DECISION

2015-03-10 HISTFILFAK 2015/21

UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

The Board of the Faculty of Arts

The Dean

INSTRUCTIONS FOR REFEREES[1]

Recruiting new staff is a crucial part of the University's long-term strategies and quality assurance work. The Faculty wishes to express its gratitude for your advice and assistance in identifying good candidates.

The following guide-lines clarify the Appointment Regulations of Uppsala University (UFV2010/1842), the faculty's supplementary guidelines (2012/29) and the appointment profiles laid down by the Faculty for each recruitment process. The instructions focus on aspects that in our experience can sometimes cause misunderstandings and unnecessary delay of the recruitment process.

LEGAL FOUNDATIONS

Recruitment of new academic staff is regulated in detail by Swedish law and in complementary university-specific rules. For a recruitment process to be legal, it is vital that no formal errors are committed in the course of the process. There is a right of appeal. The responsibility for ensuring the legality of the process lies entirely with the recruitment panel and not with the referees. It is, however, useful for you as a referee to be familiar with the legal foundations. In the following, the rules and the process are described and explained.

According to Swedish law, all documents produced within or submitted to a state body (such as, for instance, a university) are by definition public documents. This means that referee reports become public upon submittal to the university. If you feel uncomfortable at the thought that candidates will be allowed to read your assessment of them, we suggest you decline the evaluation task because there is no legal possibility of denying anyone access to the reports. Also, for the same reasons, please

[1] In this document, the same terminology is used as in the Appointment Regulations where the Swedish word 'sakkunnig' is translated as referee. You sometimes see this word translated as evaluator instead.

bear in mind *not* to submit any preliminary reports to the university.

No conflict of interest should affect recruitment, and referees must therefore declare any interest that may disqualify him/her. If you are in doubt whether or not you have a conflict of interests, please consult with the chair of the recruitment panel.

Under no circumstances are candidates allowed to contact a referee in the course of the recruitment process. Should this happen, please do not respond but instead inform the chair of the recruitment panel immediately.

RULES OF PARTICULAR RELEVANCE

The laws and rules of relevance to the recruitment process *in general* are all included in the Appointment Regulations of Uppsala University. Please pay special attention to Section 6, and in particular § 79, which describes your task. For each *specific* recruitment process, an appointment profile is set up before the call for applicants is advertised. The appointment profile is as important as the laws and rules in general. This means that referees and recruitment panels *must* pay close attention to the contents of the profile, and *must only* pay attention to the contents of the profile. For the validity of the process, it is not allowed either to introduce any selection criteria that are not explicitly mentioned in the profile, or to neglect any explicitly mentioned criteria. It is incumbent on the recruitment panel to make sure that the profile is heeded.

HOW TO READ THE RECRUITMENT PROFILE

The appointment profile typically starts with a description of the department and of the tasks included in the position. After the task description, the eligibility requirements and assessment criteria follow. Applicants who do not fulfil the eligibility requirements shall not be subject to further scrutiny.

Please note that it is usually sufficient to have a Ph.D. or an equivalent exam to be eligible; the Ph.D. does not have to be in the discipline in question. Thus, a person with a Ph.D. in for instance history is not automatically ineligible for a position as lecturer in anthropology. Very likely, such an applicant will not be able to meet the assessment criteria, but s/he should not be declared ineligible.

Apart from holding a Ph.D., having practical pedagogic skills and formal pedagogic training is always a part of the eligibility requirements. Often, language skills are also included under eligibility requirements.

For *lectureships* the assessment criteria usually state that equal emphasis will be placed on research and teaching competence, and that equal care will be taken in the appraisal of both types of competence. This means that a referee needs to be equally careful when assessing both types of competence and that when the final overall assessment of each candidate is made, the same importance should be afforded to both research and teaching competence.

For *professorships* the assessment criteria usually state that special emphasis is to be placed on research credentials. However, both research and teaching qualifications must be assessed and equal care must be taken in the appraisal of both types of competence. Appointment profiles often include the sentence: 'In a combined consideration of all assessment criteria, however, an applicant with outstanding teaching qualifications may be ranked higher than an applicant with slightly superior research credentials.' This means that in the *normal* case, the candidate with strongest research credentials will win against someone with weaker research credentials – since special emphasis is to be placed on such credentials for professorships – but referees *may* place a person with *slightly* weaker research credentials first if they feel that s/he is really an outstanding teacher.

THE REFEREE'S TASK

Referees are allowed to cooperate to a certain extent. Sometimes, cooperation is necessary simply because there are so many candidates. It is, however, important to be aware of when cooperation can and cannot take place (see § 79 in the Appointment Regulations and below under Structure of the report).

All eligible candidates must be described in some detail and the descriptive parts of the reports may be written jointly by the referees. The description of those who do not make it to the shortlist may be rather short.

Referees are however not allowed to cooperate when it comes to shortlisting and ranking candidates. It is important that the latter parts of the reports, where the shortlisted candidates are discussed and assessed, are written by each referee individually.

