are important.
- C criteria relate to qualifications and experiences which are not specifically required for the type of position in question. However, fulfillment of these counts positively and may to some extent compensate for not fulfilling some of the A and B criteria.

4.1. Positions at the level of Postdoc and Assistant Professor

Along with the specific stipulations stated in the job advertisement, applicants to positions at the level of post doc or Assistant Professor are formally deemed qualified, if they hold a PhD within the academic field covered by the job advertisement. Furthermore, applicants to tenure-track positions are to be assessed on the basis of external research relations (e.g., extended stays and/or employment at other research institutions, invited lectures, joint publications and applications, program/organizing committees, editorial board membership, peer-reviewing, etc.).

4.2. Positions at the level of Associate Professor

Along with the specific stipulations stated in the job advertisement, applicants to positions at the level of Associate Professor are to be assessed on the basis of the following criteria.

Research (output and peer-reviewed publications)

A - Significant body of independent, high-quality research (a substantial part of which should be conducted after completion of PhD).

A - Several publications through high-quality publication outlets with documented peer-review.[1]

B - Some publications through the best publication outlets within the research area/field. [1]

B - Some publications with solid impact on the profession (as measured by scholarly citations, journal impact or otherwise). [1]

C - Breadth of research profile (e.g., demonstrated ability to work in different sub-areas and experience with trans-disciplinary research).

Research (leadership/network/funding)

B - Ability to manage research projects or substantial parts thereof.

C - Experience with co-supervision of PhD students.

B - External research relations (e.g., extended stays and/or employment at other research institutions, invited lectures, joint publications and applications, program/organizing committees, editorial board membership, peer-reviewing, etc.).

B - Ability to attract external funding.[2]

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[1]Publication formats and patterns vary significantly across the academic fields covered by Aarhus BSS. Hence, metrics and quantitative requirements depend on the field. Some fields/departments focus almost exclusively on research publication in scholarly journals, while others may rely significantly on the monograph as the more prestigious outlet. Also, measures of impact on the profession vary significantly across fields. Consequently, departments use field-dependent means to assess the quality of publication. These should be used in conjunction with the present guidelines.

[2]External funding sources vary significantly across the academic fields covered by Aarhus BSS. Hence, the departments use field-dependent means to assess the capacity of applicants to attract funding. These should be used in conjunction with the present guidelines.

Teaching and scholarly outreach

A - Demonstrated ability to deliver high-quality and innovative teaching at Master's and Bachelor level.[3]

A - Demonstrated ability to take course responsibility (curriculum development, maintenance and development of course material, etc.).

B - Successful supervision of Bachelor projects and Master's theses.

C - Public outreach (e.g. popular science lectures/articles/books).

C - Participation in continuing education programs and/or post graduate executive training.

Corporate and public sector collaboration

C - Collaboration with private and/or public organizations or planning and management of consultancy/advisory projects.

C - Membership of expert groups/advisory committees/boards in government agencies, the EU, private companies, etc.

Additional skills

A - Skill requirements explicitly mentioned in the specific job announcement.

C - Experience with management of academic personnel.

C - Experience with department-level university management (e.g. participation in departmental committees).

4.2.1. Tenure track advancement from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor

Candidates are assessed by an overall evaluation of their fulfillment of the set of criteria for assessing associate professors and the assessments should factor in current and recent productivity and take into account number of years at the present academic level.

Promotion to the level of Associate Professor following a tenure review substantively requires fulfillment of the same quality standards pertaining to pedagogical competences acquired and documented research output as any other assessment for an associate professorship. What is specific to a tenure-track position is that the (tenure) criteria have to be pre-announced and should account for the fact that advancement may follow a period of five years, say, at the junior level, rather than 3 years.

4.3. Positions at the level of full Professor

Along with the specific stipulations stated in the job advertisement, applicants to positions at the level of full Professor are to be assessed on the basis of the following criteria.

Research (output and peer-reviewed publications)

A - Significant body of original, independent, high-quality research at the international level after completion of PhD, which shows that the applicant has contributed to developing the academic discipline.

A - Numerous publications through high-quality publication outlets with documented peer-review.[4]

A - Several publications through the best publication outlets within the research area/field.[4]

A - Several publications with solid impact on the profession (as measured by scholarly citations, journal impact or otherwise).[4]

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[3] In addition to the mandatory teaching portfolio, the applicant must submit proof of relevant university-level pedagogical training with the application.

[4] Publication formats and patterns vary significantly across the academic fields covered by Aarhus BSS. Hence, metrics and quantitative requirements depend on field. Some fields/departments focus almost exclusively on research publication in scholarly journals, while others may rely significantly on the monograph as the more prestigious outlet. Also, measures of impact on the profession vary significantly across fields. Consequently, departments use field-dependent means to assess the quality of publication. These should be used in conjunction with the present guidelines.

