

RSETHZ 510.20

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Guidelines for the Assistant Professor System at ETH Zurich, as issued by the President

(of November 1, 2010)

The President of ETH Zurich issues the following guidelines, based on the Ordinance on the Faculty of the Federal Institutes of Technology ('Professorenverordnung ETH') of September 18, 2003¹ and art. 7 par. 2 of the Ordinance on the Organization of ETH Zurich ('Organisationsverordnung ETH Zürich') of December 16, 2003²:

1. PARAGRAPH: PRINCIPLES

1. At ETH Zurich, positions at the assistant professor level are aimed at promoting the careers of young professors and at giving them the opportunity to gain further scientific qualifications in view of an academic career. Duties in teaching and academic services need to be adjusted to this goal so that the assistant professor has sufficient time to do research.
2. Like associate and full professors, assistant professors are granted complete freedom of research and teaching as well as their own financial means.
3. With the promotion of excellent young scientists in mind, as well as in view of the development of their further career, as a general rule, assistant professors are not to be older than 35 at the time of their appointment.
4. Assistant professors are appointed for four years with the possibility of one renewal for a period that is generally two years.
5. Assistant professorships can be filled as follows:
 - a) Appointment with tenure track
Assistant professorships with tenure track are rooted in the professorship planning of ETH Zurich. Their funding has to be assured in the long term within the framework of the financial planning of the department.
 - b) Appointment without tenure track
Generally, assistant professorships without tenure track are financed with ETH-budget funds or with third-party funds (e.g. SNSF-Professorships, ERC Starting Grants, industry funds). They are included in the professorship planning of ETH Zurich if possible. The President can grant startup funding for assistant professors without tenure track up to a maximum of 20'000 CHF per year.

The total expenditure for assistant professorships financed with ETH-budget funds are accounted for in the financial planning of the departments.
6. Generally, assistant professors cannot be employed as scientists without the rank of a professor directly after the termination of their work contract.
7. All assistant professors (with or without tenure track) are appointed by the ETH Board (ETH-Rat). The final decision, whether to submit a particular proposal to the ETH Board, lies with the President of ETH Zurich for all assistant professorships (with or without tenure track).

¹ SR 172.220.113.40

² RSETHZ 201021 (available in German only)

2. PARAGRAPH: RECRUITING PROCESS

8. The recruiting process for assistant professors is the same as the recruiting process for associate and full professors³. With the exception of SNSF professorships and assistant professorships financed with ERC funds, where the SNSF or ERC conduct the evaluation, respectively.
9. The President decides whether to advertise a particular assistant professorship. With the exception of SNSF professorships and assistant professorships financed with ERC funds.
10. The advertisement is based on a profile paper, which the department concerned submits to the President. This paper contains the following items⁴:
 - a) description of the teaching area (incl. reference to the incorporation of the position into the course(s) of studies as well as information on the expected teaching load);
 - b) description of the research area (incl. scientific relevance and integration into the institute, the department, and ETH Zurich);
 - c) list of centers and people of excellence in the field with a particular emphasis on female individuals, who could be taken into consideration as potential candidates or as experts in the field;
 - d) concept for the endowment of the assistant professorship, especially regarding funds and space, including information on their source and availability;
 - e) suggestions for the composition of the faculty recruiting committee;
 - f) draft version of the text of the advertisement in English, and, where appropriate, in German, French or Italian; and
 - g) list of journals for the publication of the advertisement.

3. PARAGRAPH: SUPPORT

11. With the aim of providing better support for assistant professors, the departments are asked to designate a mentor for each assistant professor, who is generally a full professor working in a field closely related to that of the assistant professor in question. The mentor is to hold periodical assessment meetings with the assistant professor and the Head of Department, which are to be documented in writing, where the career situation and career outlook of the assistant professor are discussed. The Office for Faculty Affairs has to be informed of the name of the mentor when the assistant professor takes up office.
12. The assessment meeting takes place after 18, 30, and 42 months in office. The result of the third assessment meeting is the basis for a possible request filed by the department (conference of the full and associate professors) for reappointment of the assistant professor in question to the President.
13. At the assessment meeting, the evaluation criteria listed under paragraph 4 are applied.
14. The results of the meeting are documented in writing and confirmed by the participants by means of their signature. The document is brought to the knowledge of the President. The Office for Faculty Affairs monitors the implementation of the assessment meetings.

