



AALBORG UNIVERSITET

## ***Guidelines on Aligning Expectations for Career Development for Younger Researchers at the Faculty of Engineering and Science***

### ***Introduction***

The Faculty of Engineering and Science (TEKNAT) recruits and trains researchers on a high international level to perform various work in academia, the public sector and private industry. With these guidelines, TEKNAT aims to focus on working more strategically and systematically with competence and career development for younger researchers.

### ***Background***

The reality is that not all younger researchers can expect to obtain permanent employment at the universities and thus be secured a research career. A significant portion of PhDs and postdocs will be employed outside the university. They will obtain employment in industry, municipalities and regions, or abroad, based on the knowledge and experience they acquire in the course of their employment at Aalborg University. A fixed-term position at TEKNAT, whether it is as a PhD, postdoc or assistant professor, must therefore contribute to improving the younger researcher's CV and career opportunities both inside and outside academia.

### ***Purpose***

The guidelines will assist the departments at TEKNAT in aligning the expectations of younger researchers with respect to an appropriate career path. Going forward, TEKNAT would like to integrate a more stimulating and clarifying career development plan for younger researchers. Younger researchers are employed in fixed-term positions and thus have a more uncertain employment basis. It is therefore important that they receive timely clarification on the direction their career is heading. Within the first year of employment, the departments must establish a competence development program directed towards a future career choice for the younger researcher.

It should also be emphasized that in order to ensure younger researchers the time and the help they need, we must respect and accommodate the frameworks in the job structure and the legislation on fixed-term contracts to the best of our ability.

The guidelines provide direction for the departments in relation to acting with transparency and engaging in dialogue relative to younger researchers. The younger researchers who are affiliated with TEKNAT and who TEKNAT benefits from must be mentored and their talent nurtured to the best of our ability.

The guidelines on aligning expectations relating to career development for younger researchers are fundamentally about good protocol when nurturing the talent and careers of younger staff.

### ***Tools and principles***

The guidelines will support the departments in the strategic and systematic work of nurturing the talent and careers of younger researchers in terms of specific tools and principles for the recruitment of PhDs, postdocs and assistant professors.

### **PhDs:**

#### ***Principles for employment***

PhDs are employed for a period of 3 years.

#### ***Tools (applies to employed as well as enrolled PhDs)***

- 4 + 4 system (combination of Master's degree and PhD)
- Course activity with a career focus (networking, innovation, entrepreneurship)
- Clubs for PhD students (PAU- <http://www.phd.teknat.aau.dk/current-students/PAU/>)
- Mentor program
- Competence development
- Staff Appraisal Interview (*MUS*)/Group Appraisal Interview (*GRUS*)  
(<http://www.aauhaandbog.aau.dk/faces/viewDocument/703>)

### **Postdoc:**

#### ***Principles for employment***

All postdoc's should be employed for a minimum 3-year period<sup>1</sup> via a position announcement or their own funding (recipient of funding). However, there will be projects of shorter duration where employment beyond the project cannot be demanded. There may also be international guests and the like where employment is typically shorter.

#### ***Tools***

- Career Development Plan: All plans should describe how the postdoc will be able to qualify scientifically at a level equivalent to an associate professor. This part of the plan should include a set of objectives regarding expected scientific results and publications. It is important that the postdoc has the opportunity to demonstrate competences in formulating scientific problems on his/her own and independently addressing them.

*The career development plan can also include*

- preparation of applications for the research councils and the like
- reviewing
- dissemination activity with regard to peers (seminars and workshops)

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. the job structure, employment as a postdoc cannot exceed a period of 4 years. It may be an option to extend the period with a 3-year appointment as a postdoc, followed by a 2-year appointment as an assistant professor (may be a need in specific cases). This must be done by means of a position announcement and a specific decision in relation to a modified job description.

- dissemination activity with regard to non-peers (institutions, companies, media)
- organizing scientific workshops
- stays abroad, stays at other Danish universities or companies

The plan will be an important part of the annual Staff Appraisal Interview (*MUS*), and the career development plan must be in place at the recruitment stage or at the start of the employment.