B - Breadth of research profile (e.g. demonstrated ability to work in different sub-areas and experience with trans-disciplinary research).

Research (leadership/network/funding)

A - Demonstrated ability to provide scientific leadership, inspiration and guidance to research colleagues.
A - Demonstrated ability to manage research projects.
A - Successful supervision of PhD students.
A - External research relations (e.g. extended stays at other research institutions, invited lectures, joint publications and applications, program/organising committees, editorial board membership, peer-reviewing, etc).
B - Experience with academic assessment (e.g. hiring committees and thesis committees).
B - Ability to attract external funding.[5]

Teaching and scholarly outreach

A - Demonstrated ability to deliver high-quality and innovative teaching at PhD, Master's and Bachelor level.[6] (Please refer to our guidelines on Mandatory Teaching Portfolio).
A - Demonstrated ability to take course responsibility (curriculum development, maintenance and development of course material, etc.).
A - Successful supervision of Bachelor projects and Master's theses.
B - Public outreach (e.g. popular science lectures/articles/books).
C - Participation in continuing education programs and/or post graduate executive training.

Corporate and public sector co-operation

B - Collaboration with private and/or public organisations or planning and management of consultancy/advisory projects.
B - Membership of expert groups/advisory committees/boards in government agencies, the EU, private companies, etc.

Additional skills

A - Skill requirements explicitly mentioned in the specific job announcement.
B - Experience with management of academic personnel.
B - Experience with department-level university management (e.g. participation in departmental committees).

4.4. Fixed-term employment at the level of full Professor

Along with the specific stipulations stated in the job advertisement, applicants for fixed-term Professorships must be assessed on the basis of the same criteria as for full Professorships as stated above.

[5]External funding sources vary significantly across the academic fields covered by Aarhus BSS. Hence, the departments use field-dependent means to assess the capacity of applicants to attract funding. These should be used in conjunction with the present guidelines.

[6]In addition to the mandatory teaching portfolio, the applicant must submit proof of relevant university-level pedagogical training with the application.

5. Form of the assessment

The assessment is to be presented to the dean along with the following dimensions.

5.1. Presentation of the applicant

The presentation must contain the applicant's name, nationality, year of birth and academic degrees/final examinations must be stated first, stating the date when the degrees were awarded and the name of the awarding institution.

5.2. Presentation of the applicant's academic career

The presentation must contain main features of the applicant's academic career: Previous appointments and further education, study trips of a certain minimum duration and similar professional activities.

5.3. Assessment of academic qualifications

A list of research contributions is submitted for assessment. The most important work submitted must be assessed. For all relevant work it should be stated whether the work concerned gives credit in relation to the job advertised. Any work not included in the assessment must be stated, and the reason why it has not been included. The form in which any unpublished work is currently available must be stated.

5.4. Assessment of teaching qualifications

Qualifications with regard to teaching (if the position carries a teaching commitment) and communication must be assessed based on the documentation submitted.

Applicants for associate professorships/professorships in particular

It is required that teaching qualifications are assessed.[7] For instance, the assessment must state whether applicants have completed the University's compulsory course in "University education theory for assistant professors and supervisors", and whether applicants who have not been employed as assistant professors at Aarhus University have provided other documentation of teaching competencies at a corresponding level.

5.5. Assessment of other qualifications (including other professional qualification requirements stated in the job advertisement in question)

Other relevant qualifications must be assessed based on the documentation submitted (professional positions of trust, membership of commissions, appointments in non-academic positions providing relevant practical experience etc.).

5.6. Summary and conclusion

The committee's substantiated assessment of whether the applicant is qualified or not qualified for the position advertised in terms of research and teaching (cf. section 4 of the Executive Order on appointments) must be clearly stated.

For applicants who are not qualified for the position in question, the committee needs to briefly state the qualification requirements that have not been met. The assessment of the committee may either be unanimous or split between a majority and a minority. Any differences of opinion and the reasons for such differences must be stated clearly in the assessment.

[7] According to General comments to Job Structure for Academic Staff at Universities 2019 and Guidelines for the use of Teaching Portfolios at Aarhus BSS

5.7. Technical requirements regarding assessment

It is assumed that each applicant has been assessed by the entire committee, but the work of such committee is often based on written contributions from several members. However, the final assessment of the committee must be written in a consistent terminology enabling the dean to compare the professional qualifications of all applicants. In the final editing of its assessment, the committee should, therefore, eliminate any editorial and linguistic inconsistencies which may result from the division of work between the committee members.

The assessment must be phrased in a suitably objective form as a separate document per applicant that can be read without consulting applications or documents enclosed with applications.