

Regulations on the work of the assessment committee, hiring and professional advancement of faculty at the University of Akureyri

These regulations apply to the hiring of *lecturers/specialists, senior lecturers and professors* at the University of Akureyri, and their professional advancement.

These regulations do not apply to the hiring of adjuncts and temporary instructors, whom the Rector hires without an assessment of qualification by an assessment committee.

1. Current laws and regulations on hiring, advancement and assessment of qualifications.

Laws on the rights and duties of government employees No. 70/1996, laws on universities No. 63/2006, laws on the University of Akureyri No. 40/1999 and regulations on the University of Akureyri No. 466/2007 apply to employees of the University of Akureyri.

Articles 19 and 20 of the University of Akureyri's regulations on teaching staff and teaching appointments state the following:

Permanent teaching staff at the University is professors, senior lecturers and lecturers, and they alone are considered by law to hold full-time positions in teaching and research at the University. Also employed at the University are adjuncts, project managers, specialists and temporary instructors.

Only individuals who have graduated from a university or another comparable institution, and have majored in the subject or a subject related to the one they will be teaching, are allowed to be hired as permanent faculty members. Applicants for the positions of Professors, Senior Lecturer and Lecturer should enclose with their application a thorough report on their scientific or academic work, writing, research, teaching, management work, academic record and other jobs.

See laws on the University No. 11 and further regulations which the University Council has based on them, about the composition of the committee and the assessment of applications for the positions of Professor, Senior Lecturer and Lecturer. If the position of Professor, Senior Lecturer or Lecturer is advertised, and the qualifications of more than one applicant are deemed by the committee to be qualified, the Rector shall ask the relevant faculty/faculties to comment on the candidates' suitability before hiring.

An advancement of a faculty member from the position of Lecturer to the position of Senior Lecturer and from Senior Lecturer to Professor is allowed, according to regulations set by the University Council on professional advancement. If the Dean of Faculty accepts the promotion, the University Council is obliged to ensure that applications are heard and processed in accordance with the laws of the University.

The rector determines, after consulting with the Dean of Faculty, how the work duties of individual faculty members are divided between teaching and other work factors, within the limits of current work and benefits contracts, and taking into account laws and regulations on the work duties and rights of teaching staff.

Article 3 of the laws on the University of Akureyri, on the assessment committee and its work states the following:

The Rector shall appoint a three person assessment committee for a two-year term, based on nominations by the University Council and the Minister of Education, for the purpose of evaluating applications for the positions of Professor, Senior Lecturer and Lecturer. The University Council nominates two individuals for the committee, one of which is the Chair. One of the University Council representatives should be employed outside the University. The Minister of Education nominates one individual for the committee. Deputies shall be nominated in the same way.

Only individuals who have graduated from a university at a Masters level can be appointed to the committee.

The Rector shall each time nominate a specialist, recommended by the relevant faculty, to act as a consultant to the committee when it evaluates the applicant's academic work.

The assessment committee shall issue a written statement where it argues whether the scientific value of the applicant's publications and research, and his/her academic career and jobs, indicate that s/he is qualified for the job. No person may be appointed to the position of Professor, Senior Lecturer or Lecturer, unless a majority of the assessment committee has expressed in a written statement that s/he is qualified for it.

The assessment committee should evaluate the qualifications of applicants for the position of Dean of Faculty in the same way as qualifications of applicants for faculty positions are evaluated. Applicants for the position of Dean of Faculty should fulfil general qualification requirements for faculty positions, either in the academic field taught in the faculty in question or in a field very closely related to its main subjects.

Contracts which the University makes with research institutions are allowed to state that employees of partner institutions, who have teaching duties at the University but fulfil their research duties at a partner institution, have a right, or an obligation, to have the assessment committee evaluate their qualifications for the position of Lecturer, Senior Lecturer or Professor at the University.

A person who is deemed to be qualified according to the paragraph here above, shall enjoy comparable rights and fulfil comparable duties to Lecturers, Senior Lecturers and Professors, as applicable, even when employed at another institution, as long as it complies with the laws, regulations and wages and benefits contracts in force at the partner institution. The University Council can set regulations on advancement for employees of partner institutions who have a teaching duty at the university, and complying with regulations on advancement for teachers at the university.

