



## Åbo Akademi University Regulations on Personnel

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## **GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **1. Legal basis and scope of application**

As prescribed in section 31 of the Universities Act (558/2009): "Universities employ professors and other teaching and research staff, as well as other staff to perform other tasks. Further provisions on the qualification requirements of staff and the procedures for recruitment are specified in the university rules of procedure."

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 among research and teaching personnel. Provisions concerning the qualification requirements for personnel at Vasa Övningsskola are given in the currently valid Rules of Procedure for Vasa Teacher Training School.

All personnel at Åbo Akademi University are employed under an employment contract. Employment terms and conditions shall comply with the applicable provisions laid out in the Employment Contracts Act (55/2001) and those agreed upon in collective agreements and employment contracts. ÅAU promotes equal opportunities and gender equality in recruiting and employment.

### **2. Employment contracts and recruiting procedure**

As prescribed in section 17(2)(6) of the Universities Act: "The remit of the rector is to decide on the hiring and dismissal of staff." Only those bodies or persons that the Rector has delegated the right of decision in a recruitment matter may make decisions related to employment.

Employment contracts are made in writing. A trial period is applied in accordance with the Employment Contracts Act.

As prescribed in chapter 1(3) of the Employment Contracts Act: "An employment contract is valid indefinitely unless it has, for a justified reason, been made for a specific fixed term." Justified reasons for a fixed-term employment contract include, among others:

- Substitute assignment
- Internship
- 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
- Employment within the 4-level career structure for researchers and teachers
- Fixed-term projects
- Academy of Finland researchers and professors
- At the employee's own request
- Non-established activities

As prescribed in the Employment Contracts Act, the duty to offer employment to individuals who are engaged in a part-time employment relationship or have been laid-off or dismissed on financial and production-related grounds shall be observed in recruitment processes.

Any decision concerning recruitment shall be based on the need of the unit in question for new or supplementary competence. This takes into account the business plan, personnel plan and financial circumstances of the unit in question.

As a rule, all vacancies are announced publicly. A person may be employed without the vacancy of a given position being listed only in cases where there is a justified reason for doing so and there is a person with suitable qualifications and expertise available. In addition, a person may be employed without the vacancy of a given position being listed in cases involving a specific job assignment on a project.

The Personnel Services (HR) unit is responsible for listing vacancies and providing support in the recruitment process. The recruiting practices of Åbo Akademi University shall be characterised by openness, transparency and a merit-based assessment for researchers. Specifically appointed recruitment committees participate in the recruitment of teaching and research personnel in compliance with the provisions laid out in these Regulations. Each recruitment committee shall have at least three members, both female and male. The members of the recruitment committee shall possess suitable experience and diverse competence with regard to the task. External recruitment committee members may also be included. Provisions on the grounds for disqualification laid out in the Administrative Procedure Act [section 28, 434/2003] and the Instruction on Ethics and the Responsible Conduct of Research, along with other directives on conflicts of interest and the impartial handling of recruiting matters shall be applied. As a rule, the responsible director or another appointed person in charge, along with possible other experts, shall participate in preparing for the recruitment of experts and other personnel in support functions at Åbo Akademi University.

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. The job tasks and continuous competence development are addressed in development discussions with the supervisor. The job descriptions for teaching and research personnel shall be further defined in annual work plans in accordance with Åbo Akademi University instructions.

### **3. Titles**

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

### **4. Employment structure for research and teaching personnel**

The employment structure for researchers and teachers at Åbo Akademi University consists of four levels. As a rule, teaching and research are included in the job descriptions at every level. Teaching shall primarily be done by personnel who have completed a postgraduate degree.

#### **Level 1. Level for doctoral studies**

The aim of doctoral studies is to prepare doctoral students for performing research functions and serving in other expert capacities. Positions at this level are primarily comprised of doctoral students and, in cases where doctoral studies are not included in the job description, research assistants.

