

APPROVED
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Policy at Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences on the Open, Transparent, and Merit-Based Recruitment of Academic Staff*

* The academic staff of ViA consists of professors, associate professors, docents, senior researchers, lecturers, researchers, and assistants (Law on Higher Education Institutions)

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1. Introduction

The Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences (hereafter - ViA) policy on Open, Transparent, and Merit-based Recruitment of Academic Staff (hereafter – Policy) defines the principles and procedures that ensure open, transparent, and merit-based recruitment of academic staff and evaluation at the later stages in ViA. This Policy provides guidance and requirements for the preparation, organisation, and implementation of recruitment procedures and related measures, as well as for the evaluation of academic staff at later stages of their employment. The Policy is applicable to all academic staff (including professors, associate professors, docents, lecturers, senior researchers, researchers and research assistants, doctoral students, post-doctoral students, and other staff members in academic and scientific positions).

Academic and scientific endeavours are among the most important activities at ViA. The goals of the [ViA Development Strategy 2023-2028](#) (hereafter - the Strategy) are related to the promotion of excellence and interdisciplinarity in research, making ViA an international, regionally significant, and sustainable knowledge, research, and innovation community for the future vitality and growth of society. ViA strives for excellent, interdisciplinary fundamental and applied research to address societal challenges in international and regional contexts, and for the development of a sustainable and human-centred growth environment that is attractive to all stakeholders.

The principles set out in this Policy are based on the [European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers](#), to attract excellent researchers at all career levels and provide the best possible conditions for conducting excellent research at ViA.

This Policy also supports the application of international candidates and the attraction of foreign academic staff, which aligns with the ViA Strategy and the ViA Research Development Plan 2024-2030. One of the objectives defined in the ViA Strategy is to promote the renewal and internationalisation of the research environment through participation in international research networks.

ViA promotes gender balance in its activities by adhering to the "Gender Equality Plan 2021-2025." and by ensuring equality during the staff selection process and in the evaluation of academic staff at later stages.

The Policy is available on the ViA website in Latvian and English. It offers essential information for candidates and provides support for everyone involved in preparing and implementing recruitment and evaluation procedures for academic staff at ViA. The principles outlined in this Policy must be implemented by September 30, 2026.

2. ViA recruitment procedure

2.1. General principles

Principles:

- *The recruitment procedure is open, efficient, transparent, internationally comparable, and tailored to the type of positions.*
- *ViA establishes clear rules and guidelines for recruiting academic staff to academic/scientific positions, specifying the purpose of the position, the maximum duration of the position, and other relevant criteria.*
- *The recruitment procedure avoids any form of discrimination or bias.*
- *The recruitment procedure diligently safeguards personal data.*

The recruitment process of academic staff at ViA is carried out in compliance with the requirements of the [Labour Law](#), the [Law on Higher Education Institutions](#), the [Law on Scientific Activity](#), and other normative acts regulating the recruitment of academic and scientific staff.

Recruitment at ViA is carried out through an open and transparent competition. The criteria for evaluating applications are laid down in the [ViA Regulations on Elections to Academic Positions](#) (hereafter - the Regulations). Appropriate forms must be used at certain stages of the procedure. The Policy supplements the recruitment procedure by specifying the principles to be followed in the recruitment process at certain stages of the selection process.

In the recruitment process at ViA, it is crucial to avoid any form of discrimination or bias. The protection of personal data is also prioritized. Personal data processing at ViA is conducted in accordance with [Regulation No. 2016/679](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council (General Data Protection Regulation) and other relevant laws and regulations. ViA ensures that personal data is processed solely for its intended purpose and only to the extent necessary, guaranteeing fair data processing. Access to personal data is restricted only to employees whose duties require it. Personal data is not retained longer than necessary and is destroyed or deleted within one month after the selection process concludes. Detailed information on personal data protection (Data Processing Policy) is available on the ViA website.

2.2. Advertising phase

Principles:

- *The advertisement provides information on the recruitment process, selection criteria, number of available positions, conditions of employment, and staff rights (a reference to publicly available VIA normative acts is permissible), as well as a description of the required knowledge and competencies (including the required level of education, field, and other relevant qualifications), without creating barriers to recruitment.*
- *Applicants can reach out to the contact person listed in the advertisement with any questions regarding the vacancy.*
- *The advertisement does not include discriminatory terms based on a person's race, skin colour, gender, age, disability, religious, political, other convictions, ethnic or social origin, property or marital status, sexual orientation, or other circumstances (Labour Law).*
- *A reasonable period (at least one month) from the publication of the vacancy advertisement until the closing date for submission of documents, but not less than the period laid down in the legislation, is indicated.*

All vacancies at ViA are publicly advertised, and there is a fixed application period of at least one month. Each selection procedure is precisely based on a vacancy description that aligns with legislative requirements and is tailored to the specific job description. This detailed description of requirements forms the foundation for a meaningful and relevant job advertisement, ensuring an open, transparent, and merit-based recruitment process.