Guest and substitute lecturers working at the University of Akureyri for a longer or shorter period may, for professional and financial reasons, need to gain a qualified status in the position and job title system of university faculty. In such cases, the Rector is authorised to ask the Chair of the assessment committee to determine which job title this person could be given if this was a typical case before the assessment committee. There is

generally no need to assign the whole committee to this task, nor to employ a consultant to review the person's documents.

The University Council is authorized to appoint honorary professors to the University of Akureyri, on the recommendation of the Faculty Meeting. Honorary professors should be well known, approved specialists with an outstanding career in a particular sector of society. They should fulfil general qualification requirements for university lecturers in the assessment of the Chair of the committee and work as temporary lecturers in the relevant faculty. The rights and duties of academic professors do not apply to honorary professors.

<[Amended with article 1 of regulations No. 1358/2007](#)>

2. New hires to academic posts

Applications for new positions or advancements should be submitted to the Rector, who confirms the receipt of the applications in a letter to the applicants. When the application deadline for a position has passed, all applicants' names are made public. The Rector puts the Project Manager of Research, the University of Akureyri, in charge of the processing of the applications and communication with the applicants and the assessment committee, as noted in article 6, below.

Applicants should enclose with their application a thorough report on any science work they have done, as well as writing, development projects, art works, design works and research, as well as a record of their education and previous jobs. Enclosed with the application should be copies of scientific publications and essays, published or unpublished, and photographs or descriptions of artworks and design works, which the applicants wish to be included in the assessment. When there is more than one author to a work of writing, design work or art work, the applicant should explain his/her part in the work. The application also needs to contain information on which projects the applicants have worked on, what they are currently working on, and what their plans are, if hired. The applicants are also expected to enclose references on their teaching and management work, as applicable. An advertisement for a position can place a limit on the maximum number of copies of documents from each applicant, for instance by requesting that the applicants submit a certain maximum number of copies of the science publications which they themselves consider to be the most important.

3. Advancement in an academic job

As stated in Article 3 of laws on the University of Akureyri No. 40/1999 and Article 20 of regulations on the University of Akureyri, it is allowable to promote, without an advertisement, a Lecturer from a Lecturer position to a Senior Lecturer position, and a Senior Lecturer to the position of Professor. A request for such advancement should be treated in the same way as applications for new positions, i.e. they should go before an assessment committee before a final decision is made. The final decision on advancement is made by the Rector, but no one may be promoted to the position of Professor or Senior Lecturer unless a majority of the committee considers the person to be qualified for the position.

The aim of the University's advancement system is to encourage academic staff to be active and successful in their work, thereby increasing the quality of teaching and research at the University of Akureyri. Advancement is based on a professional assessment of performance and on success in research, teaching and management for the University of Akureyri. Employees are expected to take the initiative in their own professional advancement.

3.1 Applications for advancement

An applicant applying for advancement submits an application, with a written statement, to the Dean of the relevant faculty. The statement should explain how research activity, teaching, management, and other comparable work for the University is sufficient for submitting the application to the University's assessment committee. If the Dean accepts the application, he will forward application to the Rector, for a formal review.

When the committee has reached an opinion, the Rector assesses whether the requested advancement should be granted, taking into account the opinion of the committee. If the Rector reaches the conclusion that it is not right to grant the requested advancement, s/he must give reasons for his/her conclusion.

The University Council can set regulations stating that applicants must have been employed for a certain minimum number of years at the University of Akureyri before they can apply for advancement to the position of Senior Lecturer or Professor. Such regulations would supplement the provisions on minimum number of points, listed in the next article.

3.2 Minimum number of points for each work factor when hiring new staff and assessing advancement.

This system is based on the traditional division of work factors into research, teaching and management. The points in Table 1 are based on the point assessment system of the wage and benefits committee and the system used based on the institutional contract between the University of Akureyri and the Association of University Teachers in Akureyri.

The assessment committee can in special circumstances increase or decrease the requirements if it so seems fit. This includes circumstances mentioned in the provision on the University's emphasis on good connections with local businesses in Article 5.3. Other allowable exemptions from regulations on minimum research level include cases where a person has held the position of Dean of Faculty or when high management demands, including demands for consolidation of research within their own Faculty, have decreased the person's opportunities for conducting his/her own research. If the committee's assessment deviates greatly from the minimum number of points for each work factor for lecturers and specialists listed in these regulations, the committee will need to give arguments for it, as it constitutes a deviation from a main rule.

The assessment committee must make higher demands on applications for advancement to the position of Professor than on applications for other jobs. Applicants for

advancement to the position of Professor should be active in research and have shown considerable skill and initiative in scientific work, in accordance with article 5.3.

