

Tenure track professorships at the University of Vienna: Procedural document

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-- English translation, German document is binding --

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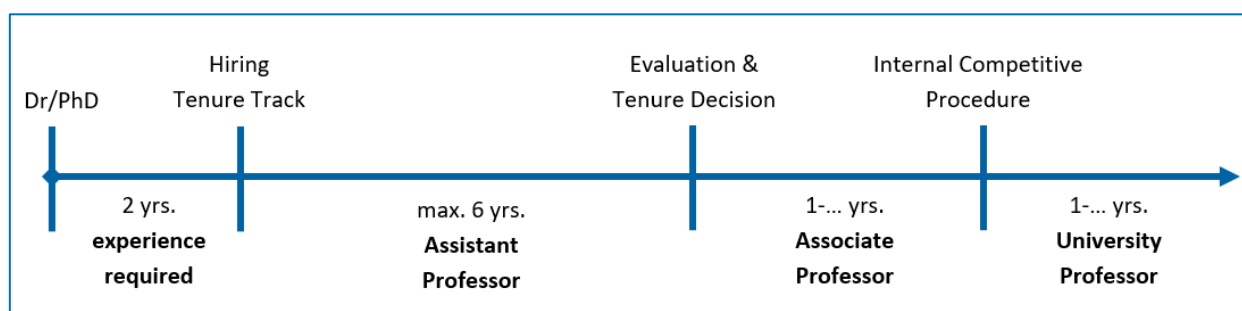
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Career steps and target group

Tenure track professorships enable promising academics who have achieved recognition to pursue a continuous academic career from an assistant professor position via a permanent associate professor position – to be obtained after six years of employment at the latest – to a university professorship.

According to article 27 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement for University Staff and section 99 of the Austrian Universities Act, the career steps are:

- **Assistant professor** (temporary position for six years): when concluding a qualification agreement
- **Associate professor** (permanent position): when fulfilling the conditions in the qualification agreement. In accordance with section 99, para. 6 of the Universities Act, associated professors are assigned to the group of professors for organisational purposes
- **University professor** (permanent position): following an appointment procedure according to section 99, para. 4 of the Universities Act



Tenure track professorships are aimed at academics who hold a doctoral/PhD degree and have at least two years of experience as postdoctoral researcher at a university or other research institution; as a general rule, applicants must have gained research experience outside the University of Vienna for a total of at least two years during or after their doctoral studies.

Depending on their academic age and taking into account possible care periods, the University of Vienna expects candidates to have an outstanding publication record and an international reputation, the ability and willingness to lead a research group and enthusiasm for excellent teaching in all phases of studies (bachelor's, master's and doctoral level). In addition, candidates should have supervised academic theses (according to the Statutes) and promoted early career researchers.

Subject dedication and selection procedure

Tenure track professorships are dedicated to certain academic fields. They are advertised internationally and appointed in a competitive selection procedure.

Based on the **Development Plan**, the Rectorate and the Dean of the relevant Faculty or the Head of the Centre dedicate tenure track professorships during **staff structure discussions**. The Dean of the Faculty or Head of the Centre has to consult the Scientific Advisory Board of the Faculty or Centre.

The **subject dedication** has to guarantee that the expected number of applications from qualified candidates allows for a competitive selection procedure.

A tenure track position amounts to 1.5 personnel points. The Rectorate has to approve the budget for tenure track professorships.

According to statutory provisions, the **Equal Opportunities Working Party** has to be involved in the selection procedure.

The relevant Dean of the Faculty or Head of the Centre and the Rectorate have to agree on the **text of the vacancy notice** (template) before it is approved by the member of the Rectorate responsible for research and the Rector.

Vacancy notices for tenure track professorships are **advertised internationally** by the Rectorate. The Dean of the Faculty or the Head of the Centre is responsible for the **active search** for suitable candidates, and for adequately disseminating the vacancy notice internationally in the relevant field.

Applications should be submitted in English to allow for an international appraisal.

For every tenure track position, the member of the Rectorate responsible for research appoints and chairs a **panel** comprising the Dean of the Faculty or Head of the Centre, and, normally, three professors (university professors, associate professors, associated professors).

In consultation with the member of the Rectorate responsible for research, the panel is responsible for the **selection procedure**. This procedure is based on a comparative international **appraisal**, as well as public presentations at the Faculty or Centre (**hearings**). This procedure has to comply with the provisions concerning equal opportunities.