The advertisement is designed with gender mainstreaming and a respectful approach to diversity (anti-discrimination) in mind. The advertisement specifies the necessary academic and scientific competencies and other requirements depending on the position for which the vacancy is advertised. The advertisement also informs applicants about special conditions and opportunities for reconciling work and private life (e.g., attractive working environment, flexible working hours, and other benefits). The job advertisement provides a contact person whom potential applicants can contact if they have any questions about the vacancy, including social guarantees, working conditions, career and development opportunities, and other relevant details.

The vacancy announcement is placed in the Latvijas Vēstnesis (official publisher of the Republic of Latvia) and/or in the National Scientific Activity Information System, on the vacancy portal of the State Employment Agency and the VIA website (in accordance with the Regulations). ViA also uses other channels to announce vacancies, including ViA social media, to make the recruitment procedure as open as possible and to reach a wider range of potential applicants. If necessary, talent recruitment agencies may also be used.

ViA has also established the attraction of foreign academic staff as one of its strategic goals, and in some cases, vacancy announcements are published internationally in English, including on the EURAXESS portal (a platform for researchers, entrepreneurs, universities, and businesses to interact with each other).

Applicants are asked to submit only the documents relevant to the recruitment process to minimize the administrative burden. These documents can be sent to the specified email address, submitted in printed form, or uploaded through the online application system. In some cases, documents in English can also be accepted.

2.3. Selection and evaluation phase

Principles:



- *The selection committee shall include representatives with different qualifications and expertise, an adequate gender balance, as far as possible, and, where appropriate and feasible, representatives from different sectors (both public and private) and disciplines, including from other countries and with relevant experience to assess the candidate.*
- *Members of the selection committee should be adequately trained.*
- *The selection process shall, as far as possible, use a wide range of selection practices (e.g., external expert assessments, face-to-face/remote interviews, practical exercises, and other relevant methods) and consider the full range of the candidate's experience, judging merit, both qualitatively and quantitatively.*
- *When selecting candidates from an industrial background, particular attention is paid to their contribution to patents and inventions.*
- *The selection process takes into account the professional development over a lifetime, not considering career breaks or variations in the chronological order of CVs as a disadvantage but in the context of career development regarded as the evolution of a career and recognising that this has the potential to make a valuable contribution to the professional development of academic staff towards a multidimensional career track.*
- *Any mobility experience, e.g., staying in another country/region, changing research setting (public or private), moving from one discipline or sector to another, or virtual mobility, is recognised as a valuable contribution to the professional development of academic staff.*
- *Academic and professional qualifications, including non-formal qualifications of academic staff, are assessed, especially in the context of international and professional mobility.*
- *In recognising and assessing qualifications, the selection committee focuses on judging the achievements of the person, not the circumstances in which the candidate was placed or the reputation of the institution where the qualification was obtained.*
- *Once the selection process is complete, the candidate is informed of the strengths and weaknesses of his/her application and whether or not he/she is recruited.*

Staff is selected in accordance with regulatory acts and based on the principle of equality laid down in the Labour Law. The selection of staff at VIA is transparent and objective, focusing on the applicant's education, professional achievements, and other relevant qualifications. During the selection procedure, the criteria defined in the job announcement are rigorously compared with the applicants' submissions to identify the candidate who best meets the position's requirements. The selection process assesses the qualitative and quantitative aspects of a candidate's application, focusing on performance in the various fields of activity relevant to the vacancy - not only the number of publications but also involvement in teaching, supervision of scientific work, experience in teamwork, knowledge transfer, research and innovation management, work with attracting public attention, and other pertinent activities.

The Faculty Council (academic staff) and the Scientific Institute Council (scientific staff) select academic staff by setting up specialised selection committees in accordance with the procedure specified in the Regulations. If necessary, the selection committee may be expanded to include representatives from different sectors and disciplines (both public and private), including from other countries, with the necessary experience to evaluate candidates.

