

Regulations for the Interim Evaluation of Junior Professors

Dated February 3, 2021

Please note: This publication is an English translation. Only the German original of these regulations as published in the Official Announcements of RWTH Aachen University (“Amtliche Bekanntmachungen”) is legally binding.

Based on § 2 (4) and 2 (4) of the Higher Education Act of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (Hochschulgesetz; HG) in the version of the announcement dated July 12, 2019 (Law and Official Gazette of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia p. 547), most recently amended by Art. 1 of the Act Concerning Further Measures to Address the COVID-19 Pandemic in Higher Education dated December 1, 2020 (Law and Official Gazette of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia p. 1110), RWTH Aachen University (Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische Hochschule; RWTH) has issued the following regulations:

Preamble

Objective and Legal Basis

The interim evaluation of junior professors serves to evaluate the performance and innovative ability of junior professors in research and teaching. The current status is evaluated taking into account the respective framework conditions and the development prospects of the job holder.

The employment status as well as the duration of the employment is governed by § 39 of the Higher Education Act of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (Hochschulgesetz, HG).

These regulations apply to the interim evaluation of all junior professorships at RWTH Aachen University, both with and without tenure track.

The procedure for transferring to a permanent employment or private-law employment relationship for junior professorships with a tenure option (tenure-track) is governed by the valid version of the Regulations on the Tenure Track Process at RWTH Aachen University.

§ 1

Responsibilities and Subject Matter of the Procedure

- 1) The faculty where the junior professorship is assigned is responsible for conducting the interim evaluation.
- 2) The faculty appoints an interim evaluation commission for each junior professor. If the requirements are comparable, a commission may also evaluate several candidates. The interim evaluation commission includes members of RWTH from the groups of University professors, academic staff, and students at a ratio of 3:1:1. At the request of the Faculty Council's representative of employees in technology and administration, at least one of the employees from this group must participate as an advisory member. This individual has the right to speak and to submit motions. The Faculty Council elects the chairperson – this must be an individual from the group of University professors.
The interim evaluation commission shall be composed of equal numbers of women and men. An unequally proportioned commission is only permissible in justifiable exceptional circumstances according to § 11c of the Higher Education Act. Efforts to ensure a gender balance on the committee as well as the reasons for any deviations from the provisions are to be recorded on an individual basis.
- 3) The equal opportunities officer, the relevant faculty representative, and the representative for staff with disabilities are entitled to participate in the meetings of the commission as non-voting members with the right to speak and submit motions. They have to be invited and informed of proceedings like all other members.
- 4) The interim evaluation commission meetings are not public. Guests shall be admitted only to the extent that and for as long as their presence is necessary for the commission to perform its duties. A record of their presence must be taken.
- 5) The commission appoints at least two reviewers.

- 6) The commission creates an interim evaluation report based on
 - a. the self-report of the junior professor
 - b. the records of the annual performance reviews
 - c. reports from the reviewers

The interim evaluation report also contains concrete indications regarding accomplishments and further development opportunities.

- 7) The Faculty Council submits the report to the Rectorate for resolution. The report makes a recommendation regarding the possible extension of the junior professor's position. The consent of the junior professor must be enclosed, if applicable. The Rectorate is responsible for the final decision.

§ 2

Mentoring and Performance Reviews

- 1) At the beginning of the junior professor's employment, a professor from the faculty is to be appointed as a mentor for the candidate. The candidate has the right to nominate a specific individual for this role. The dean of the faculty appoints the mentor in consultation with the candidate. If the candidate does not wish to have a mentor, this must be put on record.
- 2) The mentor should provide critical feedback to the candidate from an experienced colleague's perspective, be available for in an advisory capacity, and offer advice on the preparation of the self-report for the interim evaluation. The mentor will not be involved in the interim evaluation.
- 3) The dean or a vice-dean or a spokesperson from the department shall hold a performance review with the candidate once a year. This is intended to help identify any undesirable developments at an early stage and to reflect on performance and progress based on the junior professor's performance to date.

During this meeting, the current situation of individual topics, such as research and teaching, is to be discussed.

A brief record of the meeting is to be prepared and signed by all participants, recording the agreed objectives. The record is part of the evaluation procedure.

