

# ÅBO AKADEMI UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS ON PERSONNEL

Approved by the Åbo Akademi University Board on 17 August 2017, revised on 24 January 2019

## GENERAL PROVISIONS

### **Article 1 Scope of application**

These University Regulations on Personnel outline the principles for recruiting personnel at Åbo Akademi University (ÅAU) as well as the general qualification requirements for different personnel categories. Specific qualification and competence requirements for each position will be determined and set out prior to the initiation of the recruitment process. Provisions concerning the qualification requirements for personnel at Vasa Teacher Training School are given in the currently valid Rules of Procedure for Vasa Teacher Training School.

### **Article 2 Employment relationship of the personnel**

The Universities Act (Universitetslag 558/2009), Sections 31–32, contains provisions regarding the personnel structure and employment relationships of the personnel at universities. According to the Act, a university has professors and other teaching and research personnel, as well as personnel to execute other tasks. At ÅAU, the employment relationship of the personnel is based on a contract of employment. Employment terms and conditions are in compliance with the statutory provisions and those agreed upon in collective agreements and employment contracts. ÅAU advances equal opportunities and gender equality in recruiting and employment.

### **Article 3 Recruiting procedure**

In compliance with the Universities Act, Section 17, the Rector decides on the employment and dismissal of personnel. Only those bodies or persons that the Rector has delegated the right of decision in a recruitment matter may take decisions related to employment.

Any decision of recruitment shall derive from the relevant unit's demand for new or additional competence. In this context, the strategy, personnel plan and financial circumstances of the relevant profit centre unit shall be taken into consideration.

As a rule, all vacancies are announced publicly. An individual person can be hired without the position being announced vacant, if the employment in question is for a maximum period of one year and the task calls for immediate recruitment and there is a person with suitable competence and expertise available. Moreover, it is possible to employ a person without the position being announced openly when it comes to specific tasks within a research project.

As prescribed in the Employment Contracts Act (Arbetsavtalslag 55/2001), the duty to offer work for individuals who are laid-off, part-time employed or dismissed on financial and production-related grounds (Chapter 7, section 3) shall be observed in recruitment processes.

The Personnel Services unit is responsible for advertising vacancies and providing support in the recruitment process. Recruitment processes are supported by specifically appointed recruitment committees in compliance with the instructions of these Regulations. Each recruitment committee shall have both female and male members.

Before initiating a recruitment process, it is necessary to draw up a job description to define the tasks and the specific qualification requirements and any other terms and conditions related to the job in question.

Employment contracts are made in writing. A trial period is usually agreed on, as applicable, in accordance with the Employment Contracts Act, Chapter 1, Section 4.

According to the Employment Contracts Act, Chapter 1, Section 3, an employment contract is permanent, that is, valid until further notice unless it has, for a justified reason, been made for a fixed term. Justified reasons for a fixed-term employment contract include, for example, the following:

- Substitute assignment
- Practical training
- Management of a vacant position during the recruitment process
- Work related to one's own undergraduate/graduate studies
- Work related to one's own postgraduate education
- Employments within the 4-level career structure for researchers and teachers
- Time-limited projects
- Academy of Finland researchers and professors
- Employee's own request
- Non-established activities.

#### **Article 4 Titles**

All titles that are used for different positions should adequately and consistently describe the work tasks. For teaching and research personnel, as a rule, only those titles that are given in these Regulations should be used.

#### **Article 5 Employment structure for research and teaching personnel**

At Åbo Akademi University, an employment structure with four levels is applicable to researchers and teachers.

- Level 1: Doctoral student, research assistant
- Level 2: University teacher, post-doctoral researcher, project researcher
- Level 3: Senior lecturer, associate professor, university researcher, special researcher, research director
- Level 4: Professor, research professor, visiting professor, Professor of Practice

University teachers, senior lecturers and professors are usually employed on a permanent basis. Doctoral students, post-doctoral researchers and university researchers are employed for a fixed term. In principle, doctoral students are employed for a period of 4 years, post-doctoral researchers for 3 years and university researchers for 4 years. In addition, the employment of doctoral students can be extended on the basis of a maternity, paternity or parental leave, military or civil service, or other good reason.

For teaching and research personnel, internal advancement from one level to another is possible, if the field of research and education in question is considered by the Faculty Council to be of strategic value and financially feasible. For the assessment of whether the applicant meets the qualification requirements, the Dean appoints an evaluation committee, the composition of which corresponds to the recruitment committees appointed for the level and position intended by the advancement.