All persons involved in the selection procedure must be knowledgeable about it. ViA organises human resource training to guarantee this.

Applications are processed as quickly as possible to speed up the selection and evaluation process.

Applicants who are shortlisted for the next selection round after their applications are examined are invited to a job interview with a preparation period. In areas where either sex is underrepresented, an equal number of each sex should be invited to interview, in so far as their qualifications meet the requirements. Detailed evaluation questionnaires tailored to the job's specific requirements, based on the Regulations, ensure that the same conditions apply to all applicants. This facilitates comparisons between individual applicants.

Depending on the position, ViA may use additional selection methods, such as public lectures organised by the Study Programme Councils.

The highest-ranked candidate is the potential staff member, who is elected in accordance with the procedure laid down in the national legislation and Regulations. If that person declines

the offer, the post is offered to the next person on the list. If the selection process is unsuccessful and no candidate is selected, a new call for competition shall be issued for the post in question.

The Selection Committee's decision is recorded in the meeting minutes. Applicants not offered the position receive notification of the decision and the reasons for rejection within 10 working days. This practice ensures that the selection process aligns with the criteria outlined in the job advertisement and that decisions are made based on transparent and measurable standards, facilitating later verification.

2.4. Appointment phase

Principles:

- *Special attention is paid to the integration of new recruits into ViA (onboarding), which also includes introducing them to the work environment and raising awareness of good research practices adopted in the University, etc.*
- *Each new recruit is carefully chosen to be supported and guided by a mentor to ensure a smooth integration into the VIA working environment.*

After the Selection Committee has decided on the recruitment of a particular candidate, the appropriate procedures are carried out as laid down in the Labour Law, the Regulations, and the Rules of Procedure of the VIA. An employment contract is drawn up and signed with the selected candidate before the employment relationship commences.

Candidates with degrees from foreign countries must have their education documents recognized by the Academic Information Centre before starting their contract.

A selected mentor is responsible for integrating new employees into the ViA environment and team of colleagues, supporting them at the beginning of their working relationship, and introducing them to the duties of their position. The mentor is appointed by mutual agreement between the mentor and the new recruit.

The ViA Constitution stipulates that ViA ensures the involvement of young scientists in its work by developing the doctoral school and taking care of the development and growth of the scientific staff. Various measures promote the integration of doctoral students into the scientific environment of ViA.

3. Evaluation of academic staff at later stages of their employment

Principles:

- *Academic staff is evaluated at later stages of their employment by an independent, specialised staff evaluation committee (in the case of R4-level academic staff, preferably involving international professionals), which regularly and transparently assesses their professional performance within the framework of a common appraisal system.*
- *The evaluation of academic staff considers the overall creative performance of academic staff, assessing both quantitative and qualitative performance.*
- *Staff involved in the evaluation process must be adequately trained.*
- *Regardless of the stage of their academic career, all academic staff are supported in their career development.*

During the election period, specialised committees of VIA evaluate the performance of academic staff in accordance with the Regulations at least every two years. The staff involved in the evaluation process needs to be appropriately trained.

The evaluation process takes into account not only quantitative but also qualitative performance indicators, including publications, patents, management of research, teaching/lecturing, supervision, mentoring, national and international collaboration, administrative duties, public awareness activities, and involvement in all types of mobility, e.g., staying in another country/region, moving from one discipline or sector to another, virtual mobility, and other similar contributions, which are recognised as valuable contributions to the professional development of academic staff, both at the initial stage and in the later stages of their academic and research career.



The evaluation in the later stages of the employment is linked to the establishment of an action plan for the next reporting period to contribute to the achievement of both the individual objectives of the staff member and the overall objectives of VIA. It is clearly indicated what each academic staff member should do in the next appraisal period to reach the next career step if this is one of the individual objectives of the staff member.

The Scientific Activity Development Plan 2024-2030 of the ViA identifies the development of researchers' individual scientific activity plans as one of the main actions to improve the quality of scientific activity, including in these plans' criteria such as applied and basic research opportunities, the proportion of WoS or SCOPUS indexed publications, the proportion of publications in Q1 and Q2 publications, publications with foreign co-authors and open access publications, etc. During the evaluation period, emphasis is placed on one or a few growth criteria.

All academic staff are supported through their career progression. The support provided is tailored to each stage of the academic career through the establishment of Academic Career Development Committees. Academic staff from other universities, including those from abroad, with the necessary professional experience and expertise may be invited to provide support where necessary.