

Rector's Decision
55/2015

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24 June 2015

Tenure track system for teaching and research staff at the University of Helsinki as of 1 August 2015

The University of Helsinki applies a tenure track system for its teaching and research staff based on a Rector's Decision made on 5 May 2010 (088/2010). The system was updated on 17 June 2011 (104/2011) and revised on 1 March 2012 (39/2012).

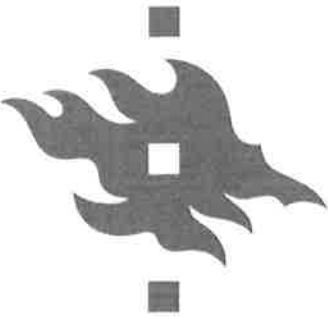
This decision amends the previous guidelines as described in the appendix.

Rector

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Director of Human Resources

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24 June 2015

Tenure track system for teaching and research staff at the University of Helsinki as of 1 August 2015

OBJECTIVE

The tenure track system aims to increase the predictability, competitiveness and attractiveness of academic careers while promoting internationalisation at the University. The goal is to attract the most talented, suitable and motivated individuals in an increasingly competitive environment both in Finland and abroad.

PROGRESS ALONG THE TENURE TRACK

A person who is appointed to a tenure-track position is employed as an assistant professor for fixed-term employment, during which his or her performance will be monitored and evaluated according to the criteria defined when concluding the employment contract. Successful rating in the assessment will lead to new fixed-term employment as associate professor, the overall aim being a permanent position as professor.

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR ASSISTANT/ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS AND THE PREREQUISITES FOR SELECTION

According to the Regulations of the University of Helsinki, the appointee must hold a doctoral degree, be capable of independent scientific work and have the teaching skills required for the position. In addition, the appointee is expected to show his or her capability and motivation as regards a scientific career as demonstrated by publications or other means.

When evaluating the candidate's merits, attention will be given to research and teaching work, international research work and other international experience, as well as success in obtaining external research funding.

POSITION OVERVIEW AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF POSITION

Because the goal of the tenure track system is to recruit highly talented researchers to the University of Helsinki, the field of the position must be defined in sufficiently broad terms.

Based on the dean's proposal, the rector decides whether sufficient grounds exist for announcing a tenure track position.

The position may be a joint one, involving a faculty and independent institute or a non-University unit. The establishment of joint professorships is strongly encouraged. However, the position will always be located in a faculty.

When announcing a tenure track position, the unit ensures that it has the financial resources to offer a permanent position as professor, provided that the candidate has been successful as an assistant and associate professor and that the predetermined criteria are fulfilled.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF VACANCY

Calls for applications to professorships must be announced in such a way that the appointees may be employed as assistant professors, associate professors or professors, depending on their merits and career stage.

Positions are announced both in Finland and abroad. The recruiting unit is expected to actively distribute information about the position through its own international networks. To reach the best candidates, the unit should not rely solely on the position advertisement.

SELECTION PROCEDURE

The appointment process for professorships described in the rector's guidelines is followed in recruitment.

FIRST EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP

Employment contract

The first employment contract is concluded for three to five years, depending on the career stage determined by the appointee's previous experience. The duration of this contract determines the point at which the assistant professor's success in fulfilling his or her duties as well as his or her capacity for continuing to another fixed-term contract may be evaluated. The assistant professor should be informed about the continuation of the position approximately a year before the end of the first term so that he or she can make plans for the future.

Based on experiences from international recruitment, non-Finnish appointees require more time for orientation than their Finnish peers at the beginning of the first employment relationship. Since they may also require more time to obtain external funding, a five-year employment relationship is better suited to such candidates.

Work plan

Assistant professors draw up a work plan jointly with their immediate superior. However, the head of department and, in faculties without departments, the dean, should also participate in the preparation of at least the first work plan. Thereafter, assistant professors will draw up a work plan for each academic year, as do other teaching and research staff.

The work plans include research, research funding acquisition, teaching and supervision of studies as well as other tasks assigned to the unit. The maximum amount of 140 contact teaching hours per academic year defined for professors in the collective agreement will be applied when allocating teaching tasks. Overall, the work plan must be drafted in such a way

that the assistant professor can realistically attain the objectives set for the successful fulfilment of his or her professional duties.

Confirmation of the criteria for successful work

The criteria for evaluating, towards the end of the first contract, the assistant professor's performance and the possibility for concluding a second contract must be defined before the employment begins. The objectives of work will be recorded in concrete terms in an appendix to the employment contract, taking into account the stage of the employee's career and the particular nature of the field.

Such criteria may include the number and quality of publications, acquisition of research funding, the status of supervised theses and dissertations, any international work during the contract term, as well as other academic merits and matters related to the unit's operations. The assistant professor must have a clear understanding of what is expected of him or her during the first employment contract and what criteria will be used to evaluate his or her possibility to secure another fixed-term contract in order to proceed along the tenure track.

The provision of resources for work

The unit must support the assistant professor's work and development towards the position of professor by ensuring that the assistant professor has access to the resources and opportunities that he or she needs to reach the objectives set. In addition to financial support, the assistant professor needs guidance and support from the immediate superior. Mentoring may also be beneficial.

Each new assistant professor must be assigned a personal coordinator. Orientation and guidance are particularly important for people from outside Finland.

SECOND EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP

The assistant professor's success in his or her duties will be assessed approximately a year before the end of the first contract period, and a decision on continuation will be made on the basis of the assessment. If the assistant professor has reached the objectives set, a second employment contract will be concluded for three to five years, and the goals for the continuation period will be defined. If the work was not productive and the goals were not reached, the employment relationship will end after the first contract.

The dean will appoint an appointment committee to prepare the interim assessment. Outside experts may also be used, but it is not necessary at this point.

Having received the appointment committee's proposal and the appended statements from the head of department or dean, the rector will decide whether to extend the assistant professor's employment relationship.

TENURE

No later than one year before the expiration of the second employment contract, an evaluation will be carried out to determine whether the requirements for granting tenure as professor have been fulfilled. If this is not the case, the employment contract will not be renewed.

This stage is essentially equivalent to an invitation to the position of professor, and therefore the evaluation is supported by an assessment procedure. Scientific and teaching qualifications, assessor statements and a statement from the Teaching Skills Evaluation Committee will be considered when evaluating the performance of the associate professor. Furthermore, activity in international circles, community relations and stakeholder cooperation during the tenure track period will also be taken into account in the evaluation.

If, based on the assessors' statements and other considerations, the appointment committee concludes that sufficient grounds for tenure do not exist, the committee's report, along with the statements by the dean and head of department, will be submitted to the rector. If the rector agrees with the conclusions, the associate professor's employment relationship will terminate at the end of the contract.

If the appointment committee concludes that sufficient grounds for tenure exist, the invitation to the position of professor will follow the normal procedure.

The rector will decide on the invitation to the position of professor based on the associate professor's success in the second fixed-term employment relationship.