³ See http://www.facultyaffairs.ethz.ch/berufungen/index_EN

⁴ See http://www.facultyaffairs.ethz.ch/berufungen/Checkliste_Profilpapier.pdf (available only in German)

4. PARAGRAPH: EVALUATION CRITERIA

15. For all evaluation categories, the following career-relevant criteria must be considered:
- a) scientific activities in the academic or industrial context and their reflection in the publication record, scientific presentations and patents;
 - b) teaching activities and their evaluation (teaching portfolio; incl. student's evaluation);
 - c) supervision of term papers, diploma and doctoral students;
 - d) acquisition of research funds;
 - e) activities abroad and international contacts;
 - f) services for the academic community; and
 - g) academic and societal relevance and potential of activities, also in relation to the strategic guidelines of the department and ETH Zurich.

5. PARAGRAPH: TENURE PROCEDURE

16. For assistant professors with tenure track with outstanding qualifications, there is the option of examining his or her qualifications for a permanent professorship through a direct, multi-stage tenure procedure.
17. The decision on the initiation of a tenure procedure is made by the respective department, based on the assistant professor's achievements.
18. To advise the President on the assessment of the requests for permanent professorships supported by the departments, the President establishes a Tenure Committee, the main task of which is to ensure quality standards for ETH Zurich. The Tenure Committee formulates its own statutes.
19. The final decision on whether a request is submitted to the ETH Board is made by the President.
20. In addition to these guidelines, the departments can specify further criteria and steps in the procedure, according to the needs of the department.
21. The ETH-wide and department-specific guidelines as well as the statutes of the Tenure Committee have to be made available, especially to the assistant professors, in the interest of the highest possible transparency.

6. PARAGRAPH: STEPS OF THE TENURE PROCEDURE

22. The procedure consists of the following steps:
- a) If the result of the third assessment meeting according to point 12 is highly probable to lead to a successful tenure procedure, the procedure can be initiated by the department.
 - b) The assistant professor submits the application documents listed under paragraph 7 to the department.
 - c) The department examines the request for tenure, according to its own department-specific criteria and procedures; at least six letters of reference from internationally recognized experts in the field in question have to be requested.
 - d) 18 months prior to the termination of the assistant professor's work contract at the latest, the conference of the full and associate professors decides to reject or to forward the request to the President.
 - e) If the request is rejected by the department, this has to be communicated to the assistant professor by the Head of Department in an appropriate manner.

- f) In case the request is forwarded to the President, the Head of the Department together with the mentor write an accompanying letter, where they detail the aspects leading to the positive decision as well as the result of the voting procedure, explain the position of the professorship within the strategic planning of the department and ETH Zurich, and formulate a concept for the endowment of the professorship. In particular, the statements of the referees have to be commented upon as well as their status in the corresponding field. Any relations between the assistant professor or other members of the department and the referees are to be revealed.
 - g) The President submits the request to the Tenure Committee for examination.
 - h) At this stage of the procedure, the assistant professor gives a public presentation. The date of the lecture must be communicated to the Tenure Committee in due time.
 - i) Generally no later than half a year after receiving the request from the department, the Tenure Committee submits its recommendation for rejection or approval of the tenure request to the President.
 - j) The President makes his or her decision after a hearing with the Head of the Tenure Committee, which takes place before the beginning of the sixth year in office at the latest.
 - k) If his or her decision is positive, the President enters into negotiations with the assistant professor and recommends the assistant professor for appointment to the ETH Board.
 - l) A negative decision has to be communicated to the assistant professor by the President in an appropriate manner.
23. If a candidate has an appointment offer by a renowned university for a position comparable to a permanent professorship at ETH Zurich, the tenure procedure can be initiated earlier or be accelerated, if necessary.
24. In the case of maternity or paternity leave, the tenure procedure can be suspended for up to one year.

7. PARAGRAPH: APPLICATION DOCUMENTS OF TENURE CANDIDATES

25. The following documents need to be submitted:

- a) Curriculum vitae
- b) List of publications
- c) List of talks
- d) List of lectures
- e) Results of the teaching evaluation, further comments on teaching (if available)
- f) Copies of the regular assessment meetings
- g) List of diploma and doctoral students, including their present positions
- h) Acquisition of research funds
- i) List of services for the academic community
- j) Commented suggestions for at least five referees
- k) Comments on future research and teaching activities in the case of promotion to a permanent position

8. PARAGRAPH: EFFECTIVE DATE

26. These guidelines become effective as of November 1, 2010. They replace the ones of March 1, 2008.

THE PRESIDENT OF ETH ZURICH
(Prof. Dr. R. Eichler)