

Routines for hiring committees (innstillingskomiteer) when employing PhD fellows

The Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences has prepared an instruction guide for hiring committees for PhD fellowship positions. This is a common minimum requirement, but the institutes may have supplementary rules and/or regulations. The guidance given below is based on the following documents:

- Complementary rules at the Faculty of Science at the Faculty of Philosophiae Doctor (Ph.D.) at the University of Oslo:
<https://www.mn.uio.no/forskning/phd/regelverk/utfyllende-regler.html>
- Guidelines for appointment for postdoctoral and fellowship positions at UiO:
<http://www.uio.no/om/regelverk/personal/vitenskapelig/retningslinjerpostdokogstip.html>
- "Regulations on employment conditions for posts as postdoctor, fellow, scientific assistant and specialist " (Ministry of Education: 31 January 2006 No. 102) issued pursuant to Act 1 April 2005 No. 15 on Universities and Colleges:
<https://lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2006-01-31-102>

1. Creation of hiring committee

The head of department / office manager appoints the hiring committee based on a proposal from the supervisor for the position. The institutes may have supplementary requirements, but the following requirements apply to the entire faculty

(a) Composition requirements of committee:

- I. Minimum three persons
- II. The committee must contain at least one permanent employee
- III. Both sexes should be represented, if possible

b) Requirements for committee members

- I. must hold a similar position (PhD candidate) or higher scientific position
- II. Conflicts of interest: members of the committee should self-assess their conflicts of interest and inform about this. Being or having been the

master's supervisor for an applicant is NOT considered as a reason for disqualification.

2. Assessment of candidates - absolute qualification requirements

Admission to the doctoral program is an absolute condition for appointment as a PhD fellow. The faculty will not accept applicants with a doctorate within the same subject area as the advertised position.

a) Assessed by the committee:

- I. a five-year master's degree at a university in Norway (master's degree, including defense of the assignment, must be completed by 1 July 2018. Candidates without a master's degree examination may be admitted but appointment cannot be made until the requirement has been obtained and documented)
OR
an education that is recognized as equivalent to a five-year master's degree
- II. The following character requirements applyⁱ:
 - the average grade point for courses included in the Bachelor's degree must be C or better in the Norwegian educational system
 - the average grade point for courses included in the Master's degree must be B or better in the Norwegian educational system
 - the Master's thesis must have the grade B or better in the Norwegian educational system
- III. Good proficiency in English (for applicants who are not exempt from documentation of this) (see §5 *Requirements for competence in English*ⁱⁱ). Candidates with no proven English knowledge can be ranked, but appointment cannot be made until the documentation has been obtained. International applicants must document these skills by passing one of the following as described in §5 *Requirements for competence in English*ⁱⁱ. Applicants cannot apply for an exemption for the English requirement.

b) Evaluated by the facultyⁱⁱⁱ

- I. International education
- II. other education corresponding to the master's degree, which, after individual assessment, are approved as a basis for admission

- III. Documentation of English skills. It is **not** possible to apply exceptions from the competence requirements in English.

3. Assessment and review of applicants

- The hiring committee must review the applicants in writing.
- Applicants should be assessed and described according to the same criteria. The qualifications used to assess the applicants must comply with the requirements described in the announcement text.
- Applicants who do not satisfy or cannot prove that they meet the absolute requirements for the position can be grouped and referred to as unsuitable and need not be referred to individually. The basis for this may be lacking grade requirements, English proficiency, relevant education or relevant work experience. An example of how this may be stated is: "The following applicants do not meet the minimum grade requirements for admission to the PhD program at the MN faculty" or "The following applicants are not considered for admission to the PhD program because they are missing required documentation".
- As a general rule, interviews ought to be used during the application process.

4. The setting

- The hiring committee can only rank candidates who are eligible for admission to the PhD program. If the committee wishes to rank a candidate where the average grade of the applicant is weaker than the baseline rule, or where there may be doubts whether other qualification requirements have been met, prior permission must be granted from the faculty^{iv}
- In their report, the Committee will normally rank the three most suitable applicants, if so many are eligible for the position.
- The hiring committee's ranking with, if necessary, the faculty's assessment of foreign education and/or granted exemptions from regular admission requirements, is sent to the office manager who submits the matter to the Appointment Committee (tilsettingsutvalget).
- Candidates who have not yet defended their master's thesis must be able to provide proof of graduation with grade B or better before the start date. These candidates cannot begin until this documentation is available.

- The office manager finally sends the Appointment Committee's decision to HR.

ⁱ How to calculate grade equivalence:

Letter characters are given the following value:

A = 5; B = 4; C = 3; D = 2; E = 1; F = 0

*Average grade = (number of credits * grade) / (total number of credits)*

Common rounding rules for decimal numbers are followed, for example: 3.4 = 3 = C or 2.5 = 3 = C.

Note that there are two grade requirements of the master's level: I) requirement of B or better grade point average on courses included in the master's degree **AND** II) requirement of B or better grade on the master's thesis itself. These should not be combined to an average grade but considered separately!

ⁱⁱ Requirements for competency in English:

International students must document English proficiency by taking one of the following tests:

- TOEFL - Test of English as a Foreign Language with a minimum score of 550 on the paper-based test (PBT), or 80 on the Internet-Based Test (IBT)
- IELTS - International English Language Testing Service with minimum score 6.5
- Certificate in Advanced English (CAE) and Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE) from the University of Cambridge
- PTE Academic – Pearson Test of English Academic with minimum score of 62

The following applicants are exempt from the above requirements:

- Applicants from EU/EEA countries
- Applicants with one year of completed university studies in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, UK, USA
- Applicants with International Baccalaureate (IB) diplomas
- Applicants who have completed their bachelor's and/or master's degree with English as the language of instruction in one of the Nordic countries or the Netherlands

It is **not** possible to apply exceptions from the competence requirements in English.

iii Foreign education

It is the faculty that assesses the scope and level of completed foreign education. Applicants with foreign education or with courses included from a foreign institution in a Norwegian degree must have their education assessed by the faculty at *phd-godkjenning@mn.uio.no*. The hiring committee should send a list of applicants who they wish to be assessed by e-mail, where the ID number for the position appears in the email's subject field. The hiring committee cannot rank an applicant who has not been considered and found qualified by the faculty.

The deadline for submission is 10 May for positions advertised as part of the Spring Campaign 2018, but it is an advantage if requests for assessment are submitted on a continuous basis. Three candidates with foreign education can be considered by the faculty per position. The faculty will prioritize this work in the period up to 29 May, and applications received by 10 May will be processed first and guaranteed to be considered by 29 May. Applications received after the deadline will be processed on a continuous basis, but will have a longer processing time and there is no guarantee that they will be completed by 29 May.

The assessment form from the faculty must be attached to the recommendation, which will be sent to the Appointment Committee via the office manager.

iv Application for exemption from grade requirements

The Faculty requires for the online form (<https://skjema.uio.no/94902>) for application for exemption from grade requirements:

- 1) The committee must state why the candidate is suitable for completing a doctorate despite weak grades
- 2) The head of department must assess and justify the suitability and robustness of the supervisor to guide a candidate who does not meet the formal admission requirements at a proper level.

If the faculty provides an exemption, the candidate can be ranked in line with other qualified candidates. The answer from the faculty shall also be attached to the decision of the hiring committee that the office manager sends to HR.