



Professorial Appointment Procedure at the University of Zurich (UZH)

Process Description

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Preamble

Professorial appointments are one of the key elements in the way in which UZH manages its affairs. By appointing outstanding academics and scientists, UZH contributes significantly to its own reputation and development, in addition to helping to advance the quality of research and teaching. This description of the appointment process is intended to increase transparency and to explain the roles played by all of the involved parties. It is aimed at those who are part of the process, at applicants, and at members of the general public who are interested.

The appointment of professors at UZH is governed by the provisions of the University Act of 15 March 1998, with its subsequent amendments, although the appointment process itself is largely covered by § 10 of the University Statutes of 4 December 1998, with their subsequent amendments. The provisions of the employment ordinance of the University of Zurich of 29 September 2014 (PVO-UZH), as they refer to the legal aspects of appointments, also apply. These provisions also provide the key foundation for quality assurance in this area.

Categories of Professorship

UZH makes a fundamental distinction between professorships which are subject to an appointment procedure, and those which are not. A further distinction is made with regard to professorships which are subject to an appointment procedure: Between appointments for a chair, ad personam professorships, and assistant professorships which are not tenure-track positions.

Professorships Subject to the Appointment Procedure

Full professorships	Full professors are generally appointed to a particular chair and are employed indefinitely (§ 8 University Statutes).
Ad personam full professorships	Ad personam full professors are generally appointed for a six-year term, which may be extended several times (§ 11 PVO-UZH). In other respects, they have the same status as those holding professorial chairs (§ 8 University Statutes).
Associate professorships	Associate professors are generally appointed to a particular chair and are employed indefinitely (§ 8 University Statutes).
Ad personam associate professorships	Ad personam associate professors are generally appointed for a six-year term, which may be extended several times (§ 11 PVO-UZH). In other respects, they have the same status as those holding professorial chairs (§ 8 University Statutes).

Tenure-track assistant professorships	These professors will generally be aged under 45. They are appointed to a particular chair. The initial appointment is for a three-year term, which may be extended by between one and three years. In justified cases, the appointment may be extended up to a maximum of nine years in total. At the end of the second appointment period, these professors will be considered for promotion to associate professor, without the position being advertised internationally (§ 9 University Statutes and § 12 PVO-UZH).
Assistant professorships	These professors will generally be aged under 45. The initial appointment is for a three-year term, which may be extended by between one and three years. In justified cases, the appointment may be extended up to maximum of nine years in total (§ 9 University Statutes and § 12 PVO-UZH).

Professorships not Subject to the Appointment Procedure

Externally funded assistant professorships	These appointments are made by the Executive Board of the University on the basis of an Executive Board-recognized funding program run by research funding organizations. Appointees are subject to the same rights and obligations as assistant professors (§ 10a University Statutes). The selection and employment process differ from the appointment procedure at UZH and are governed by other regulations.
Adjunct professorships	Appointment as an adjunct professor grants the appointee the right to use the title of professor. Appointments are made for a six-year term, which may be extended. The grant of the title of professor in itself is not linked to employment at UZH (§§ 14, 14a-c University Statutes).
Visiting professorships	Academics from Switzerland and abroad may be employed at UZH as a visiting professor at the invitation of one of the faculties. Such appointments are made for a minimum of one month and a maximum of one year. They are approved via the faculties, subject to the consent of the Executive Board of the University (§ 18 University Statutes and § 14 PVO-UZH).

Flowchart of the Appointment Procedure



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- 1) In the Faculty of Medicine, the managements of the hospitals concerned are involved in preparations for annual planning for professorial chairs.
 - 2) DFP: Development and financial plan. The application for professorial chair planning to be approved is made by the Executive Board via the Extended Executive Board of the University. The Extended Executive Board passes the DFP and forwards it for approval to the Board of the University.
 - 3) With the exception of direct appointments, direct requests and ad personam appointments
 - 4) Not applicable for Assistant Professorships without Tenure Track
 - 5) For Assistant Professorships without Tenure Track: Appointment by Executive Board of the University (§ 31 Abs. 3 Ziff. 6 University Act)