### **Level 2. Level for acquiring individual research qualifications**

The aim of this level is to strengthen each individual's identity as a researcher, thus making their role more independent and enabling them to conduct research and/or studies. Research-intensive positions at this level comprise postdoctoral researchers and assistant professors (tenure track, level 1) as well as project researchers. Teaching-intensive positions at this level comprise university teachers and lecturers.

### **Level 3. Level for independent researchers**

At this level, researchers are independent researchers and experts, who also possess the capacity to serve in academic leadership roles. Research-intensive positions at this level comprise university researchers, associate professors (tenure track), senior researchers, research leaders and heads of research. Positions that are more teaching-intensive comprise senior university lecturers.

### **Level 4. Level for leading researchers in the field**

The job descriptions within this level are multifaceted and consist of demanding research and teaching tasks. Positions at this level comprise professors, visiting professors and Professors of Practice.

University teachers, lecturers and professors are usually employed on a permanent basis. Doctoral students and post-doctoral researchers are employed on a fixed-term basis. In principle, doctoral students are employed for a period of 4 years, and post-doctoral researchers are employed on a fixed-term basis, however, for no more than five years. In addition, the employment periods for doctoral students and tenure track positions can be extended on the basis of a maternity, paternity, parental or care leave, military or civil service, or for other compelling reasons.

For permanently employed 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 Board to be of strategic value and financially possible. In order to assess whether the qualification requirements are met, the Dean appoints a recruitment committee, whose composition corresponds to the recruitment committees appointed for the level and position related to the advancement

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

### **Article 5 General qualification requirements**

The personnel to be hired shall possess the education and experience required for the successful execution of the relevant tasks and duties. Competence requirements shall specify the required scientific and pedagogical requirements as well the expectations concerning leadership and collaboration skills within all categories of research and teaching personnel. Competence in the form of practical familiarity or professional skills can also be specially emphasised for a given task.

- **Scientific competence**

The scientific competence requirements for doctoral students, teachers and researchers are prescribed below. The overall assessment of research results also takes into consideration the time the applicant has had available for research since receiving their doctoral degree.

- **Pedagogical competence**

Provisions concerning the teaching skills expected of teachers and researchers are specified in greater detail in Levels 2-4 and are based on the tasks to be performed. The overall assessment of teaching skills is based on the reported teaching skills and, if required, the demonstrated teaching skills of the applicant.

- **Leadership and collaboration**

The job description includes management of a unit or activities and requires a familiarity with the field in question as well as leadership and collaboration skills. All positions require collaboration skills.

Language proficiency requirements shall be defined before starting the recruitment process. The language proficiency requirements for teaching and research personnel as well as experts and other personnel in support functions are laid out in a separate instruction. The language skills of the applicant shall be ascertained before an employment decision is made.

## **Article 6. 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 doctoral programme at Åbo Akademi University. When employing doctoral students, applicants are assessed, among other things, based on their study achievements, research plan and any research results in the relevant field or related subjects.

An agreement is made with the doctoral students concerning their supervision and studies. The employment may be terminated if the doctoral student fails to comply with the supervision and study agreement.

Employees involved in project research without the work being linked with their own doctoral studies are referred to as **research assistants**.

## **Article 7. Postdoctoral Researcher, Researcher, Project Researcher (Level 2)**

The tasks to be performed by a **postdoctoral researcher** primarily involve the deepening and expanding of their research competence. Postdoctoral researchers are usually required to contribute to teaching and supervision. A postdoctoral researcher is required to hold a doctoral degree. As a rule, the time elapsed since receiving the doctoral degree should not exceed four years. A postdoctoral researcher is expected to possess teaching skills when teaching is included in their tasks.