It is also possible to move between different categories of positions at the same level (for example, from a teaching-intensive position to a research-intensive one).

## **RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS, RESEARCHERS AND TEACHERS**

### **Article 6 General qualification requirements**

The personnel to be hired shall have such an education and experience as is required for the successful execution of the relevant tasks and duties. Competence requirements shall set out the required scientific and pedagogical skills, as well the expectations concerning collaboration with the surrounding society, across all categories of research and teaching personnel.

Requirements concerning the language proficiency of teachers at ÅAU are prescribed in Section 78 of the Universities Act and in the Guideline for proficiency in Swedish and Finnish required of teachers at the Åbo Akademi University.

#### **1. Scientific competence**

The scientific competence requirements for doctoral students, teachers and researchers are prescribed below. For the assessment of scientific competence, the applicant's achievements in terms of research results will be evaluated with consideration to the time available for research since taking the Doctor's degree.

## **2. Pedagogical competence**

Provisions concerning pedagogical competence and its assessment are given in the currently valid Rector's decision on the pedagogical competence of teachers and researchers at Åbo Akademi University.

## **3. Leadership**

If the job involves management of a unit or activities, the requirements include knowledge of the relevant field, as well as leadership and co-operation skills.

### **Article 7 Doctoral student, research assistant (Level 1)**

Employment as a doctoral student requires that the person in question has a higher university degree (Master's degree) and has been accepted to a postgraduate education programme at ÅAU. When recruiting doctoral students, the applicants are assessed on the basis of their study achievements, research plan and possible results of research in the relevant field or related subjects.

An agreement is made with the doctoral students concerning their supervision and studies. It is possible to terminate the employment if the doctoral student fails to comply with the supervision and study agreement. Moreover, the doctoral students' work tasks are defined in an annual work plan.

Staff members involved in project research without the work being linked with their own postgraduate education are entitled **research assistants**.

### **Article 8 Post-doctoral researcher, project researcher (Level 2)**

The tasks of a post-doctoral researcher are comprised primarily of research intended to deepen and expand the relevant field of research. Post-doctoral researchers are usually required to contribute to teaching and supervision, dedicating one third of their working hours to these duties. The tasks and duties are defined in an annual work plan. A post-doctoral researcher is required to hold a Doctor's degree. As a rule, the time elapsed since taking the Doctor's degree should not exceed four years.

When assessing the applicant's scientific competence, the presented research plan and the applicant's capacity to conduct research as planned, as well as prior achieved research results, among other aspects, will be taken into consideration. Apart from scientific merits, pedagogical competence is required as well. For the purpose of evaluating the applicant's merits, the Dean may appoint a recruitment committee. In the recruitment committee, at least one of the members shall represent the subject and one the study programme in question.

A staff member with a Doctor's degree who is involved in project research can be given the title **project researcher**.

### **Article 9 University teacher (Level 2)**

The tasks of a university teacher are comprised of teaching and supervision at all levels of education. The university teacher may be provided with an opportunity to conduct research for a maximum of one third of the working hours. The tasks and duties are defined in an annual work plan.

A university teacher is required to have a Doctor's degree in the subject he or she is teaching or a closely related discipline, as well as pedagogical competence. A higher university degree (Master's degree) may be sufficient, if the teaching is of such nature that a Doctor's degree is not deemed as necessary. A university teacher without a Doctor's degree can only be engaged in teaching undergraduate/graduate students. For the purpose of evaluating the applicant's merits for a permanent position, the Dean appoints a recruitment committee. In the recruitment committee, at least one of the members shall represent the subject and one the study programme in question.

### **Article 10 University researcher, special researcher, research director (Level 3)**

A university researcher's tasks include conducting independent research, leading research projects, raising funding for research, as well as teaching and supervision. A university researcher may use one third of his or her working hours to contribute to teaching and supervision, unless project activities require dedication to other work tasks. The tasks and duties are defined in an annual work plan.

A university researcher is required to have a Doctor's degree, solid experience in research and pedagogical competence. As a rule, experience in international research activities is required. For the purpose of evaluating the applicant's merits for a permanent position, the Dean appoints a recruitment committee. Among the members of the recruitment committee, at least one must represent the subject in question and one must be an external expert.

