

# **Recruitment Strategy**

Department of Law,  
SDU

## **1. Introduction**

The current recruitment strategy concerns the academic staff at the Department of Law.

The strategy must be seen in the context of the department's guidelines for qualifications, which determine the minimum requirements that must be met in order for an applicant to be considered for a given post. Further general provisions concerning job postings and assessments are set out in the regulations that apply at any given time regarding the assessment and hiring of academic staff and teachers at the university, including the circular regarding job structure for academic staff at universities.

Recruitment must take place with the necessary consideration given to the department's values, where all tasks and all employees (both technical/administrative and academic staff) are equal and equally important, and where good relations with both colleagues and students are highly prioritised.

## **2. Recruitment aims**

The department works to ensure high quality and social relevance for both research and education. Recruitment is undertaken in order to support this and the department's strategic priorities in general.

Recruitment is thus aimed at developing and strengthening the department's research and research activities and ensuring the presence of the teaching resources needed to deliver high-quality research-based teaching within a number of key disciplines.

Recruitment must ensure that, at all times, the Department of Law employs highly qualified employees with research skills that support the department's research strategy and agenda, as well as teaching skills within a number of key legal disciplines defined by the compulsory subjects within the department's key courses of study (basic disciplines).<sup>1</sup> In relation to each job posting, both a research and a teaching need must be defined, and a specific applicant must be able to fulfil both.

### **2.1 Recruitment needs and priorities**

The composition and the academic content of the majority of the department's teaching portfolio is largely determined externally (such as by customer expectations and requirements stipulated in Executive Orders). In order to be able to offer these courses of study/subjects, the presence of academic skills – both research and educational – within a number of basic legal disciplines is crucial.

A job posting will therefore usually be initiated by a need to secure/maintain critical mass within a given key subject area – in both the short-term and long-term. However, at the same time, recruitment must support the department's research strategy and agenda. Recruitment is thus not solely for the purpose of teaching.

---

<sup>1</sup> In their research, all employees must draw on one (or more) basic legal discipline(s), and all employees must be able to handle professional responsibility and teach at a qualified level in at least one (and preferably several) basic disciplines/compulsory subjects.

Measures in relation to recruitment must generally ensure that a reasonable balance is struck between the department's teaching activities and research within a given subject area. As a rule, where there is a need for prioritisation between several subject areas, those where the ratio between teaching and research is greatest take priority.

## **2.2 Types of posts**

The purpose of the specific recruitment campaign will naturally determine the category of post for which recruitment takes place. Below, you can see the purposes for which recruitment for a certain post *generally* takes place. As you can see, several types of post can fulfil the same purpose. The extent to which recruitment takes place for a specific category of post will thus also depend on whether recruitment is deemed realistic and possible for a given category from a market perspective.

As a starting point, recruitment of new employees will take place at PhD and assistant professor level. This is in recognition of the fact that it is extremely difficult to recruit qualified employees at senior level externally. Thus, the outreach and active recruitment measures are concentrated at PhD and assistant professor level with the aim of finding the strongest candidates early in the process and thereby also creating a sufficiently strong recruitment basis in relation to the subsequent steps in the job structure.

At professor level, recruitment primarily has a retention purpose, and recruitment efforts at this level will reflect this, among other things by active use of shortlisting, unless there is a need to employ additional/new employees in the department in a specific situation.

### **2.2.1 Special circumstances regarding the individual job categories**

*Research assistants* are recruited for one or more of the following purposes:

- In order to assist a researcher or a research group with a specific research project (and in this context, assess the potential of the person concerned in relation to any future employment as a PhD fellow) and/or
- With a view to performing teaching and supervisory tasks to a greater extent than possible when employed as an external lecturer.

*PhD fellows* are recruited for one or more of the following purposes:

- With a view to developing and strengthening the department's research and research activities and
- With a view to enabling *long-term* development and strengthening of these activities as well as the provision of teaching and supervision within key legal areas (ensuring a future recruitment basis for assistant professor posts) *or*
- With a view to strengthening and contributing towards a special research focus within a research group for a *limited period* (3 years), and in this way, "boosting" the group's research. Recruitment for this purpose primarily uses external resources.