When assessing the scientific competence of an applicant during recruitment, the presented research plan and the applicant's capacity to conduct the research in question as well as their prior research results shall be taken into consideration. For the purpose of evaluating the applicant's merits, the Dean may appoint a recruitment committee. At least one of the recruitment committee members shall represent the subject, subject area or profile, and one the degree programme in question

An employee who holds a doctoral degree and is involved in project research or other specific research tasks may be referred to as a **project researcher or researcher**. Responsibility for specific areas is typical of the task, but usually does not involve overall project management.

## **Article 8. University teacher, university lecturer (Level 2)**

The tasks of a university teacher comprise teaching and supervision at the undergraduate level. The university teacher may be provided with an opportunity to conduct research to a limited extent.

A university teacher is required to hold a higher university degree (Master's degree) in the subject they are teaching or a closely related discipline. They shall also possess teaching skills. When assessing the teaching skills of the applicant, their basic pedagogical approach, pedagogical education, teaching and supervision experience relevant to the task in question, course assessments, evaluations of their teaching, and participation in assessment and pedagogical development shall, among other things, be taken into consideration. For the purpose of evaluating the applicant's merits for a permanent position, the Dean may appoint a recruitment committee. At least one of the recruitment committee members shall represent the subject, subject area or profile, and one the degree programme in question.

University teachers who have earned a doctoral degree shall transfer to an employment as university lecturers.

The tasks of a university lecturer comprise teaching and research. University lecturers supervise and examine theses at all levels of education. University lecturers may be provided with an opportunity to conduct research for a maximum of one third of their working hours.

A university lecturer is required to hold a doctoral degree in the subject they are teaching or a closely related discipline. They shall also possess teaching skills. When assessing the teaching skills of the applicant, their basic pedagogical approach, pedagogical education, teaching and supervision experience relevant to the task in question, course assessments, evaluations of their teaching, and participation in assessment and pedagogical development, among other things, shall be taken into consideration.

For the purpose of evaluating the applicant's merits for a permanent position, the Dean may appoint a recruitment committee. At least one of the recruitment committee members shall represent the subject, subject area or profile, and one the degree programme in question.

## **Article 9. University Researcher, Senior Researcher, Head of Research, Research Leader (Level 3)**

The tasks performed by a **university researcher** 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 their working hours to contribute to teaching and supervision, unless project activities require dedication to other work tasks.

A university researcher shall be required to hold a doctoral degree and research merits that correspond to the scientific merits of a 'Docent'. A university researcher is expected to also possess teaching skills when teaching is included in their tasks. Experience in international research activities is usually required. For the purpose of evaluating the applicant's merits for a permanent position, the Dean may appoint a recruitment committee. The recruitment committee shall consist of at least one member representing the subject or subject area and an expert from outside the faculty.

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

A **research leader** is an employee who performs a task for a fixed period of time in the subject or subject area assigned to a research director or professor and serves as a director of personnel.

### **Article 10. Senior University lecturer (Level 3)**

The tasks performed by a **senior lecturer** include teaching and supervision as well as examining theses at all levels of study. In addition to these tasks, senior university lecturers also conduct independent scientific research. Senior university lecturers participate in continuing efforts to develop and evaluate the relevant field of education. Two thirds of the working hours shall be used for teaching, supervision and other tasks, and one third of the working hours for one's own research.

A senior university lecturer shall be required to hold a doctoral degree and research merits that correspond to the scientific merits of a 'Docent' as well as teaching skills. When assessing the teaching skills of the applicant, their basic pedagogical approach, pedagogical education, teaching and supervision experience relevant to the task in question, course assessments, evaluations of their teaching, and participation in assessment and pedagogical development, among other things, shall be taken into consideration. For the purpose of evaluating the applicant's merits for a permanent position, the Dean may appoint a recruitment committee. The recruitment committee shall consist of at least one member representing the subject, subject area or profile, one representing the degree programme in question, and an expert from outside the faculty.

### **Article 11. Professor (Level 4)**

A professor's tasks include ~~the~~ conducting of scientific research and ~~the performance of~~ research-based tuition. In addition to this, a professor's tasks also include ~~the~~ supervision and development of research and instruction activities, ~~the~~ procurement of research materials and participation in national and international collaboration within their respective area of responsibility.