It is possible to use the title of **special researcher** for limited projects, and the title **research director** can be used for a person heading a major research project or institute. The qualification requirements are the same as for university researchers.

### **Article 11 Senior lecturer, associate professor (Level 3)**

A senior lecturer's tasks include teaching and supervision as well as examination of theses at all levels of education. Moreover, the work includes independent practice of scientific research. The senior lecturers contribute to the continuing efforts to develop and evaluate the relevant field of education. Two thirds of working hours shall be dedicated to education, supervision and other duties. One third of the working hours are reserved for research. The tasks and duties are defined in an annual work plan.

A senior lecturer is required to have a Doctor's degree and research merits that correspond to the scientific merits of a 'Docent', as well as pedagogical competence. For the purpose of evaluating the applicant's merits for a permanent position, the Dean appoints a recruitment committee. Among the

members of the recruitment committee, at least one must represent the subject and one the study programme in question, and one must be an external expert.

#### **Article 12 Professor, research professor (Level 4)**

A professor's tasks include scientific research and the provision of research-based education. A professor's tasks also include leading and developing research and teaching activities, raising funding for research and participating in national and international co-operation within one's field of responsibility. The tasks and duties are defined in an annual work plan.

In addition to a Doctor's degree, professors are required to have solid scientific competence together with pedagogical competence, ability to lead research projects and raise funding for research, experience in international research and leadership skills.

The ÅAU Board decides on the recruitment of new professors or research professors as well as the establishment of new professorships, upon the proposal of the Faculty Council or the Rector.

The Rector confirms the statements proposed by the Faculty Council for individual professorships. The field of science and focus are defined in the statement for a professorship. It also specifies the competence and suitability expectations as well as the recruiting procedure for the professorship.

For preparing the recruiting of a professor, the Dean will appoint a recruitment committee. The members of the recruitment committee shall include a minimum of two professors, of whom at least one comes from another faculty or other university, as well as one member who represents the study programme. The Dean, or another member of the committee as appointed by the Dean, serves as the Chair of the committee.

The committee's tasks include preparing a statement for the professorship, proposing experts and issuing statements concerning the recruitment of a professor. The recruitment committee selects the applicants whose applications will be forwarded to the experts for competence assessment. The committee is responsible for providing the experts with clear instructions concerning their assignment as experts and the overall recruitment process. The experts submit their statements to the recruitment committee. The recruitment committee is also tasked with interviewing and ranking those applicants who are deemed as having the best qualifications for managing the professorship.

Upon a proposal by the Faculty Council, the Rector may invite a merited person to serve as a professor or research professor, if the person has undisputed competence qualifications for the professorship. Any proposal to invite a professor shall be specifically motivated. The employment decision shall be based on, at least, two expert statements, as stipulated in the Universities Act, Section 33.

The Rector may hire **research professors** on Level 4. A research professor primarily conducts research or leads research projects.

According to the Universities Act, Section 33, a university may assign a person employed at the university the right to use the title of Professor. At ÅAU, the main principle is that the title of Professor is linked with the post of a professor. In the presence of special reasons, the ÅAU Board

may, upon the proposal of the Faculty Council, give other members of the ÅAU staff the right to use the title of Professor for a fixed period. The title calls for undisputed competence as a professor and extensive scientific leadership experience linked with the tasks and duties presented in the proposal.

#### **Article 13 Visiting professor, Professor of Practice (Level 4)**

A person with undisputed competence as a professor can be invited to serve as a visiting professor with limited expert tasks. The employment is for a fixed term and accounts for no more than 20% of an ordinary employment. The Rector may, upon the proposal of the Faculty Council, hire a visiting professor.

Visiting professors are recruited for certain limited expert tasks, while also supporting the teaching and research activities within the subject in question. The tasks and duties are defined in detail in a job description, and an annual work plan is used for monitoring purposes.

The Rector may, upon the proposal of the Faculty Council, hire a Professor of Practice. In addition to a Doctor's degree, a Professor of Practice is required to have professional experience of, at least, five years in a field of business, public administration or the third sector that is relevant to instruction. The employment is for a fixed term and accounts for no more than 20% of an ordinary employment. Further provisions for appointment are given in the regulations approved by the Rector.

#### **Article 14 Tenure track career system**

At Åbo Akademi University, the tenure track career system is used to complement the four-level employment structure for research and teaching personnel. A tenure track position offers the recruited individual an opportunity for permanent employment and career advancement up to a professorship within the scientific discipline in question.

