

# Procedure for tenure track at SDU

## 1. Purpose

This procedure establishes the framework for use of tenure track positions at SDU. Tenure track positions are positions on an assistant professor level that, presupposing a positive academic assessment, progresses to a permanent position on an associate professor level without prior announcement of this position.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of SDU's tenure track model is to attract the most qualified and talented researchers. The tenure track is primarily expected to be used in subject areas where competition for the most promising researchers so warrants.

Assistant professors employed in tenure track positions must be able to document a high level in their current research and other professional work and, at the same time, must also possess exceptional potential to achieve the highest international level within their research area. After completing the tenure track progress, they are also expected to be able to live up to the criteria for employment as an associate professor as specified in the tenure track job advertisement.

Tenure track is one among several recruitment tools, and employment in fixed-term positions on an assistant professor level will continue to be the most common form of employment for junior researchers.

Please note that SDU's tenure track model is a so-called "Danish model". This means that current national legislation regarding conditions for remuneration and terms of employment are adhered to in tenure track positions, including e.g. term of notice as specified in the Employers' and Salaried Employees' Act. determination.

## 2. The tenure track progress

A person in a tenure track progress is employed as an assistant professor. During this progress period, the assistant professor is expected to achieve qualifications equivalent to that of an associate professor. Before the end of the sixth year of employment, the assistant professor transitions to permanent employment as an associate professor provided there is a positive academic assessment from the assessment committee.

The period of employment as assistant professor is maximum six years; however, this period may be extended due to maternity, paternity or adoption leave etc.

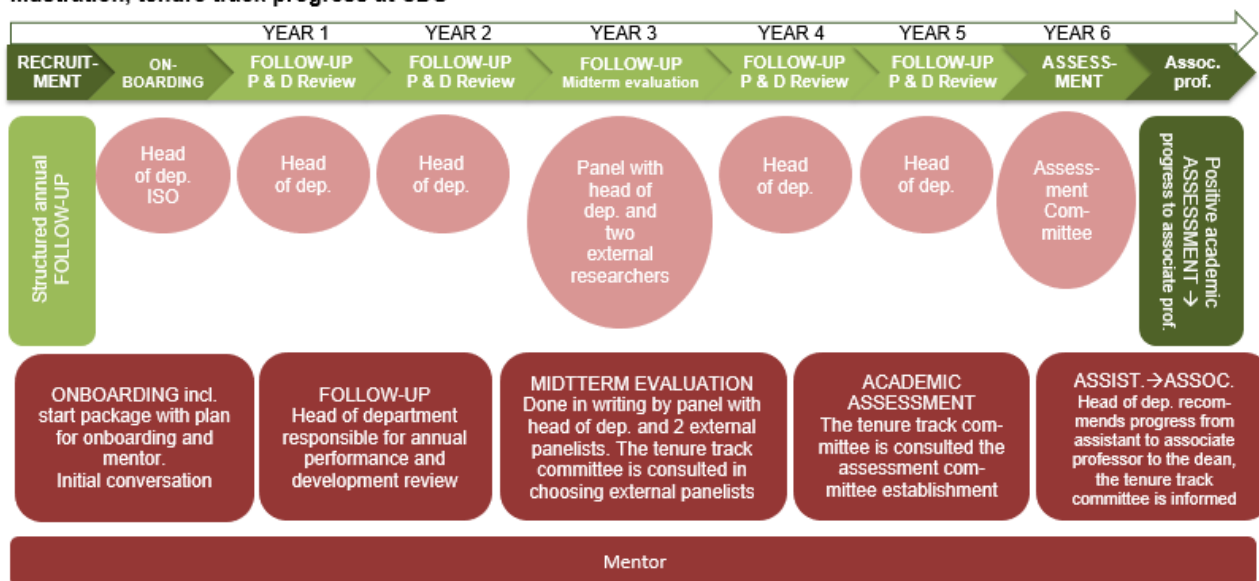
An interfaculty tenure track committee is appointed, which will be rooted in D-IAS. The committee is comprised of a chair from each faculty; committee members are appointed by the Vice-Chancellor based on nomination from the Deans. The committee is involved in advertising and filling tenure track positions, and it is also involved in the follow-up and evaluation of tenure track progresses.