The panel meetings (i) to determine the short list and (ii) to determine the appointment list are chaired by the member of the Rectorate responsible for research. Die organizational responsibility for the further work of the panel besides these meetings is in the hands of Dean of the Faculty or Head of the Centre.

Suggestions for the shortlist are to be developed by the members of the panel, taking into account suggestions from other university professors ("extended panel"). The extended panel is appointed by the member of the Rectorate responsible for research based on a proposal by the Dean of the Faculty or Head of the Centre.

In the **first session of the panel (to determine the short list)**, chaired by the member of the Rectorate responsible for research, the members of the panel (in compliance with the Affirmative Action Plan for the advancement of women and equal treatment) select, as a rule, five candidates who are best-qualified according to the advertised criteria (**short list**).

The assessment of the short-listed candidates through peer review and hearing takes place simultaneously.

- The peer review is centrally managed. The member of the Rectorate responsible for research **appoints the reviewers** on the basis of proposals made by professors (university professors, associate and associated professors) as well as proposals made by the Unit for Quality Assurance.
- Hearing with the short-listed candidates. The Dean of the Faculty or the Head of the Centre is responsible for organising the **hearing** consisting of a Faculty or Centre public scientific lecture and teaching sample as well as a non-public discussion with the panel and non-public interviews. The dates of the hearing are to be communicated to all Faculty or Centre members as well as to the students, including faculty and study representatives. The Faculties and Centres have to cover the costs associated with the hearing. The Dean of the Faculty or the Head of the Centre are responsible to write and provide the **minutes of the hearing**.
- Involvement of students. The students have to be invited by the Dean or Head of the Centre to the teaching sample and must get the opportunity to interview the candidates. The Faculty or Centre representatives of the Austrian Student Union nominate two students who write a written statement on the performance of the short-listed candidates in the teaching sample. The statement is send directly to the member of the Rectorate responsible for research (via the service unit Human Resources and Gender Equality) and can be presented by the students in the second session of the panel.

The **appointment list** is developed by the members of the panel taking into account suggestions from other university professors ("extended panel").

In the **second session of the panel (to determine the appointment list)**, chaired by the member of the Rectorate responsible for research, the members of the panel select (as a general rule three) candidates who are best-qualified (**appointment list**) on the basis of the expert opinions and public hearings.

The panel submits the appointment list to the **Rector** who decides on a candidate.

The Rector consults the **professors in the relevant academic discipline in writing** about his/her decision.

The University of Vienna offers the successful candidate an **employment contract**. The Rector decides whether the successful candidate receives an offer for an employment contract on the basis of the Collective Bargaining Agreement for University Staff with allocation to job group A2, or a higher offer (excess payments are subject to appropriate proof – presentation of current payslips).

Initially, the employment contract is a temporary contract for a period of maximally 6 years. If a temporary contract is not feasible due to legal provisions, the employment contract is concluded for an unlimited period. This contract may be terminated according to the specifications in the Collective Bargaining Agreement for University Staff.

Career path to a professorship

Following the conclusion of a qualification agreement with the commencement of employment, the employee is appointed to **assistant professor**.

The process leading to the conclusion of a qualification agreement comprises the following steps:

1. **Proposal concerning the content of the qualification agreement made by the candidate and the Dean of the Faculty or Head of the Centre:** Based on the standards of the University (see below), the candidate and the Dean of the Faculty or Head of the Centre agree on the contents of the qualification agreement in consultation with subject representatives.
2. **Approval of the qualification agreement from the Rector**, following a preliminary review by the member of the Rectorate responsible for research (signed by the candidate, Dean of the Faculty/Head of the Centre, Vice-Rector, Rector).
3. **Appointment to assistant professor** with the commencement of employment.

Generally, the **qualification phase** lasts four years.

Exceptional cases: the qualification phase may be shortened to, as a rule, two years in the following cases:

- Appointment of an (associated) professor who is already working at another university or research institution
- The candidate has an offer from another university or research institution for a permanent position as e.g. an associated professor
- In case of outstanding scholarly achievements of the candidate (e.g. ERC Grant, START Prize of the FWF, Vienna Research Group of the WWTF).

The Rectorate specifies the **standards for qualification agreements** for the entire University (see below).