Table 1

Minimum points for each work factor for university teachers.

	Research	Teaching	Management, service, other	Difference	Total
Lecturer/Specialist	30	-	-	0	30
Senior Lecturer	130	20	-	50	200
Professor	270	50	-	80	400

4. The role of the assessment committee at the University of Akureyri

A three-person assessment committee, which the Rector appoints for two years at a time in compliance with article 3 of laws No. 40/1999, operates at the University of Akureyri, to evaluate applicants' qualifications for the positions of Professor, Senior Lecturer or Lecturer/Specialist. The Rector should, after consulting with the Dean of Faculty nominate external advisors in each case, who will advise the committee when the academic work of applicants is evaluated. In special circumstances it is permissible to appoint more than one external advisor.

The assessment committee handles both new hires and promotions. The regulations and instructions presented in this chapter therefore apply to both, unless otherwise stated.

The assessment committee should assess each applicant in such a way that it is unambiguous whether it judges the applicant to be qualified or not qualified to perform the job in question. The committee assesses whether the education and other criteria of the applicant fit acceptably within the parameters defined in the advertisement. The committee's report should contain arguments for its verdict on the applicant's qualifications, as well as the information which the committee considers helpful for the Rector in his final decision on hiring and advancement. If there is disagreement in the committee, separate votes should be cast for each applicant and each committee member must cast a vote. The minority is given an opportunity to give its opinion in a special report. If an applicant is deemed to be unqualified, the committee must explain the reasons for that conclusion in detail, but apart from this, the report does not need to be as thorough as for those who are deemed to be qualified.

If the committee considers it likely that the applicant meets the requirements for a more senior position than the one currently hired for, this should be mentioned in the committee report, but does not need to be supported by arguments in the same way as the committee report on the position currently available. The committee should not arrange qualified applicants in preferential order for the job in question, unless the Rector has specifically requested this.

At the start of the committee's report, the committee should explain the criteria, data and references it has used to assess the applicants, and its assessment procedures. The report

should contain the bibliographies/portfolio list of the applicants, which they submitted with their applications, and a statement on their education and employment history.

The committee is allowed to request additional documents from the applicants. Applicants should be treated equally in this respect.

The committee should reach its conclusion as quickly as possible and should generally have completed its work within two months after the nomination of an external advisor.

When the committee has completed its work, it should return the application documents to the Project Manager of Research, who sends the documents to the University's Records' Manager for archiving.

5. Assessment of an applicant's qualifications

Below are descriptions of criteria which the assessment committee needs to keep in mind when assessing an applicant's qualifications. These criteria usually apply both to new hires and advancement. In a few places however, a distinction is made between the two, particularly regarding assessment of teaching.

5.1 Criteria

Article 1 of the laws on the University of Akureyri states: *The University of Akureyri is a scientific education and research institution. It provides education for its students to work independently on scientific projects and to hold positions of responsibility in the job market, in particular in connection with the fishing industry, business, education and health. The University is authorized to provide post-graduate education and continuing education in the academic subjects which are practised in its faculties.*

This first article of the laws on the University of Akureyri defines its role as a scientific education and research institution. The University should focus on teaching and research, vocational training and research-based postgraduate education. The assessment committee should keep this main goal of the University of Akureyri in mind when evaluating the qualifications of university teachers.

The committee should also keep in mind that the job of teachers at the University of Akureyri consists of *research, teaching and management*. Each of these work factors will later be explained separately. A positive verdict on an applicant's qualifications in particular areas of the assessment does not make up for a negative verdict in other areas.

The committee has access to and can refer to the point system which is used to determine the salaries of individual teachers and other academic staff at the University of Akureyri.

5.2 Education

As stated in Article 7 of the Laws on Universities No. 63/2006, teachers at a university should have completed a Master's degree at least, or have an equivalent knowledge and experience, in the opinion of the assessment committee.

An applicant for a Senior Lecturer position should generally have completed a PhD degree or a comparable university education, which consists in great part of training for independent research work. The committee can however treat other types of study as equivalent, e.g. in art subjects.

An applicant for the position of Professor should generally have completed a PhD degree or an equivalent university degree, which demands a high level of independent research work. Independent research work can be evaluated as equivalent to a PhD degree, if the applicant has completed an extensive research project or a group of linked projects which show a solid grasp of the methods of the relevant subject and a substantial knowledge of it. It should be a requirement that the results of such research have been published by recognised publishers.

