

Date: 25 February 2022

Case no.:

Report from Working Group – Recruiting for Academic Positions

Introduction

Employees are the most important resource at the University of Oslo. In order for the University of Oslo to achieve its goal of being a leading European university, the University of Oslo needs to recruit capable and motivated employees. The University of Oslo has an overarching objective of being an attractive workplace and recruiting the most qualified academic employees nationally and internationally. The University of Oslo will use recruitment as a strategic instrument and will ensure a competitive and professional recruitment process. This is also set out in the University of Oslo recruitment policy for academic positions.

In May 2020, the University Director appointed a working group tasked with performing a comprehensive assessment of how the University of Oslo can best recruit to academic positions with the aim of achieving a single simplified framework for recruitment. This work was delayed due to the pandemic and commenced during the autumn of 2020.

The objective of this work has been to draw up a single simplified framework for appointment to professor and associate professor positions, covering the process from call for applications to decision of appointment. In this connection, prominent attention has been afforded to the University of Oslo's competence profile. The working group has, among other things, considered whether the current competence profile is adequate, whether more competence areas should be considered and whether the assessment criteria for the different areas are adequate and appropriate. The basis for this work is that the regulations must be designed at an overall level and that the faculties and units will have the opportunity to further specify rules based on the needs of the different subject areas.



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The mandate, composition and working methods of the working group

The mandate of the working group

Consider how UiO should best recruit for academic positions, with the aim of achieving a unified and simplified framework for recruitment. The working group can also propose changes to other related rules where this is appropriate for the internal context of UiO's overall regulations.
Ensure that the competence profile UiO assesses when hiring and promoting is comprehensive and that the assessment criteria within the various areas are good and comprehensive. The working group is asked to assess whether there are more competence areas that should be assessed.
Assess the extent to which the current roles and distribution of responsibilities in the employment process are appropriate.
Pay particular attention to how an equality and diversity perspective can be taken care of through the recruitment process, including how bias in the assessment of applicants can be countered.
Take relevant strategic documents and processes into account
The work will result in a proposal for overall guidelines for employment in professorships and associate professorships, which will give the that the faculties and units the opportunity to further specify rules based on the needs of the different subject areas.

The composition of the working group:

- Ivar Prydz Gladhaug – Dean (Faculty of Medicine)
- Rita Hvistendahl – Dean (Faculty of Educational Sciences)
- Jo Døhl – Faculty Director (Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences)
- Helga Reiss – Section Manager (Faculty of Humanities)
- Irene Sandlie – Personnel Director (Department of Personnel Support)

Working methods

Due to the pandemic, the work was delayed and the working group started its work during the autumn of 2020. The work has been undertaken using meetings and written feedback on specific

proposals for changes. Throughout this work, the working group has convened meetings with several parties, including Finn-Eirik Johansen. The working group has emphasised UIO-KVM and NOR-CAM in its work.

The working group has taken into account several key documents and processes in its work, including:

- Applicable laws and agreements
- The Dora Declaration (San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment), concerning the evaluation of research, and the University of Oslo's continued work on the evaluation of research
- The University of Oslo's innovation boost and work on applied knowledge
- The University of Oslo's dissemination policy
- Report to the Storting no. 16 (2016-2017) Quality Culture in Higher Education and the University of Oslo's follow-up on this, including the University of Oslo's merit scheme for teaching and work conducted in connection with the assessment and documentation of educational qualifications.
- Master plan for the University's IT
- The University of Oslo's Action Plan for Equal Opportunities and Diversity
- The Front Project's work to ensure gender balance and avoid bias in recruitment processes.
- The UHR guidance for academic careers (NOR-CAM) and UIO-KVM
- Towards a reform of the research assessment system - Publications Office of the EU

Proposals for amendments to the regulations relating to promotion and appointment to professor and associate professor positions

The proposals from the working group are based on a comprehensive review of the current regulations and existing guidance for the assessment committee and applicants. The working group proposes a number of amendments and specifications: a simplified regulatory structure with a clearer distinction between guidelines and mentoring, changes to the qualification profile and assessment criteria, specification of how qualification criteria should be weighted and clarification of roles/mandates in the appointment process. The working group has also looked at how the UHR guidance for academic career paths (NOR-CAM) can be incorporated into regulations/guidance and adapted to the needs of the University of Oslo.

The objective of the proposed changes is to help ensure that the University of Oslo carries out professional, transparent, efficient and high-quality recruitment processes, including by clarifying the qualification requirements for academic positions, having an appropriate allocation of responsibilities between the different bodies/committees involved in the recruitment process and by providing simplified and targeted information to applicants and the various bodies/committees involved in the recruitment process. Assessments throughout the entire recruitment process must be characterised by equal opportunities and diversity perspectives.

Proposed amendments

1. The working group proposes a new structure for the current regulations. The new structure is aligned with the recruitment process from publication of the call for applications to appointment and distinguishes between regulations and guidance. Some of the information that was previously included in the regulations has been moved to the guidance. The purpose has been to simplify the regulations and provide targeted information to the various target groups. This work can be viewed as a continuation of the previous work to reduce the number of regulatory documents and combine documents that naturally belong together. The regulations are still designed at a level that allows for local specifications based on the needs of the different subject areas.