*Postdocs* are recruited for the following purposes:

- With a view to strengthening and contributing towards a special research focus within a research group for a *limited period* (1-2 years), and in this way, "boosting" the group's research. Recruitment for this purpose primarily uses external resources.

*Assistant professors* are recruited for the following purposes:

- With a view to developing and strengthening the department's research and research activities, as well as to provide teaching and supervision within key legal areas *and*
- With a view to enabling long-term handling of these tasks (to ensure a future recruitment basis for associate professor posts)

A qualified applicant is only offered an assistant professorship if it can justifiably be expected that the person can attain qualifications within 3 years that qualify him/her for an associate professorship. However, there will not necessarily be a 1:1 ratio between the number of assistant and associate professor posts.

*Associate professors* are recruited for the following purposes:

- For long-term development and strengthening of the department's research and research activities, to undertake teaching and supervision within key legal areas, as well as to perform various administrative and managerial tasks related to research and teaching *or*
- To take on an employee who, in light of his or her particular qualifications or profile, would be able to contribute to the performance of specific tasks and/or fulfilment of specific strategic goals.

The associate professor post, *in some cases*, enables the post holder to apply for a professorship after a number of years as an associate professor (see more in the department's qualification guidelines), although there is no 1:1 ratio between the number of associate professorships and professorships. However, it is considered entirely appropriate not to aspire to a professorship. The department respects and values different career desires and aspirations.

*Professors* are recruited for the following purposes:

- With a view to retaining and honouring a particularly talented internal associate professor who has made a positive contribution to the work and daily life of the department and who has continuously and over a long period of time delivered results that exceed expectations, thereby showing great potential (read more in the department's qualifications guidelines) *and*
- With a view to long-term development and strengthening of the department's research and research activities, undertaking teaching and supervision within key legal areas, as well as performing various administrative and managerial tasks related to research and teaching as well as support of younger researchers *or*
- With a view to taking on an employee who, in light of his or her particular qualifications or profile, will be able to contribute to the performance of specific tasks and/or fulfilment of specific strategic goals *or*
- With a view to taking on an employee who, in light of his or her professional profile, will be able to inject research and teaching resources that might specifically be lacking in a key legal area and for which recruitment is generally difficult.

*Permanent professors* are recruited for the following purposes:

- With a view to retaining an internal professor who has fulfilled his or her expected potential *and*
- With a view to long-term development and strengthening of the department's research and research activities, conducting teaching and supervision within key legal areas, as well as performing various administrative and managerial tasks related to research and teaching, supporting younger researchers and developing and shaping the department's/research groups' research agendas *or*
- With a view to taking on an employee who, in light of his or her particular qualifications or profile, will be able to contribute to the performance of specific tasks and/or fulfilment of specific strategic goals *or*
- With a view to taking on an employee who, in light of his or her professional profile, will be able to inject research and teaching resources that might specifically be lacking in a key legal area and for which recruitment is generally difficult.

### **3. Recruitment process**

#### **3.1 Recruitment measures**

The department's employees are always focused on "spotting" potential PhD candidates among the university's graduate students, and similarly an attempt is made to maintain contact as far as possible with the most talented students after they have graduated, so as to maintain their relationship with the Department of Law. The department always keeps itself informed about ongoing legal PhD projects at other Danish universities, and similarly, the department's senior staff participate in PhD presentations and PhD defences at other institutions in order to "spot" interesting and relevant assistant professor or postdoctoral candidates.

In addition, the department's management and staff generally focus on establishing contact with relevant collaboration partners and potential future employees in connection with conference participation and the like. Interesting individuals that the department may wish to recruit (or establish other forms of collaborative relations with) are invited to visit the department and, in connection with this, hold a presentation for the department's staff about their research or participate in other activities. In this way, the department can form an impression of the candidate, and similarly, the person in question can get an impression of the department. The Head of Department and the relevant research group leader(s) take part in these events.

In connection with specific job vacancies, the department's staff invite relevant candidates in their network to apply.

For assistant professor, associate professor and professor posts, it is crucial that the applicant, in addition to contributing to the research activities of the department, can also perform teaching. Since most of the teaching at the Department of Law is based on law relevant to Danish society, the majority of the teaching offered by the department takes place in Danish. This means that recruitment measures will be especially aimed at applicants with knowledge of Danish law.