5.3 Research

In assessing research and development projects, an emphasis should be on their scientific value. Attention should be paid to their originality and independence from other research and written material, treatment of sources and work methods, innovation and usefulness. It is also possible to take into account ongoing research work, even if the results are not yet available, if the applicant describes the nature and scope of the work and explains its status.

Graduation projects in university studies (Cand. Mag. or Masters and PhD dissertations) will normally be considered for the assessment of research and development projects. The same goes for published works, academic works, printed or photocopied, publications on development projects, published course material, peer-reviewed articles in academic journals and books (collections of articles), Icelandic and international, as well as articles in other magazines and books, academic publications and reviews. In addition diagnostic tools, tests and other material created for the practical use of professionals in the field. Also translations from other languages, works on video and audiotape, and original or adapted computer programs. Unpublished works can qualify; for instance academic lectures which have not been published.

When evaluating artistic creation, the emphasis should be on whether the submitted works meet requirements for artistic ambition, originality and workmanship, showing the author's command of and skill in this area.

When assessing design projects, the emphasis should be on the value of the works, their originality and independence from other works; handling of sources and work methods, innovation and functionality.

In the field of art, one should count works like public performances and exhibitions/curatorship, submitted objects or descriptions thereof. Depending on the circumstances, research and work methods, as well as the author's originality and individuality should be taken into account.

In fields which rely on complex movement skills or creative expression, as in theatrical expression, instrument playing, dance or sports, practical experience, dedication and skill should be considered, among other things.

When assessing an applicant's research contribution, it is natural that the assessment committee takes into account how well it relates to the University's goals (see article 1 of the laws on the University of Akureyri No. 40/1999). When evaluating research, one may count management work which falls under the applicant's specialty, e.g. management and co-ordination of long term research projects, planning and management of academic conferences, editing of professional journals and training work.

The University of Akureyri puts a great emphasis on close connections to local businesses and its immediate environment. The assessment committee is therefore allowed to consider teaching and management experience gathered by the applicant, and other jobs outside of University institutions, in so far as they can be useful in the job applied for. In particular, initiative and innovation in previous jobs, which acts as a research equivalent, should be counted in the applicants favour.

If the applicant has collaborated with others on research projects, art creation, design and development projects or the creation of course material, and it is clearly stated in a work of writing or an application what the applicant's role was, information on this should be gathered from trusted sources, and the applicant's role assessed accordingly. Senior Lecturers and Professors should prove unequivocally their ability for independent work in the production of new knowledge. It should be valued highly if they have been successful in obtaining grants from Icelandic or foreign sources, for research or development projects. Applicants for professorships must be active in their chosen field, and have shown considerable skill and initiative in scientific work or the field of artistic creation.

In addition to the general provisions on minimum requirements and assessment of work factors already listed, the assessment committee should base their assessment on the requirements which are made for applicants for comparable jobs in accredited scientific institutions in Iceland and abroad.

5.4 Teaching

When evaluating teaching, the emphasis should be on the applicant's qualifications for teaching in the relevant specialisation, so that the students will benefit as much as possible.

New Hires. The applicant should submit along with his application a statement explaining which area of the relevant field s/he wishes to focus on, what his main role is, what strategies s/he plans to use and how s/he plans to assess his/her own results and those of his/her students. If the applicant has teaching experience at a university level and/or other school levels, s/he should also submit a statement thereof, along with other documents relating to his/her teaching experience. The same factors should be evaluated as in the case of advancement.

Advancement. The applicant's teaching career should be assessed as well as possible and how much care s/he has put into his/her teaching work, such as by writing teaching material and instructions, using varied and innovative teaching methods, and seeking to motivate students to use independent and academic work methods or to take on team

projects, when applicable. Supervision of and initiative in planning academic subjects and courses, as well as promotion of new developments and innovations in the applicant's teaching field should also be assessed. Collaborations with foreign institutions and specialists, and links to Icelandic institutions should also be included in the assessments. Other factors to be considered are supervision of students' final projects, personal guidance and assistance.

An evaluation of the teaching factor can be based on a statement from the faculty, department, or the students, and a professional assessment of the teaching, if possible.

The assessment committee is permitted to use data which has been collected in connection with teaching assessment by the University of Akureyri.

5.5 Management

When assessing management, an emphasis should be placed on the applicant's initiative and leadership skills, skills in independent organization and planning, and working with others on administrative projects.