Use pertinent supporting arguments to justify the ranking and make sure to relate to the assessment criteria identified in the appointment profile. Notice that the *ranking* of candidates is explicitly mentioned in the Appointment Regulations § 79. If the reports do not include a justified ranking, they cannot be used. This does not mean that a referee cannot arrive at the conclusion that two candidates are equally strong. In such a case, both candidates should be given the same ranking.

The applicants are not allowed to submit work (books, papers) written after the deadline given in the appointment profile.

ASSESSING RESEARCH QUALIFICATIONS

The assessment of research qualifications should focus on quality rather than quantity. What the recruitment panel wants to know is what contributions to knowledge the applicants have made, and how valuable those contributions have been in your opinion. What problems have the applicants addressed and solved? How convincing are their results? What impact have the results made?

Please, do not focus on number of pages, or on number of items on the publication lists. In addition, please do not write over-long summaries of the applicants' works. It is much appreciated if the reports are as concise and precise as possible.

The reports must show that the referees have read the works of the candidates themselves. In some disciplines, bibliometric aids are well-established tools and may be used, but only as a complementary indicator.

Grant capture is another important indicator of research activity and excellence. It should therefore be part of the overall assessment of the candidates' research qualification, as should conference organization and other forms of scholarly interaction.

ASSESSING TEACHING QUALIFICATIONS

The assessment of teaching experience and pedagogic skills should aim for a combined assessment of quantity and quality. Quality is always the most important factor but, also, the most difficult one to assess.

Quantity

Candidates often describe the volume of their teaching experience in different ways.

Sometimes, candidates describe their teaching experience in terms of 'credits' (HP). This is, however, not an ideal way of measuring since 'credits' describe the workload of the students rather than of the teacher. For instance, 7.5 HP means five weeks' fulltime work for a student but says nothing about number of contact hours. The relationship between 'credits' and contact hours is not uniform but varies greatly at Swedish universities. A better way of describing teaching experience in terms of quantity is to count 'lecturer hours'. At least in theory, one lecturer hour corresponds to four clock hours, i.e., the assumption is that one hour in the classroom will require preparatory work etc. of another three hours. The best solution is often to describe the teaching experience in terms of full years but some candidates will have less than that.

Quality

Teaching *experience* is not the same as teaching *skills*. Large experience of teaching does not automatically entail excellent teaching skills. A teacher with relatively little experience may still be a better teacher than a more experienced one. Whether experience translates into skills or not depends on what conclusions a teacher draws from his/her experience. Teaching excellence is often the result of careful reflection on what went wrong and why.

For this reason, applicants are often asked to write a statement on their views on teaching and on their own teaching trajectory. In combination with other sources of information, such statements can be very useful to identify quality. It is important, however, to be critical and to look for evidence supporting all claims made in such statements. The same applies to course evaluations and to letters of recommendation; they too have to be read with a critical eye.

'Pedagogic skills' does not only refer to teaching skills but has a broader meaning. For instance, assisting one's colleagues with help and advice, taking a leading role in course development, and writing textbooks are all examples of activities that are relevant to the assessment of a person's pedagogical skills.

Pedagogical skills are eligibility requirements for *both* professorships and lectureships.

The appointment profiles always say that a successful applicant has to have completed 'relevant tertiary-level teacher training' of at least ten weeks. This requirement is negotiable since 'equivalent proficiency' is accepted. We appreciate if you pay close attention to whether or not the proficiency can be said to be equivalent. Again, please bear in mind that 'proficiency' is not a matter of quantity/experience but of quality/skills.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The referee reports should have the following structure:

First, describe briefly the legal basis for your report, that is, the appointment profile, the Appointment Regulations of Uppsala University and the supplementary guidelines of the faculty.

Second, state if any of the applicants are ineligible and if so why. This should be made very briefly.

Third, describe the works and experiences of all candidates. These descriptions need not be very long for the ones that do not make it to the shortlist. You may divide this purely descriptive work between you, but *you should establish your shortlists individually*.

Fourth, analyze the qualifications of the shortlisted candidates in detail. Here, the reasons for singling out the top candidates must be explicit and in accordance with the appointment profile. It should be clear to the reader why the people on the shortlist are there and why the ones who fall outside do so. *It is important for the validity of the report that there is no collaboration between referees here*.

Fifth, *rank the shortlisted candidates*, justifying the ranking carefully with pertinent supporting arguments and with reference to the appointment profile. Compare the candidates systematically by assessing each type of competence separately and then make an overall assessment of each candidate and assign him/her a position on the ranking list. *It is important for*

the validity of the report that there is no collaboration between referees here.

INTERVIEWS AND TRIAL LECTURES

If the recruitment panel decides that it needs interviews and trial lectures as an additional basis for its decision, you may be asked to attend and to weigh in the lectures and interviews in your reports. Do not, however, accord too much weight to interviews and lectures; they are after all small components in the overall assessment. Nervousness may affect the performance of the candidates and hence distort the impression of otherwise excellent teachers.

DEADLINES

In order to avoid unnecessary delays in the recruitment process we ask all referees to respect agreed-upon deadlines.