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<sup>1</sup> Circular concerning protocol on terms of employment of academic staff at universities (in Danish) (2015), appendix 1, section 2.2. on "Stillingen som adjunkt/forsker"

The different phases of the tenure track positions' progress are illustrated below and described in greater detail in the following section.

**Illustration, tenure track progress at SDU**



## 2.1 Recruitment to tenure track

Tenure track positions are advertised on an assistant professor level. Advertisements of tenure track positions must be approved by a dean and SDU's tenure track committee, and one member of the committee must be included in the appointments committee for tenure track positions.

It must be stated in the job advertisement that before the end of the sixth year of employment and with no advertisement of the position, the assistant professor will be offered a permanent (tenured) position as associate professor provided that the assistant professor receives a positive academic assessment.

When advertising tenure track positions, it must be clear and transparent for applicants what criteria are emphasised in the academic assessment upon transition from assistant professor to associate professor.<sup>2</sup> The job advertisement must also state what the assistant professor is expected to achieve during their time as an assistant professor.

Such criteria must be drafted taking into account the skills necessary to the relevant subject area within e.g. teaching, research and knowledge exchange. Other criteria may include obtaining external research funding and stays at other research institutions.

The criteria must also reflect that, presupposing a positive academic assessment, automatic employment as associate professor is secured, which is why such assessment criteria should be tightened compared to those normally applied when employing non-tenure track associate professors where a positive assessment alone is not enough to secure employment.

<sup>2</sup> Note on "Job Structure for Academic Staff at Universities" (2013), page 6.

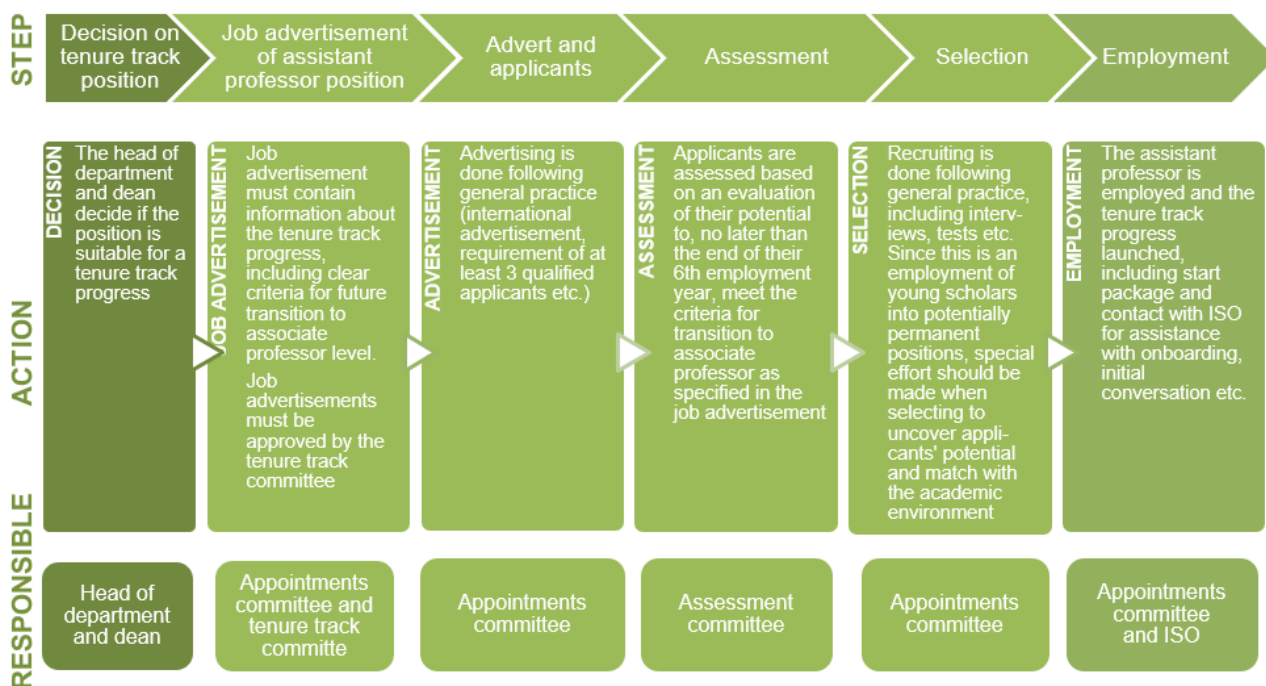
Applicants for tenure track positions are assessed based on an evaluation of their potential to, during the course of employment as assistant professor, meet the criteria for transition to associate professor level during the tenure track progress, and the assessment is conducted based on information concerning the applicant's proven record of scientific achievements, teaching experience and other relevant details as specified in the job advertisement.