These standards provide the basis for the conclusion of qualification agreements for a qualification phase of four years. In case of a shorter qualification phase (see exceptional cases above), it is necessary to assess which of the criteria have already been fulfilled and are therefore no longer subject to the qualification agreement.

The **objectives of the qualification agreement** have to match the employee's career level at the time of the conclusion of the agreement. The wording used may be altered individually and adapted to the relevant field. These objectives should be achievable within the qualification phase. The available resources (including third-party funds that have to be acquired) have to be taken into consideration as well. The objectives have to be formulated in a realistic, specific and meaningful way. Quantitative objectives have to be measurable. The following points have to be covered in every agreement:

- Development and further development of an independent profile in research and teaching
- Publication achievements
- Subject-specific teaching
- International visibility and recognition, as well as cooperation
- Third-party funds
- Promotion of early career researchers
- Third mission and public outreach
- Leadership (establishing and leading a research group)

During the **qualification phase**, the Dean of the Faculty/Head of the Centre evaluates and records the progress made and the intermediate objectives achieved in the framework of annual staff appraisals.

The Faculty/Centre has to support assistant professors in achieving their qualification objectives by providing them with opportunities (especially by giving them appropriate teaching assignments) and resources (taking account of third-party funds to be acquired) to conduct independent academic research.

In the framework of human resources development, the University of Vienna offers various seminars (leadership, conflict resolution, etc.), mentoring programmes, as well as individual development measures (coaching offers, etc.).

The qualification period is extended by periods of prohibition of employment under the Maternity Protection Act 1979 (MSchG) and / or parental leave under the MSchG or the Fathers Parental Leave Act (VKG). According to § 20 para. 3 KV, these extension periods must in sum not exceed 3 years.

The fulfilment of the qualification agreement is not assessed before the end of the qualification phase.

Only in the case of outstanding achievements of the candidate (e.g. ERC Grant, renowned academic prizes) and if it is strategically important to the University of Vienna (e.g. offer from another university), the member of the Rectorate responsible for research may assess if the conditions in the qualification agreement have been satisfied before the end of the qualification phase.

With the successful evaluation of the qualification agreement, the assistant professor will be appointed to a permanent **associate professor** position on the first day of the following month.

At the end of the qualification phase, the fulfilment of conditions in the qualification agreement is checked as follows:

1. The assistant professor has to present a **self-evaluation report** that outlines the fulfilment of the individual aspects of the qualification agreement in a plausible and comprehensible manner. **It has to include a standardised overview of the teaching, examination, supervision and publication achievements, third-party funds acquired and the results of the course evaluations, which is prepared by the Unit for Quality Assurance.**
2. Based on this self-evaluation report and in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty or Head of the Centre and, normally, three professors (including associate professors and associated professors), the member of the Rectorate responsible for research assesses if the candidate has satisfied the conditions specified in the qualification agreement.
 - a. The course evaluations are used to assess the teaching agreement.
 - b. If necessary, i.e. if individual conditions of the qualification agreement have not been evidently met, international expert opinions may be sought to assess whether the assistant professor has satisfied the conditions in the research agreement. The member of the Rectorate responsible for research **appoints the reviewers** on the basis of proposals made by professors (university professors, associate and associated professors) as well as proposals made by the Unit for Quality Assurance.
3. The result of this assessment is submitted in the form of a proposal to the Rector in writing. On this basis, s/he determines whether the assistant professor has satisfied the conditions in the qualification agreement or not.
 - a. The subject dedication specified in the vacancy notice is reviewed and determined.

Associated professors, who were appointed to a tenure track professorship on the basis of a selection procedure in accordance with section 99, para. 5 of the Universities Act as outlined in this document, are allocated for organisational purposes to the group (“curia”) of university professors (section 99, para. 5 and para. 6 of the Universities Act).

If the candidate does not achieve the objectives of the qualification agreement, a temporary employment ends upon expiry of the employment contract, and a permanent contract may be terminated (not subject to the extended employment protection provisions in accordance with article 22 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement for University Staff).

Following an internal competitive procedure according to section 99, para. 4 of the Universities Act, associate professors may be appointed to **university professors**.

The Rectorate is responsible for advertising positions pursuant to section 99, para. 4 of the Universities Act.

The general outline of this appointment procedure is specified in the **Statutes** of the University of Vienna and is described in greater detail in a **procedural document issued by the Rectorate**.