The ÅAU Board decides on tenure track recruitment upon the proposal of the Faculty Council or the Rector. The tenure track positions are filled through an open, international recruitment process. The scientific discipline is determined so as to ensure a sufficient number of applicants. The Rector confirms the statement for tenure track recruitments upon the proposal of the Faculty Council.

The preparations for tenure track positions are implemented according to the same principles and practices as the preparations for recruiting professors, as defined in 12 § of these Regulations.

The idea is that the recruited individual shall have the ability to advance through the tenure track career system all the way to the highest level, which is also considered in the employment decision.

The person to be hired may, depending on his or her experience and competence, be positioned on any of the three tenure track levels: Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor. Based on the recruitment committee's statement, the Faculty Council issues an assessment as to the level on which the person should be positioned.

The ÅAU agrees to offer the tenure track researcher the opportunity to advance to the next level by setting clear-cut targets for each stage. Any decision on potential advancement to the next level will be made within an agreed timeframe, thus enabling the researchers in the tenure track system to

evaluate and plan their career. The evaluation process is initiated a minimum of one year before the fixed-term employment contract ends.

The Dean decides on the general and specific targets for each stage of the tenure track within two months from the start of the employment.

Tenure track researchers are usually required to contribute to teaching and supervision, dedicating one third of their working hours to these duties.

### **Tenure track level 1: Assistant Professor**

Assistant Professors (tenure track) have the same qualification requirements as the post-doctoral researchers in the four-level employment structure. Assistant Professors (tenure track) can be employed for a period of 3 years with an optional extension of 2 years.

Upon a successful evaluation, an Assistant Professor (tenure track) will advance to the next level. Alternatively, the employment term can be extended by 2 years. The evaluation of the scientific and pedagogical merits for advancement or extension is drawn up by an evaluation committee, which is appointed by the Dean. The members of the evaluation committee shall include a minimum of two professors, of whom at least one comes from another faculty or other university, as well as one member who represents the study programme. The Dean, or another member of the committee as appointed by the Dean, serves as the Chair of the committee. The decision on advancement or extending the employment by 2 years is taken by the Rector upon the proposal of the evaluation committee.

### **Tenure track level 2: Associate Professor**

Associate Professors (tenure track) are required to have a Doctor's degree, solid experience in research, the potential to lead research groups and raise funding for research, as well as experience in international research. Moreover, pedagogical competence is required. For the assessment of the applicant's merits, the achievements in terms of research results will be evaluated with consideration to the time available for research since taking the Doctor's degree.

Associate Professors (tenure track) can be employed for a period of 4 years with a possible extension of 2 years.

Successful evaluation and undeniably established competence as professor facilitate advancement to the next level. Alternatively, the employment term can be extended by 2 years. For the purpose of assessing the competence as professor or possible two-year extension of employment as Associate Professor (tenure track), the Dean will appoint an evaluation committee. The members of the evaluation committee shall include a minimum of two professors, of whom at least one comes from another faculty or other university, as well as one member who represents the study programme. The Dean, or another member of the committee as appointed by the Dean, serves as the Chair of the committee. The evaluation committee's task is to obtain, from at least two experts, statements concerning the Associate Professor's (tenure track) qualifications and merits. The decision on advancement or extending the employment is taken by the Rector upon the proposal of the evaluation committee.

### **Tenure track level 3: Professor**

A Professor is employed with a permanent employment contract.

## **RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNICAL PERSONNEL**

### **Article 15 Administrative, technical and library personnel**

The body or person that decides on the hiring of administrative, technical and library personnel shall determine the relevant titles and qualification requirements and also decide on the job description prior to initiating a recruitment process. For tasks requiring special expertise, a higher university degree (Master's degree) is usually required. For positions and tasks involving managerial responsibilities, a higher university degree (Master's degree) as well as leadership skills are usually required.

Individuals employed to assist with research and teaching serve as research assistants or course assistants, and they are included in the administrative and technical personnel. Project coordinators are also included among administrative and technical personnel.

Requirements concerning the language proficiency of other personnel are prescribed in the Guideline for language skills for other personnel.

## **VALIDITY AND TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS**

### **Article 16 Entry into force and transitional provisions**

These University Regulations on Personnel are effective as of 1 February 2019 and are applicable to employments starting after the first day of its validity.