In relation to the development and strengthening of selected research areas and/or the handling of

specific tasks or the fulfilment of strategic goals, targeted international recruitment will, however, also be relevant in order to attract highly qualified researchers to these areas. However, in order to be able to handle teaching tasks, non-Danish speaking researchers are expected to master the Danish language within a number of years. The Department of Law supports this by offering language courses.

### **3.2 Vacancies**

The department's management group regularly (and at least twice a year) monitors the need for new posts in relation to the department's and the individual research groups' strategy and tasks. The management group also monitors the distribution of staff across the individual job categories and the gender balance – in general and in relation to each job category.

The Head of Department, in cooperation with the relevant research group leader(s), decides the date from which a given post should be offered and thus when it should be advertised. In the assessment, the following should be taken into account:

- Approval and publication of advertisements (approx. 1 month)
- Application deadline (4-6 weeks)
- Deadline for consultation with the assessment committee (1 week)
- Assessment time (usually 2-3 months depending on job category)
- Approval of assessments
- Deadline for consultation in accordance with assessments (1 week)
- Holding of interviews

As a rule, the Department of Law does not use tenure track, <sup>2</sup> but in relation to advertising posts, the aim is to schedule these so that internal researchers in time-limited positions are given the opportunity – in open competition with others – to apply for a new position at the expiry of the time-limited position, providing their academic profile and skills correspond to the department's recruitment needs, wishes and opportunities.

The Head of Department and/or the relevant research group leaders inform the relevant group members about the respective planned vacancy.

The Head of Department and/or the relevant research group leaders draw up the specific job advertisement. The job advertisement is formulated in such a way that it will attract a sufficient number of qualified applicants while giving prospective applicants a clear picture of which research and teaching needs the institute would like covered by the vacancy in question. An advertisement will thus typically be directed at a specific research group with a simultaneous indication of which teaching tasks and other functions the applicant must be able to undertake.

The publication shall also be formulated so that it supports applications from both genders. The department also invites all interested parties to apply, regardless of age, gender, religion or ethnic affiliation. The advertisement shall contain a link to the department's qualification guidelines.

---

<sup>2</sup> Tenure track may be used in exceptional cases for recruitment in key legal areas for which it is generally difficult to recruit staff.

### **3.3 The assessment committee**

At the same time as the publication of the job advertisement, the Head of Department shall set up an assessment committee consisting of an internal chairman and 2-4 external members.<sup>3</sup> Both genders must be represented on the assessment committee.

The assessment committee is tasked with assessing whether the applicants meet the department's qualification criteria and any additional requirements contained in the job advertisement. The chairman of the assessment committee is responsible for presenting to the other committee members the department's qualification guidelines and ensuring that the assessment is carried out in accordance with these guidelines. The chairman is also responsible for ensuring that the schedule laid down is observed.

A positive assessment does not in itself mean an offer of employment, as the recruitment committee plays an independent role in relation to the assessment and prioritisation of the candidates.

### **3.4 The recruitment committee and the interview**

At the same time as the publication of the job advertisement, the recruitment committee is set up and times are booked for holding employment interviews.

The recruitment committee for PhD and postdoc posts generally consists of the Head of Department (chairman), the PhD coordinator (for PhD posts) and the relevant research group leader(s), as well as the project manager of any general project in which the PhD/postdoc project is included. Both genders must be represented on the recruitment committee.

The recruitment committee for assistant professors and associate professors consists of the Head of Department (chairman), the Vice Head of Department for Education, the relevant research group leader(s) or another relevant professional of at least associate professor level, possibly the chair of the assessment committee and others whose participation the Head of Department might find relevant to the specific employment. Both genders must be represented on the recruitment committee.

The recruitment committee for professorships consists of the dean (or the vice-dean for research) (chairman), the Head of Department, two representatives at professor level appointed by the Academic Council, the Vice Head of Department for Education, the relevant research group leader(s) or another relevant professional of at least associate professor level, possibly the chair of the assessment committee and others whose participation the Head of Department might find relevant to the specific employment. Both genders must be represented on the recruitment committee. If it turns out that one (or more) of the members of the recruitment committee has a conflict of interest relative to one of the qualified candidates, another member shall be appointed.