1 Professorial Chair Planning

As part of their development and financial plans, the faculties draw up plans for their future professorial chairs (§ 10 para. 1 University Statutes) for submission to the Executive Board of the University. These plans are generally drawn up four years before an initial or successor appointment is made for the chair in question. They contain requests and reasons for the creation of professorial chairs, successor appointments, changes, and the cancellation of those chairs, determine their focus, and state how they are embedded within the faculty's broader planning strategy. Clinical professorships in the Faculty of Medicine are also subject to consultation with the managements of the University hospitals (University Hospital Zurich, University Children's Hospital Zurich, Balgrist University Hospital, and the University Hospital of Psychiatry Zurich, including the Hospital for Child and Youth Psychiatry). Based on the documentation that has been submitted, the Executive Board of the University will draw up a proposal for the approval of professorial chair planning throughout the university, and will submit it to the Board of the University for a decision as part of the annual development and financial plan. The appointment procedure can begin once the plans for professorial chairs have been approved by the Board.

In urgent cases, an application to create or make a successor appointment to a chair can be made to the Board outside the regular planning cycle.

1.1 Preliminary Procedure for Ad Personam Professorships and Procedure for Assistant Professorships

Ad personam professorships are not part of planning for professorial chairs. Rather, they are financed via the HR budget of the faculty, institute, department, or hospital concerned. The institute, department, or hospital management must submit an application to the office of the dean which contains the information required for a preliminary application in accordance with the Executive Board's requirements¹, the candidate's CV and list of publications, a presentation of their academic achievements and a compilation of their teaching and service achievements. It may also include a description of the working and research groups led by the candidate. Information on their planned research and teaching work must also be submitted. In addition, in the case of those with a clinical role, a formal statement from the hospital management concerned must be enclosed. This must set out how the candidate will be integrated into the hospital or institute concerned, and give the management's opinion of the candidate themselves. The faculty reviews the proposal and then applies to the Executive Board of the University to begin the appointment procedure. Once Executive Board approval has been granted, an application to establish a professorial appointment committee may be submitted².

Assistant professorships also fall outside regular professorial chair planning. In these cases, the faculty in question applies to the Executive Board of the University to establish an assistant professorship. In doing so, it must confirm that the necessary funding is in place.

¹ The preliminary application includes information on how the professorship relates to other functions, resources, integration into teaching and research, and reasons for creating the ad personam professorship.

² In certain cases, the faculty will apply to the Executive Board at the same time for permission to begin the appointment procedure and establish the appointment committee.

2 Establishment of an Appointment / Professorial Position Statement Committee

A separate appointment committee, or commission responsible for statements on professorial positions (professorial position statement committee), is established for each appointment³. The composition of this committee/commission is governed by the organizational regulations of the faculties and § 26 of the University Statutes. At least two external experts must be appointed to the committee/commission (§ 34a University Act), and there must be a gender balance (§ 7d. University Act). The dean is responsible for applying to the Executive Board of the University to establish an appointment committee⁴. The Executive Board reviews the application, establishes the committee (§ 10 para. 4 University Statutes), and notifies the faculty of its decision.

3 Production of Statement on the Professorial Position

The competent appointment committee or the professorial position statement committee draws up the statement on the professorial position in accordance with the requirements of the Executive Board of the University⁵. This is then forwarded by the dean to the Executive Board for review and approval. In the case of clinical appointments, the statement must be accompanied by a second report from the hospital management. The statement sets out the specifications and focus for the professorship and, based on this, the requirements that the future incumbent must meet. It also contains the text of the job posting and states the recruitment channels. The Executive Board reviews the statement and approves it in accordance with its organizational regulations. In the Faculty of Medicine, once the Executive Board has approved the statement, the professorial position statement committee is converted into an appointment committee. This is done without the explicit approval of the Executive Board.

4 Professorial Job Posting

Once the statement on the professorial position has been approved, the appointment committee advertises the vacant chair or assistant professorship both nationally and internationally, and may also approach specific individuals who have not applied.

In justified cases, the committee will endeavor to pursue a direct appointment process which does not evaluate multiple candidates. The faculty council can initiate this process with the permission of the Executive Board of the University (§ 10 para. 6 University Statutes).

³ At the Faculty of Theology, the Faculty Assembly may carry out the responsibilities of the professorial appointment committee (§ 10 para. 4 University Statutes).