In addition to a doctoral degree, professors are required to possess solid scientific competence along with the ability to provide qualitative, research-based instruction and supervision, the ability to lead research projects and raise funding for research, experience in international research, and collaborative and leadership skills.

The Rector decides on the establishment of new professorships based on proposals made by the Faculty Board.

The Faculty Board confirms appointment plans for the professorship. The scientific field and focus area are defined in the statement for a professorship. It also specifies the expected competence and suitability as well as the recruiting procedure for the professorship.

The Dean appoints a recruitment committee to prepare the recruitment of a professor. The recruitment committee shall consist of no less than four members, including the chair, who shall be the Dean or another member of the committee appointed by the Dean. At least three

of the recruitment committee members shall be professors, at least one of whom comes from another faculty or university. The study programme and subject or subject area shall also be represented.

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

In assessing the qualifications of an applicant, their scientific publications and other qualitative research results, experience in the successful completion of a doctoral dissertation, the ability to lead research projects and raise funding for research, and experience in international research and serving in an expert capacity shall be taken into consideration. When assessing the teaching skills of the applicant, their basic pedagogical approach, pedagogical education, teaching and supervision experience relevant to the task in question, course assessments, evaluations of their teaching, and participation in assessment and pedagogical development, among other things, shall be taken into consideration. The results of any test lectures given will also be taken into consideration. Leadership skills and administrative experience as well as collegial collaboration skills, collaboration with the surrounding society and participation in international activities within their field are also taken into consideration.

Upon a proposal by the Faculty Board, the Rector may invite a merited person to serve as a professor, if the person has undisputed 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 section 33 of the Universities Act.

Section 33 of the Universities Act states: "A university may award the right to use the title of professor to a person in its employ." At Åbo Akademi University, the main principle is that the title of Professor is linked with the position of a professor. In the presence of special reasons, the Åbo Akademi University Board may, upon the proposal of the Faculty Board, give other members of the Åbo Akademi University staff the right to use the title of Professor for a fixed period. The right to use the title requires that the person in question indisputably fulfils the qualification requirements for professor and possesses extensive scientific leadership experience linked with the tasks and duties presented in the proposal.

## **Article 12. Visiting professor, Professor of Practice (Level 4)**

A person who indisputably fulfils the qualification requirements for professor may be invited as a visiting professor for limited expert tasks. Visiting professors shall be employed on a fixed-term, part-time basis. The Rector may, upon the proposal of the Faculty Board, employ a visiting professor.

Visiting professors are recruited for limited expert tasks, while also supporting teaching and research activities within the subject in question.

The Rector may, upon the proposal of the Faculty Board, employ a Professor of Practice. In



addition to a doctoral degree, a Professor of Practice is required to possess professional experience of at least five years in a field of business, public administration or the third sector that is relevant to instruction. Professors of Practice shall be employed on a fixed-term basis, accounting for no more than 20% of an ordinary employment. Further provisions for appointment are given in the regulations approved by the Rector.

### **Article 13. 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 a recruited individual the opportunity for permanent employment and career advancement up to a professorship within the scientific discipline in question.

The Rector decides on tenure track recruitment based upon a proposal of the Faculty Board. Tenure track positions are filled through an open, international recruitment process.

The scientific discipline and focus are defined in order to ensure a sufficient number of applicants and to attract external applicants. The Faculty Board confirms the statement for tenure track recruitments upon the proposal of the recruitment committee.

Preparations for tenure track positions are made in accordance with the same principles and practices as preparations for recruiting professors, as defined in Article 12 of these Regulations.

The person to be hired in the tenure track career system may, depending on their experience and competence, be appointed as Assistant/Associate Professor on a fixed-term basis. Alternatively, they can be directly appointed as Professor. Based on the recruitment committee's statement, the Faculty Board issues its assessment on the level to which the person in question will ultimately be appointed.

