Evaluating the potential of Aalto tenure track candidates

The decision to recruit to the Aalto tenure track is based on the evaluation of potential and merits. The evaluation is always comprehensive taking into account all three evaluation dimensions: research/artistic work, teaching, and service. Especially when recruiting to the level of assistant professor (first term) the evaluation of future potential has a significant role in the recruitment decision. But potential may also be considered in the evaluation of recruitment – or advancement on the tenure track – to any other level (assistant professor second term, associate professor, or full professor) of the tenure track system as stated in the Aalto University Tenure Track Policies and Procedures (Decision by the president 29 February 2016, Reg. No. D/171/00.01.06.03/2016).

Evaluating potential implies estimating the candidates’ inherent ability or capacity for growth, development and future success. In a systematic evaluation of the potential for a successful career on the tenure track, the following aspects could be considered.

- **Early exceptional research or artistic merits**, e.g., the quality of publications and publication forums or artistic work and productions, the quality of co-authors, awards and grants, success in competitive circumstances, competitive funding, e.g., ERC starting grants, or Academy of Finland positions such as postdoctoral researcher or Academy fellowships or corresponding positions in other countries, official duties and projects, the quality of the doctoral dissertation and studies of the candidate, the quality of the university where the candidate graduated.
- **Early exceptional teaching merits**, e.g., novel courses or teaching methods, the quality of the teaching portfolio, the quality of student feedback, teaching awards, merits in teaching outside the university.
- **Rate of progress in earning merits**, i.e., the amount of achieved merits in a certain time period, after the dissertation or recently, e.g. during the last five years, and in relation to the work history of the candidate.
- **Comparison and benchmarking** of the candidates to scholars in the same field and career stage. Bibliometric indicators exceeding average values for researchers in the same field and career stage. Bibliometric indicators should, however, always be used responsibly and only as a complement to peer review.
- **Independence and originality**, e.g., the quality of the research or artistic plan and future vision, new original ideas, the possibility of a breakthrough, ideas for renewal of the field in question, own spin-offs.
- **Networking**, e.g., postdoc periods at other universities than where the candidate graduated, project collaboration, co-authors from several universities and countries, the number of different publication forums.
- **Recommendation letters**, e.g., from several universities and persons.

Especially during a possible site visit, the following aspects could be considered.

- **Communication, topicality, motivation**, e.g., the quality of teaching demonstration or job talk, the quality and topicality of ideas represented and motivation indicated in the interviews.
- **Initiative**, e.g., novel ideas and initiatives expressed during the recruitment interviews.