- University Pedagogy for Assistant Professors (<http://www.learninglab.aau.dk/adjunktpaedagogikum/>)
- Mentor program (supervision)
- Competence development
- Staff Appraisal Interview (*MUS*) (<http://www.aauhaandbog.aau.dk/faces/viewDocument/703>)
- Course activity with a career focus (networking, innovation, entrepreneurship)
- Career development program for younger researchers (Career Clarification Seminar for Younger Researchers — currently held in Aug/Sep and Oct/Nov 2015 and facilitated by the faculty)
- Clubs for postdocs

### **Assistant professors:**

#### ***Principles for employment***

All assistant professors should be appointed for a minimum 3-year period via a position announcement or their own funding (recipient of funding).

#### ***Tools***

- Qualification Development Plan: For all staff at the assistant professor level, it is the responsibility of the department head that qualification development plans be made that describe how the young researcher will be able to qualify scientifically at a level equivalent to an associate professor. This part of the plan should include a set of objectives regarding expected scientific results and publications. It is important that the researcher has the opportunity to demonstrate competences in formulating scientific problems on his/her own and independently addressing them.

All staff on this level are offered the course “University Pedagogy for Assistant Professors” and if this is included, the qualification development plan must include teaching duties that make it possible to complete the course, unless the course is completed in another setting.

*The qualification development plan can also include*

- preparation of applications for the research councils and the like
- reviewing
- dissemination activity with regard to peers (seminars and workshops)
- dissemination activity with regard to non-peers (institutions, companies, media)
- organizing scientific workshops
- taking part in the supervision of PhD students
- stays abroad, stays at other Danish universities or companies

The plan will be an important part of the annual Staff Appraisal Interview (*MUS*), and qualification development plan must be in place at the recruitment stage or at the start of the

employment.

- University Pedagogy for Assistant Professors  
(<http://www.learninglab.aau.dk/adjunktpaedagogikum/>)
- Mentor program (supervision)
- Competence development
- Staff Appraisal Interview (*MUS*)  
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- Course activity with a career focus (networking, innovation, entrepreneurship)
- Career development program for younger researchers (Career Clarification Seminar for Younger Researchers — currently held in Aug/Sep and Oct/Nov 2015 and facilitated by the faculty)
- Clubs for assistant professors

It is intended that the departments draw on the above principles and tools in the career development and nurturing of younger researchers in the individual departments. The planning is to be based on the individual's needs and desires in relation to realistic career options.

**Career Planning Group under the Faculty Consultation Committee (*FSU*), TEKNAT, November 2015**

<p><b>PhD fellow</b></p> <p>The aim of the PhD program is to equip the PhD student for a further career either at Aalborg University or in another appropriate setting. The PhD program qualifies the PhD student to undertake research, development and teaching tasks independently on an international level. PhD fellows are appointed for a fixed term for a period of three years.</p>	<p><b>Postdoc</b></p> <p>The individual employed as a postdoc must be able to be part of a relevant research group, based on his/her PhD, and preferably be included in externally funded projects. The benefit of this is to provide insight and strengthen the individual's experience and competence in relation to the prospective career. The postdoc position is a fixed-term position for a period of up to four years at the same university and is the natural career step after completion of the PhD degree. The postdoc position involves research under supervision and advisement from a more senior researcher where the key concept for the position is that it is a for a fixed term and serves as career support.</p>
<p><b>Assistant Professor</b></p> <p>Appointment as an assistant professor is intended to ensure that assistant professors develop their competences in the role of both teacher and researcher. In connection with research-based teaching (with associated exam duties) and research (including the obligation of publishing/scientific communication) a balance must be ensured so that the assistant professor is qualified both in research and teaching. The development of teaching competences must not be presented as the final outcome, but it is important that the assistant professor is able to challenge and improve current teaching practices.</p> <p>The assistant professor position is a fixed-term position for a period of up to four years at the same university and is part of the upgrading for permanent employment. The position typically follows a successful PhD and/or postdoc position.</p>	

The above are elements of the job structure – link to the job structure [here](#) and an elaboration of the aim and content of the positions.