Åbo Akademi University is committed to giving tenure track appointees the opportunity to advance to the next level by setting clearly defined objectives for each stage of employment. Any decision on potential advancement to the next level will be made within an agreed timeframe, thus enabling appointees to plan their career and their competence to be evaluated in a timely manner. The evaluation process is initiated a minimum of one year before the fixed-term employment contract ends.

After consulting with the recruitment committee and when recruiting within a given research profile, the Dean decides on the general and specific targets for each stage of the tenure track in connection with the drafting of the employment contract.

Tenure track researchers are usually required to contribute to teaching and supervision, dedicating no more than one third of their working hours to these duties.

#### **Tenure track Level 1: Assistant Professor (Level 1)**

Assistant Professors have the same qualification requirements as the post-doctoral researchers in the four-level employment structure. Assistant Professors (Level 1) can be employed for a period of three years with an optional extension of two years.

Upon a successful evaluation, an Assistant Professor (Level 1) will advance to the next level. Alternatively, the employment period may be extended by two years. The evaluation of the scientific and pedagogical merits for advancement or extension is drawn up by a

recruitment committee, which is appointed by the Dean. The decision on advancement or extension of the employment by two years is made by the Rector upon the proposal of the recruitment committee.

#### **Tenure track Level 2: Associate Professor (Level 2)**

An Associate Professor (Level 2) is required to hold a doctoral degree as well as possess solid experience in research, the potential to lead research groups and raise funding for research, and experience in international research. Moreover, teaching skills are required. An Associate Professor (Level 2) can be employed for a period of four years, with an optional extension of two years.

The successful evaluation of an appointee who indisputably fulfils the qualification requirements for professor facilitates advancement to the next level. Alternatively, the employment period may be extended by two years. The Dean shall appoint a recruitment committee for the purpose of assessing the appointee's competence as professor or the possible two-year extension of employment as Associate Professor. The recruitment committee's task is to obtain statements from at least two external experts concerning the Associate Professor's qualifications and merits. The decision on advancement or extension of the employment is made by the Rector upon the proposal of the recruitment committee

#### **After advancing from Level 2: Professor**

Professors are employed on a permanent basis.

Further provisions on tenure track recruitment and advancement are given in the regulations approved by the Rector.

### **Article 14. Personnel at Vasa Övningsskola**

Qualifications for staff at Vasa Övningsskola (Vasa Teacher Training School) are specified in the Decree on Qualification Requirements for Teaching Staff (986/1998) and the Instruction for Vasa Övningsskola. When recruiting teachers on a permanent basis for the Vasa Övningsskola, at least three experts appointed by the Dean, with one from the Faculty of Education and Welfare Studies and one from Vasa Övningsskola, shall participate in the recruitment.

## **RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR EXPERTS AND OTHER PERSONNEL IN SUPPORT FUNCTIONS**

### **Article 15. Experts and other personnel in support functions**

The body or person that decides on the hiring of experts and other personnel in support functions shall determine the relevant titles and qualification requirements as well as decide on the job description prior to initiating the recruitment process. The titles for experts and other personnel in support functions usually follow existing titles used by Åbo Akademi University. For tasks requiring special expertise, at least a higher university degree (Master's degree) is usually required. For tasks involving supervisory responsibilities, at least a higher university degree (Master's degree) as well as leadership skills are usually required.

Individuals employed to assist with research and teaching are given the title of research assistant (junior), project assistant or course assistant, and they are included among the administrative and technical personnel. Project coordinators are also included among administrative and technical personnel

## **VALIDITY AND TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS**

### **Article 16. Entry into force**

These University Regulations on Personnel shall enter into force on 1 April 2022 and are applicable to all employment relationships starting after the first day of its validity. Any transitional provisions set forth shall be separately decided upon by the Åbo Akademi University Board.