2. The working group proposes several changes to the University of Oslo’s competence profile. One of the changes is that academic qualifications and other professional qualifications have been combined. Furthermore, dissemination qualifications has been changed to applied knowledge and it has been specified that this qualification area includes dissemination, innovation and interaction with the community. Finally, it has been proposed that qualifications in management and administration be changed to qualifications in academic management and administration, thereby highlighting the importance of academic management (including research management and education management).

Figure 1: The current competence profile	Figure 2: Proposed new competence profile
Academic qualifications	Academic qualifications
Other academic qualifications	Educational qualifications
Educational qualifications	Applied knowledge
Dissemination qualifications	Qualifications in academic management and administration
Management and administration qualifications	Personal qualifications
Personal qualifications	

Figure 3: The figure below shows the proposed changes to the competence profile

Competence profile	
1.	Academic qualifications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research, other professional qualifications and artistic qualifications
2.	Educational qualifications

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational qualifications are anchored in the four criteria areas derived from Scholarships of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)
<p>3. Applied knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination, digital skills, innovation and interaction with the community
<p>4. Qualifications in academic management and administration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research management, training in management/administration, participation in councils, boards, positions of trust, etc.
<p>5. Personal qualifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal qualities of relevance to the position (e.g. good teamwork skills, communication skills and positive contributions to the working environment)

3. The working group has emphasised the report from the University of Oslo’s working group for the assessment of researchers (UIO-KVM) in its work. In many areas, UIO-KVM coincides with the working group’s proposed amendments to the regulations. Both working groups have assumed that a comprehensive assessment of candidates will be conducted in connection with appointments to academic positions. The working group has also considered the UHR guidance for academic career paths (NOR-CAM). The main premises and structure of NOR-CAM are in keeping with the University of Oslo’s current regulations. The working group agrees with the University of Oslo’s working group for the assessment of researchers that an incorporation of NOR-CAM would not entail any significant amendments to the current regulations.

The working group proposes that UIO-KVM, which is based on the UHR guidance for academic career paths (NOR-CAM), be incorporated. The working group has used other terms for the categories in the qualification profile than those used by the University of Oslo’s working group for the assessment of researchers (UIO-KVM). Nevertheless, the differences in content between the defined categories are insignificant. The proposal from the working group adapts the content in line with the University of Oslo’s qualification profile. The University of Oslo assessment matrix includes examples of relevant qualifications, activities and results for each qualification area. The matrix requires relevant results, experiences, qualifications and activities to be described, documented and reflected upon. In this way, the matrix highlights anything that could be meritorious, but the list is not exhaustive. The matrix must be used throughout the entire recruitment process and will make it easier for applicants to design their application. Such a matrix will also contribute to more consistent use of assessment criteria at all levels of the appointment process.

The working group for recruitment finds that the University of Oslo’s working group for the assessment of researchers focuses on user orientation and innovation activities in its report. These have not been included in the proposal from the working group, but the group would

like feedback from the units if these are elements that should be included in the University of Oslo's toolbox for the assessment of qualifications.

4. The working group has also looked at the EU report "Towards a reform of the research assessment system". The EU report provides general guidelines for a research assessment system but does not affect the working group's proposals for new regulations and guidance.
5. The working group has highlighted how the different qualification requirements will be weighted. It clarifies that academic qualifications must be considered separately and weighted ahead of other qualifications. Furthermore, educational qualifications will take precedence over qualifications in applied knowledge and academic management and administration. The proposal also specifies that personal qualifications may have a decisive significance in the appointment process, following a proper assessment. The proposed amendments will contribute to high-quality, transparent recruitment processes.

Proposed wording for the regulations:

"Academic qualifications shall take precedence over other qualifications for ordinary professorships (or associate professor positions), unless otherwise provided for in the call for applications. Educational qualifications will take precedence over qualifications in the areas of applied knowledge, academic management and administration, unless otherwise provided for in the call for applications and in accordance with Section 9 of the qualification profile.

Following an overall assessment, personal qualifications may be assigned decisive significance in the consideration of the appointment, based on factual grounds relating to the specified personal qualities in the call for applications.

6. In connection with this work, the working group discussed the wording in the final paragraph of Section 11 of the rules for appointment to professor and associate professor positions at the University of Oslo, concerning requirements for basic university pedagogical competence. The second to last paragraph is worded as follows: "However, the main rule for appointment to professorships is that the requirement should be met at the time of appointment." The main rule is in accordance with the Ministry of Education's interpretation of the regulations. Nevertheless, the working group agrees that the main rule can be waived in exceptional circumstances. This may, for example, be relevant for adjunct professor positions in combination with a main position as senior consultant. For these positions, the requirement for "basic competence to be met within two years of appointment" will apply.
7. The working group proposes amendments to the regulations in order to safeguard the equal opportunities and diversity perspective. This has been done through e.g. changes to wording and by specifying who is responsible for safeguarding this perspective in the recruitment process. As a follow-up item, the working group also proposes that the

University of Oslo's adjustment agreement be changed to ensure gender neutral provisions relating to ratios. This would be in line with the regulations and the basic collective agreement. Amendments to the adjustment agreement must be negotiated with employee representatives. Equal opportunities and diversity perspectives must be included at all levels of the recruitment process and must be taken into account in connection with further work on templates, web pages and guidance.