Of the three work factors – teaching, research and management – the last one usually weighs least. It should also be noted that management can not always be clearly distinguished from research and teaching. Therefore it can sometimes be appropriate to evaluate this work factor as a part of the other two, whilst taking care not to count it twice.

The same applies when assessing management as when assessing teaching, in that the applicant's work experience mostly determines what can be assessed and how the assessment is carried out. Thus the status of an applicant who has recently completed a degree from a university can be quite different from the status of someone who has experience of working in a university or in another professional field. It should therefore be assumed, when hiring for a new position, that management experience is generally a bonus for an applicant, but is not a prerequisite for him/her getting the position.

The factors which will be assessed can be divided into two parts:

a) *Management and planning experience.* These are factors the applicant can verify with data which can be assessed: (1) Planning of independent or combined courses. (2) Management material which the applicant has written him/herself or had a part in writing (statements, resolutions, proposals, outlines of rules or regulations etc.) (3) Participation on committees which the applicant has been voted into or appointed to. (4) Participation on boards and councils with decision-making authority, both in Iceland and abroad. (5) Participation in science and academic organisations. (6) Other general experience of management work.

b) *Personal qualities which are important for management and communication skills.* Documents of the kind listed here above give a picture of the applicant's management skills; they are simultaneously a testament to his/her diligence and ambition in the area and the reputation s/he has earned. Presumably, the opinion of others is shaped very much by particular aspects of the applicant's personality, such as a sense of responsibility,

leadership skills, flexibility in interpersonal relations, organizational skills and an ability to think on ones feet. Statements from the applicant's supervisors and subordinates can therefore be very useful in this assessment.

It is vital that the information the evaluators receive on the applicant's management abilities is as comprehensive as possible. This must be noted in the job advertisements themselves. It is also preferable that an applicant who has some work experience names a referee (e.g. a supervisor in an institution, faculty or department), or arranges for the referee to send the references directly to the Rector. Likewise, it is preferable that an applicant who has recently completed his/her studies obtains references from a teacher who knows the applicant well from his/her post-graduate studies.

5.6 Other work

The point of evaluating an applicant's work other than research, teaching and management in the relevant academic field, is to assess the applicant's professional qualifications from as many sides as possible. This means assessing work which falls outside the specialisation specified in the advertisement, but which requires a comparable skill set, such as independent writing, reviews, radio lectures, radio or television programs, other media work, book and magazine editing, public relations or active collaboration with a number of organizations or individuals in Iceland or other countries, conference management, management of associations, course management, assessment committee work, development work, consultancy work for institutions or companies, independent work as a specialist in another academic field, etc.

Any work which does not strictly fall inside the advertised field is not crucial to the qualifications assessment. Assessment of those jobs can not detract from the assessment of innovation, teaching or management in the advertised specialisation. This assessment gives first and foremost additional information about the applicant's professional qualifications.

6. Handling of the assessment committee's report and case processing

The assessment committee report, along with the application documents and statements the committee has acquired, should be delivered to the Project Manager of Research, dated and signed by all committee members. The Project Manager forwards the report to the Rector. If the Rector finds it to be in any way faulty, or finds the committee's work unsatisfactory, s/he may return the committee's report to the committee. An assessment committee's report is considered to be faulty if it does not comply with laws and regulations, statements about the applicants and argumentations are incomplete, important information is missing, or there are other obvious faults. The assessment committee is obliged to respond to the Rector's comments.

The Project Manager of Research should send the entire assessment committee's report to each applicant, unless the Rector thinks that the parties' access to the data should be restricted, in accordance with Article 17 of the Administrative Procedures Act No. 37/1993. The Project Manager of Research offers the applicants a chance to comment on the report in writing, before a decision it made on the hiring. If comments are received

from applicants, these should be submitted to the committee for review. The committee is obliged to respond to such comments.

Application documents, the assessment committee's report and other documents connected to the work of the committee, should be treated as confidential.

The Rector gives the Project Manager authority to co-ordinate formal correspondence with applicants and the assessment committee, as already stated in these regulations.

7. Entry into force

These regulations are based on Articles 2 and 3 of the laws on the University of Akureyri No. 40/1999 and regulations for the University No. 466/2007. These regulations will enter into force immediately and simultaneously regulations on the same issue No. 782/2005 will become void.

The University of Akureyri, 3 December, 2007

Þorsteinn Gunnarsson
Rector

Sólveig Ása Árnadóttir
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