Associate professors appointed in accordance with section 99, para. 4 of the Universities Act are awarded an **employment contract** as university professor.

The **designation of the professorship** is based on the designation of the associate professorship.

Standards for qualification agreements

The following points have to be covered in every agreement:

Development and further development of an independent profile in research and teaching. The self-evaluation report on the fulfilment of conditions in the qualification agreement has to provide evidence of publications, third-party funded projects and the candidate's visibility in the international academic community.

Publication achievements. The University expects candidates to publish academic results in internationally renowned media that are relevant to the subject. In this context, it is important that the assistant professor has made a significant contribution to these publications. This should be demonstrated by his/her role as an author (e.g. single author, first author, senior author or corresponding author of publications that do not list co-authors in alphabetical order). The following has to be agreed on:

- Type of intended publications: monographs, journal articles, contributions to edited volumes, etc.
- Desired publication media, including a brief outline of their importance in the field: Publishers, Q1 journals, indexing in the relevant publication databases SCIE, SSCI, AHCI, Scopus, and other excellence criteria
- Language(s) of publication appropriate for the relevant academic field
- Average number of publications that can be expected per year for the duration of the qualification phase.

Subject-specific teaching. The University expects independent, top-quality, research-led teaching.

The following is agreed on:

- On average, for the entire qualification phase: 4 hours per week per semester of teaching
- Basic and specialised teaching for different types of courses (lectures, courses with continuous assessment); it is compulsory to evaluate all courses with the questionnaires of the Unit for Quality Assurance.
- Description of measures aimed at further developing the candidate's academic teaching competence and his/her ability to deal with the results of course evaluations. The University evaluates whether the explanations are conclusive.

International visibility and recognition, as well as cooperation. The aim is to increase the candidate's international visibility in the academic community. For this purpose, the candidate has to present the results of his/her own research activities at international conferences, workshops and seminars. The following has to be agreed on:

- Overview of conferences relevant to the subject where the candidate should preferably give lectures as an invited speaker.
- Number of academic lectures given at international events: Expected average number per year for the duration of the qualification phase.

To fulfil the conditions in the qualification agreement, the self-evaluation report has to provide evidence on the assistant professor's esteem factor. Appropriate criteria are, among others, member of programme committees or editorial boards, academic prizes or awards received, or appointment as a reviewer or an expert.

A list of joint projects/publications in the self-evaluation report demonstrates the candidate's new, international academic collaborations during the qualification phase.

Third-party funds. The University of Vienna is committed to the international standards of tenure track professorships regarding the application for and successful acquisition of third-party-funded projects. Important criteria for the evaluation of third-party funds are the candidate's role as PI or co-PI, the reputation of the funding body, a competitive procedure, as well as a peer review-based decision procedure for the allocation of funds. Therefore, candidates are expected to meet the following conditions during the qualification phase:

- Successful acquisition of at least one third-party-funded project (preferably funded by ERC, Austrian Science Fund, Vienna Science and Technology Fund, EU, Austrian Research Promotion Agency or similar funding bodies) granted within the qualification phase as a PI or co-PI for the establishment of an own research group.

Promotion of early career researchers. The assistant professor supports doctoral candidates and postdocs with the aim of preparing them for an academic career or for a career outside the University.

- The qualification agreement has to specify the number of academic theses (master's and doctoral theses) that the assistant professor is expected to supervise during the qualification phase according to the Statutes of the University of Vienna.

Third mission and public outreach. The candidate is expected to introduce results from research and teaching beyond the academic community to society and economy (third mission) and to raise public awareness (public outreach). The qualification agreement has to specify the planned activities; evidence of the activities has to be provided in the self-evaluation report.

- Third mission (for example, depending on the field):
 - Social commitment
 - Collaboration with industry, economy and federal institutions
 - Submission of employee inventions
 - Intended foundation of start-ups, spin-offs and similar activities in the area of technology transfer.
- Public outreach: Outreach activities in connection with substantial research results achieved during the qualification phase (press releases, radio/TV/social media contributions, lectures for the non-academic public, etc.) and, if applicable, publications aimed at the non-academic public.

Leadership (establishing and leading a research group). The University of Vienna expects assistant professors to establish and lead an independent research group (as common in the relevant field). A prerequisite is the further enhancement of his/her personal and institutional leadership skills. At the end of the qualification phase, the candidate has to present the measures taken in the self-evaluation report.