Applicants who are considered to be qualified by the assessment committee in accordance with the department's qualification guidelines shall initially be assessed by the recruitment committee in relation to the job advertisement, the department's strategy and its current needs. Selected candidates shall be called for an interview. This will generally take place via a physical meeting with the applicant at SDU, but it is also possible, depending on the circumstances, for it to be carried out online.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> The assessment committee for research assistant, assistant professor and postdoctoral posts consists of 2-3 internal academic staff of at least associate professor level. PhD applications are assessed by the PhD course committee consisting of 3 internal academic staff of at least associate professor level.

<sup>4</sup> See separate annex regarding the plan for holding of employment interviews.

The purpose of the interview is to provide the basis for an assessment of the applicant's overall qualifications, including matters that the assessment committee may not have considered. Described below are the aspects the appointment committee will normally attach importance to when assessing whether an applicant should be offered employment. This will be an overall assessment that will include the post in question, the nature of the assessment and information and impressions acquired from the job interview.

- The coherence between the applicant's skills and the department's current needs
- The coherence between the applicant's skills and the expectations indicated in the job advertisement
- The coherence between the applicant's professional profile and the department's strategy
- The applicant's research potential shall be assessed on the basis of the applicant's previous publications and the submitted research plan
- The applicant's potential with regard to teaching shall be assessed based on the applicant's teaching and pedagogic qualifications and the applicant's pedagogic core values and attitudes
- The applicant's experience with and potential concerning acquisition of external funding
- The applicant's approach to and experience with performing administrative tasks
- The applicant's ability and interest to enter into collaborations within research and teaching
- The applicant's past and expected interest and involvement in relation to the department and its development
- The applicant's past and expected contribution towards the day-to-day activities and ongoing operation of the department
- The applicant's past and expected contribution towards the working environment at the department
- The applicant's past handling of anticipated work tasks.
- The applicant's general personal behaviour and manner.

A follow-up interview may be held with selected candidates. The recruitment committee may also obtain references from the applicant's designated referees, and the applicant may also be requested to hold a trial lecture for the appointment committee if deemed relevant.

On the basis of an overall assessment of the above-mentioned issues, the Head of Department makes the final recommendation to the dean regarding employment of the applicant.

All applicants who have been interviewed shall receive personal feedback from the Head of Department or the relevant research group leader.

### **3.5 Welcoming new employees**

The department has an action plan and check lists for welcoming of new employees, including an introduction to the academic environment and the relevant work procedures.<sup>5</sup>

Department of Law, October 2018  
Updated September 2020

---

<sup>5</sup> See action plan for onboarding and offboarding.

## **Holding employment interviews**

1. The Head of the Secretariat, on behalf of the Head of Department, invites the relevant applicants for an interview.
2. The Head of the Secretariat agrees the time and practical details with the candidates who are going to be interviewed and explains to them how the interview will proceed.
  - a. The interviews are scheduled so that there is a period of 20-30 minutes between each interview.
3. Prior to conducting the interviews, the members of the recruitment committee must agree on the role of each member, including who is responsible for which points and who asks which questions. The chairman of the recruitment committee is responsible for ensuring that this has been agreed.
4. The recruitment committee meets at least 30 minutes before the interview.
  - a. Before each interview, the appointment committee discusses whether the specific applicant and/or his/her application gives rise to special points of attention which should be examined in more detail during the interview.
  - b. The recruitment committee adapts the format of the interview and the order of questions.
5. A member of the secretariat staff collects the applicant and takes the person to the room in which the interviews take place.
6. The interview will start with a brief presentation of the members of the appointment committee and of the University of Southern Denmark, the Faculty of Business and Social Sciences and the Department of Law, including its tasks, goals, culture and values.
7. The applicant then introduces himself/herself, including his/her
  - a. research history, profile and plan
  - b. teaching practice, pedagogical approach and teaching development
  - c. previous knowledge-exchange activities
  - d. experience with external funding, research management and administration
  - e. reflections on his/her role in the department and how he or she can contribute to the department and its development
8. The recruitment committee interviews the applicant and asks further questions regarding the above points. The recruitment committee may choose to emphasise some points rather than others.
9. The applicant is given the opportunity to ask questions to the appointment committee.
10. The interview ends with the applicant being informed of the remaining steps in the recruitment process.
11. The member of the secretariat staff collects the applicant after the conclusion of the interview.