

Recommendations of the Senate for the Preparation of Appointment Proposals

Preamble

As a means of quality assurance in appointment procedures, the Senate recommends observing the following principles based on the provisions of the NHG (Lower Saxony Higher Education Act). The aim in doing so is also to avoid shortcomings in organisation and quality as well as resulting delays in appointment procedures.

The Senate shall review the practicality of these recommendations in constant discussion with the faculties.

It is strongly recommended that the "Recommendations for Quality Assurance in Appointment Procedures in Universities and Universities of Applied Science" of the Scientific Commission of the State of Lower Saxony (Wissenschaftliche Kommission Niedersachsen) are taken into consideration.¹

1. Advertisement

Before advertising a position, checks should be carried out to ensure that the applicant potential for the intended job profile is both large enough and of high quality. Advertisements should be placed in such a way that allows as many suitable potential applicants as possible to be notified of the vacant chair and allows the specialist public to be informed. In the scope of what is legally possible, the main areas of work of the chair should not be too prescriptive in the advertisement. Instead, flexibility should be the aim in the corresponding applicant situation as a means of selecting the best. Advertising in nationally and internationally accessible media and over the internet as well as in an appropriate foreign language if necessary is therefore recommended. The Appointment Commission should check whether addressing desired applicants personally, as is recommended by university organisations (HRK [German Rector's Conference], WR [Science Council], WKN [Scientific Commission of Lower Saxony]) is wise; the aim here is, in particular, the active recruitment of excellently qualified academics. The consultation of national² and international³ databases on female academics is included in the preparation of the procedure. The equal rights representative must be involved from the beginning of the procedure.

2. Formation of the Appointment Commission

The Appointment Commission shall make the decisions which are important for an appointment. The Commission is the main body responsible for the quality of the appointment proposal.

¹ "Recommendations on the Quality Assurance of Appointment Procedures in Universities and Universities of Applied Science" (<http://www.wk.niedersachsen.de/Materialien/Berufung.pdf>)

² e.g. "Wissenschaftlerinnen-Datenbank FemConsult" <http://www.femconsult.de>

³ e.g. "European platform of Women Scientists" <http://www.epws.org>

The group representatives in the Faculty Council shall nominate the respective members of the Appointment Commission. The members of the Appointment Commission should be nominated in a procedure which is as transparent as possible. The university of today, which is composed as a group university, is based on the functioning autonomy of the groups involved. Outside of the elections to the Committees, the groups are often unorganised or very vaguely organised. Accordingly, the formation of Appointment Commissions, in particular the nomination of the members, is often not subject to a regulated procedure. In particular, if a procedure is not established through a consensus of the status groups, it is recommended that all members of the respective status group (in the case of students: the selected representatives on a faculty level and in the institutions) are informed of the nominations made in whichever way [e.g. through Heads of the Institute, Boards of Deans or the group representatives in the Faculty Council], including those from current voting and/or consulting members, via email before the resolution is made and that the members are given the opportunity to express their views with the definition of a deadline.

The Commissions should be exclusively composed according to professional competence and not, where this would be possible in terms of organisation, according to affiliation to a list or according to other proportional representation aspects, unless otherwise stated in statutory regulations.

The Board of Deans shall inform the Presidential Board of the formation of the Appointment Commission before approving the work of the Appointment Commission and shall come to an agreement with the Presidential Board (Art. 26 para. 2 NHG).

In addition to the general applicable reasons for disqualification (e.g. relationship), the members of the Commission should not be professionally close to the applicants who have been shortlisted; if this is the case, however, the member of the Commission should be replaced by another member. If this recommendation is not observed, this must be justified and explicitly noted in the appointment records.

3. Equality

In the faculties, the topic of "Quality Assurance under Aspects of Equality", particularly with regard to the appointment procedures must be discussed and an awareness of the problem in relation to this must be developed. The inviting Boards of Deans shall effectively highlight the necessity of assuring equal opportunities for both male and female scientists in the procedure to the members of the Appointment Commissions.

Openness for female academics should be established in the profile of the faculties and be effectively publicised.

4. Reviewing the Applications

The applications shall be reviewed to check which applications meet the requirements of the advertisement. The previous academic achievements are initially used as a basis for the decisions to be made; the results of the personal interview (presentation, possibly trial seminar; Commission meeting) should not lead to a subsequent reassessment of the written achievements. Deviations from this procedure (which require corresponding documentation) are possible in order to speed up the procedure.

The exclusion of applications from further consultation must be justified with understandable factual arguments based on the advertisement and must be documented with voting results. In addition to the majority vote of the Appointment Commission, exclusions as well as further consideration of applications also require the majority vote of the members of the university lecturer's group who belong to the Commission.

The application of members and affiliates of the Georg-August-University is based on the provisions of Art. 26 para. 4 NHG. Suitability in terms of Art. 26 para. 4, sentence 6 shall be determined without doubt and shall be justified.

5. Appraisal by External Experts

External experts (Art. 26, para. 4 NHG) shall be appointed with the majority of votes from voting members of the Commission and the majority of votes from the university lecturers' group. In addition to professional excellence, when selecting applicants it must be ensured, as far as is possible, that the experts are not personally or professionally connected to one of the persons to be appraised (for example, participation in doctorate or post-doctorate procedures; application for grants; joint research or publication work; simultaneous work in the same academic institution). Should this not be the case, this shall be understandably justified with facts. During the selection process, the possibility of appointing experts working abroad should be reviewed.

In the external appraisal, only the applications of applicants which are primarily considered as worthy of being shortlisted should be given to the Commission.

6. Requirements for reports from external experts

External experts should be asked to express their opinion comparatively and explicitly on the following points in writing:

- a) How is the quality of the academic work assessed overall?
- b) Originality/innovation (with specific reference to the content of the work: What is particularly original/innovative or conventional? [if necessary, as an example])
- c) Should development potential be established: where is this recognised exactly?
- d) Potential for third party funds (if this can be assessed)? What substantiates this?
- f) Does the profile of the applicant match the requirements of the advertisement?

g) Are shortcomings compensated by positive characteristics? If yes, these characteristics must be mentioned.

h) Which list place is to be assigned to each person appraised and why?

The professional background of an applicant should only be traced in the reports as far as is relevant for the evaluating argumentation.

7. Faculty report

The report from the faculty should contain the following elements:

a) Formation of the Appointment Commission (if necessary, amendments during the Commission work).

b) Conclusive report on the important procedural steps and decisions of the Commission in the individual meetings, with a particular focus on equality aspects.

c) Presentation of the decision-making process which lead to the list proposal of the Commission: 1. weighting of the academic work, the presentation, the trial seminar, the personal interview; 2. the consideration of the external report: here all critical comments on the proposed applicant should be comprehensibly invalidated; 3. motives which led the Commission to its list sequence.

d) Handling the Commission proposal in the Faculty Council, if necessary, with traceable justification for a sequence which is different from that of the Commission proposal.

e) Justification for an appointment proposal with less than three persons, whereby the practice of the "three-person list" can be changed if three professionally excellent applicants are not present.

f) Assessing the probability of gaining the person proposed and being able to finance their expected equipment requirements.

g) Statement from the equal rights representative and, if necessary, statement from the representative of severely disabled persons.

h) If necessary, justification for deviating from the guidelines of the equal rights brief.

i) Laudations.