

Guidelines for the expert committee when evaluating candidates for scientific positions

1) General

Situation at IBI

The department of Biology at NTNU has a very skewed gender balance at the top, with less than 20% females in professor positions (while this is not the case at the PhD and post doc level with 63 and 47% females respectively). The department has as a strategic aim to recruit more women into associate professor and professor positions. The expert committee is therefore asked to pay particular attention during the evaluation process to unintentional (or implicit) bias, as there is scientific evidence that males and females tend to be evaluated differently even if their CVs are similar. For example, a male publishing with many authors can be characterized as a good collaborator; while a female with the same publications may be characterized as lacking independence as a researcher. Similar examples can be found for non-Caucasian applicants.

It is important to appreciate that everyone has implicit bias, that it is unintentional, but that it can affect the evaluation process. The administrator of the committee thus plays a central role in keeping an objective eye on the evaluation process and ensure awareness of this aspect.

Evaluation criteria

In addition to paying attention to the publication output of the applicants, the department wishes to hire academics that have experience in other academic work. Therefore, the evaluation should not be solely based on research output, but active involvement in committee work, international review/ advisory boards, teaching and outreach activities are important to form part of the evaluation. The actual time spent in research (the academic age) should be taken into account and not the biological age.

The short list presented by the expert committee should ideally rank 5-6 candidates for interview and at least have one candidate of each gender. In addition, the expert committee is asked to suggest which other candidates are suitable in case of a high drop-out rate during the evaluation process (which has happened before since the process can take some time).

2) Clarifications of evaluation criteria

Parental leave

Applicants that have had parental leave should be given a deduction of 12 months per child when comparing research output and academic age (active within research). Other substantial types of leave (like military service or sick leave) should be considered according to the specific time of leave.

Academic work during the past 5 years

This relates to all aspects of academic work, including publications, supervision, research proposals, teaching, committee work and outreach. Although the last 5 years (taking into account parental leave and other types of leave) are useful to evaluate recent productivity and academic engagement, the overall CV must be considered.

Interdisciplinary collaboration

Co-authored publications are to be considered as evidence for interdisciplinary collaboration. Funded interdisciplinary grants can be taken into account even if no publications have resulted from them yet.

Commitment to teaching

The candidates need to provide evidence of active teaching commitment such as contributing to or being in charge of courses, developing course material /new teaching methods or being part of student evaluations.

Other related skills

These are skills related to academic work, e.g. scientific strategy development, academic administrative work, public understanding of science etc.