The academic assessment of applicants for tenure track positions is conducted in accordance with the rules in the Danish Ministerial Order on the Appointment of Academic Staff at Universities.

The progress model means that tenure track assistant professors have a relatively good chance of securing a permanent position, and since applicants are typically early in their scientific careers, a special effort should be made when selecting among those assessed as qualified to uncover applicants' potential and match with the academic environment.

The recruitment process is outlined below.

**Illustration, recruitment process to tenure track position at SDU**



## 2.2 Onboarding

SDU's tenure track progress contains a start package for the new employee, which is determined by the head of department in dialogue with the academic environment and the Dean.

The start package must be attractive and competitive, and thus contribute to attracting the best qualified applicants, just as it must ensure that a new employee in a tenure track position get off to a good start in their employment as assistant professors at SDU.

## 2.3 Follow-up and midterm evaluation

During their employment, assistant professors are followed up to ensure that they will ultimately be able to achieve a positive academic assessment as an associate professor.<sup>3</sup>

The follow-up is comprised of the following elements:

- At the start of employment, the head of department ensures that a relevant manager has an initial conversation with the assistant professor so that the assistant professor is familiar with the requirements, guidelines and expectations associated with the tenure track progress.
- The head of department also ensures that the assistant professor is subjected to an annual performance and development review. This review helps ensure that the assistant professor follows the agreed-upon plan for tenure track, and that the assistant professor has access to relevant resources and collaborators. Reviews are normally held after 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> years of employment.
- Halfway during the tenure track progress (normally in the start of employment year 4) a midterm evaluation of the progress is conducted. The evaluation is carried out by a panel comprised of the head of department and two external, recognised researchers who are appointed following a consultation with the tenure track committee. The midterm evaluation is to ensure that the assistant professor is on the right track towards being able to achieve a positive assessment after completion of the tenure track progress, and the evaluation will also provide the assistant professor with a basis for planning the remaining part of the tenure track progress. The evaluation is based on the assistant professor's activities, results and development up until the time of the evaluation and concludes with written feedback to the assistant professor with recommendations for the onwards tenure track progress.

## 2.4. Academic assessment when transferring to associate professor position

The assistant professor recommends initiation of the assessment no later than at the transition from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> year of employment so that the results of the assessment are available in due course prior to the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> year of tenure track employment.

As stated above, the assessment will be conducted in accordance with the rules in the Danish Ministerial Order on the Appointment of Academic Staff at Universities, whereupon an assessment committee appointed by the Vice-Chancellor must decide whether the applicant possesses the academic qualifications within research, teaching and dissemination of knowledge etc. that are presupposed in the job structure, and whether the assistant professor also fulfils the other academic qualification as specified in the job advertisement.

The tenure track committee is consulted when establishing the assessment committee, and to inform the assessment committee's work, the tenure track committee also issues a statement on the assistant professor's activities, results and development during the tenure track.

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<sup>3</sup> Note on "Job Structure for Academic Staff at Universities" (2013), page 6.

The assessment committee then carries out an academic assessment based on the information obtained about the applicant's research production and teaching experience, other relevant information as specified in the job advertisement, and the tenure track committee's statement concerning the applicant.

In the academic assessment, emphasis is placed on the assistant professor's ability to convincingly fulfil the necessary acquisition of pedagogical competence and documented research results required for employment as associate professor. As stated above, tightened requirements are in place in this assessment because if a positive evaluation is received, the assistant professor automatically progresses to an associate professor position.

If a positive academic assessment is received, the head of department then submits a recommendation for transition to associate professor for the Dean's approval, and the tenure track committee is informed of the decision.

Please note that the assistant professor is free to recommend initiation of the assessment earlier and already within the first four years of employment. If this assessment is negative, the assistant professor can recommend initiation of a second assessment within the final six months of employment. Thus, assessment can be conducted a maximum of two times.

If the assessment is negative, the assistant professor's employment must be terminated in accordance with the general employment law regulations.

### 3. Follow-up on recruitment of academic staff and use of tenure track

The Executive Board and the tenure track committee will receive an annual update on the use of tenure track.