⁴ At the Faculty of Medicine, the application is for the establishment of a Professorial position statement committee, which is generally turned into an appointment committee at a later date.

⁵ <https://www.rd.uzh.ch/de/rechtssammlung/richtlinien.html>

5 Evaluation of Applications

The faculties generally use IT to support the application procedure. The appointment committee

- reviews the applications that are received according to standard criteria;
- decides which applications will be shortlisted⁶, ensuring a gender balance;
- invites the best-ranked applicants for interview and to give a trial lecture; and
- obtains external letters of reference⁷.

Based on their findings to date and the letters of reference, the appointment committee will draw up a list of proposed candidates containing between one and three names (§ 10 para. 5 University Statutes).

6 Appointment Request (Request to Begin Appointment Negotiations)

Using the list of candidates as its basis, and observing the formal requirements of the Executive Board of the University⁸, the appointment committee draws up the request to begin appointment negotiations (the appointment request) and forwards it to the dean. The appointment request contains information on the job requirements for the professorship, documents the selection criteria, outlines the selection process, and offers a comparative evaluation and reasons for the ranking of the candidates on the list. Particular attention must be paid, in writing, to the question of bias⁹ among members of the committee. The dean forwards the appointment request to the Executive Board of the University with an accompanying report. In the case of clinical appointments, a report from the hospital management concerned is also enclosed. The submission of the appointment request concludes the faculty's internal procedure, and the Executive Board takes the lead with the next steps. It reviews the appointment request in accordance with its organizational regulations, holds a hearing with the appointment committee if necessary, and decides on the request. If this decision differs from the committee's proposal (e.g. change in candidate rankings or the removal from candidates from the list), the Executive Board will notify the Board of the University.

The highest-ranked or proposed candidate, or the person determined by the Executive Board should its decision differ from the appointment request, is invited by the Executive Board in writing to attend appointment negotiations. Any further shortlisted candidates are informed in writing of the status of the process and on the next steps.

⁶ Applications are divided into the following categories: A: Candidates whose application meets the formal and academic criteria and who will go forward. A and B (= shortlist): Candidates whose application meets the formal and academic criteria; C: Candidates whose application will not be considered further.

⁷ Like the members of the appointment committee, providers of references must avoid any conflict of interest and must observe the rules of good academic practice.

⁸ <https://www.rd.uzh.ch/de/rechtssammlung/richtlinien.html>

⁹ In accordance with the guidelines for the application of the abstention rule in appointment and promotion proceedings.

7 Appointment Negotiations

The competent vice president or the Vice President Medicine conducts appointment negotiations with the chosen candidate¹⁰. A member of the Professorships Department staff also attends the negotiations in a supporting capacity. The negotiations cover the terms that are relevant to the appointment (such as grade, contract term, and pay), the resources with which the professorship is endowed (such as funding, staff, and workspace at the University) and questions regarding dual career and integration. Following the negotiations, any outstanding issues are clarified, the responses collated, and the candidate sent a written offer. In accordance with the usual practice, a month-long period of reflection is granted. In most cases no follow-up negotiations will be planned. Should the offer be rejected, the procedure resumes in accordance with the list of candidates or any decisions that have been reserved, normally in consultation with the dean. As a rule, appointment negotiations are taken up with the next person on the list of candidates. Otherwise, the entire process will be repeated.

8 Appointment

Once the offer has been accepted by the candidate, the Professorships Department prepares the application for the appointment for the Executive Board of the University for submission to the Board or the Vetsuisse Council, and the Executive Board's order with regard to employment terms and resources. The application for the appointment follows a predetermined pattern and, based on the file for the appointment, makes statements on the structure and importance of the field in question, as well as on the career, qualifications, and potential of the person concerned.

The Board of the University or Vetsuisse Council appoints the person as proposed by the Executive Board of the University, or refers the application back for further clarification. Following the meeting of the Board or Vetsuisse Council, the appointee receives confirmation of their appointment from the President, as well as further information on relevant issues from the Professorships Department. The other candidates on the list are then informed that their application has ultimately been unsuccessful.

¹⁰ Appointment negotiations are generally held with the first-placed candidate on the list.