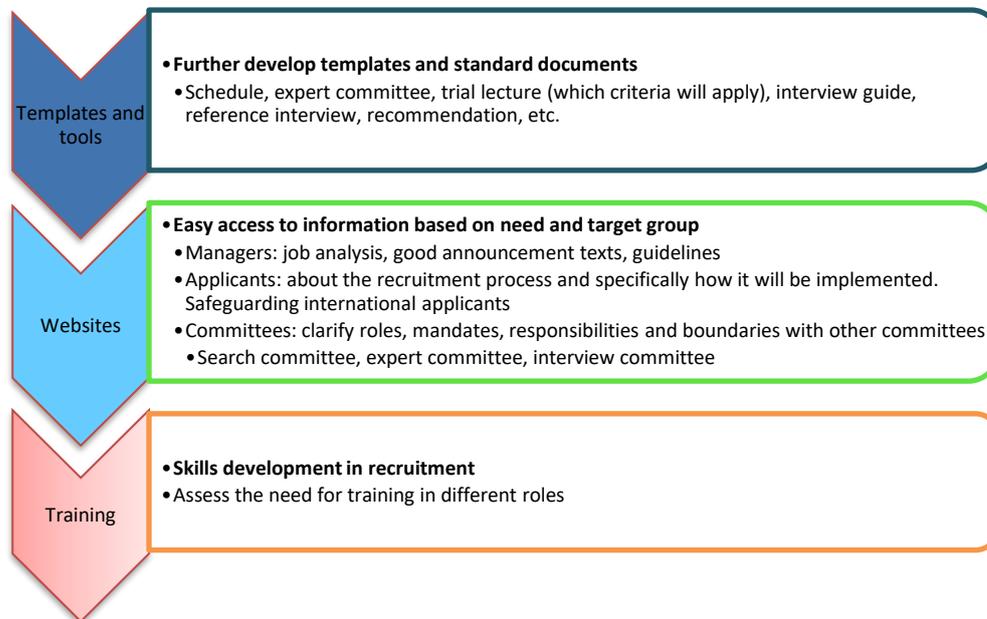
8. The working group proposes amendments to specify roles and responsibilities for the various bodies/committees involved in the recruitment process. The regulations emphasise mandates, appointments and working methods for the various bodies/committees. The working group has also chosen to clarify what will be assessed by assessment committees. The proposed guidance for the assessment committee also specifies that the assessment committee's assessment constitutes part of the overall basis before the recommending authority makes its recommendation to the appointing authority. The working group believes that this will contribute to efficient recruitment processes and increase the quality of the recruitment process.

The working group proposes the following wording for the new regulations in order to clarify what will be assessed by the expert committee:

“The expert committee will undertake a complete assessment of the academic qualifications and an initial assessment of the qualification requirements in Section 2-4. Personal qualities are assessed by the recommending authority later in the process. The qualifications in Section 2-4 will also be assessed through interviews, trial lectures and reference interviews.”

9. The working group agrees that the main objective of the expert committee is to rank at least three applicants in the order in which they should be assessed, provided there are that many qualified applicants. The working group has also discussed whether the expert committee should, in special cases, be able to rank several applicants at the same level, if multiple applicants are approximately equally well qualified. This exemption has not been included in the proposal, but such an exemption has been called for by several communities at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences and at the Faculty of Humanities.
10. Finally, the working group proposes a number of changes to streamline and improve recruitment processes. In this connection, the working group notes the importance of strong calls for applications, targeted information for various committees, targeted information for national and international applicants and appropriate standard templates for implementing great recruitment processes.

Proposed changes to the recruitment process



The working group's recommendations for further follow-up

The working group's proposed changes to the recruitment process entail amendments to the regulations and changes that must be followed up through additional work. The working group has therefore listed some recommendations for how the University of Oslo can target its work to streamline and professionalise the recruitment process through the training of managers and support roles and by further developing standard templates.

The working group's recommendations

- Consider whether guidance should be drawn up for the different committees involved in the recruitment process to clarify mandates, roles and responsibilities.
- Managers that will advertise positions should be trained and information should be drawn up on:
 - How to structure good calls for applications
 - How to ensure gender balance and diversity
- Further developing standard documents

- Schedules for the recruitment process, expert assessments, trial lectures (which criteria will be applied), interview guide, reference interviews, recommendation, etc. This could, among other things, contribute to streamlining the recruitment process.
- The University of Oslo's adjustment agreement should be changed so that rules for gender representation and ratios are adapted to the basic agreement.
- Consider the need for training to ensure expertise on the part of managers with roles and responsibilities in the recruitment process.
- Develop web pages to clarify the recruitment process and provide adapted information for various target groups.