If candidates work at a non-university research institution, the performance review must be conducted with the participation of said institution.
- 4) For tenure-track junior professorships, the regulations on mentoring and performance reviews stipulated in the valid version of the Regulations on the Tenure-Track Procedure at RWTH apply.

§ 3 Schedule

The interim evaluation procedure must be initiated no later than 28 months after the start of the junior professor's appointment.

When setting the deadlines, the dates of the Rectorate's meetings shall be taken into account.

Furthermore, individual extension possibilities, e.g. due to childbirth, parental leave, or other leaves of absence, must be taken into account in each case in accordance with the legal regulations.

The recommended schedule is available in Appendix 1.

§ 4 Contents of the Self-Report

1) The junior professor's self-report should include statements about:

Research Activities

- Their CV, a complete list of publications and scientific presentations (patents, if applicable)
- The names and descriptions of projects they are already carrying out and those planned for the future
- Explanation of relevant collaborations with other researchers in these projects
- Details of external funding applications submitted and external funds raised
- Other activities, e.g. committee memberships
- Knowledge transfer activities
- Supervision of dissertations and, if applicable, support of early-career researchers
- Reviewer activities, participation in conferences/further training courses

Teaching

- Articulation of their contribution to teaching and learning
- Names of the courses carried out (lectures, exercises, lab courses) and explanation of their practical implementation
- Disclosure and comments on internally conducted student course evaluations
- Details of other activities, such as advising and mentoring students
- Conducting examinations and supervising Bachelor's and Master's theses
- Planned innovative courses (short and long term)

In addition, statements regarding the following aspects can be included:

Academic Responsibilities and Commitment

- Participation in committee service
- Membership in University working groups
- Subject-related extracurricular activities

Leadership Skills

- Assumption of leadership tasks
- Further development of leadership skills

§ 5 Evaluation

- 1) External expert opinions from two internationally recognized professors are to be requested. The interim evaluation commission appoints the reviewers in consultation with the Dean. The reviewers must be unbiased according to RWTH's applicable guidelines on bias in the appointment procedure and declare this when they submit their review. The expert opinions serve the tasks of the interim evaluation commission and are not made available to the junior professor. Excerpts from an expert opinion justifying a negative evaluation may be cited without naming the reviewer.
- 2) In particular, the expert opinions shall contain a statement on the following aspects:
 - The junior professor's contribution to the research and teaching of the subject area
 - Importance and feasibility of the scientific projects for the fourth to sixth years of the junior professor's appointment based on the research work already commenced
 - The candidate's achievements in teaching and learning

§ 6 Interim Evaluation Report

- 1) The chairperson of the interim evaluation commission shall prepare the interim evaluation report and submit it to the commission for resolution.
- 2) The report shall include a description and appreciation of the research, teaching, and other activities during the candidate's appointment at RWTH Aachen University. It should also contain an assessment of the junior professor's further academic development.
- 3) A recommendation regarding the extension of the junior professor's appointment shall be made.
- 4) The interim evaluation report is to be made available to the junior professor immediately after the chairperson has made a decision. The junior professor will be given a period of two weeks to submit a statement.

§ 7 Resolution of the Faculty Council

- 1) The interim evaluation commission's recommendation is presented to the Faculty Council for discussion and vote with the interim evaluation report and, if applicable, the junior professor's statement.
- 2) The Faculty Council's resolution on the interim evaluation, the interim evaluation report, the junior professor's self-report, the records of the annual performance reviews, possibly the candidate's statement on the report, and the expert opinions are to be forwarded to the Rectorate. The report must be accompanied by the results of the Faculty Council's vote and an assessment of whether the junior professor has proven themselves as a university professor.

§ 8 Decision of the Rectorate

Should the Rectorate decide to reject an extension for a further three years, an extension of up to one year may be granted – at the junior professor’s request – in order to give the candidate the opportunity to bring work already commenced to a provisional conclusion and also to take steps to take up a new position.

§ 9 Data Protection

During the the interim evaluation procedure, personal data will be processed in accordance with Articles 13 and 14 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

§ 10 Entry Into Force

These regulations enter into force as an official announcement of RWTH on the day after their publication. When these regulations enter into force, the previous regulations (number 1097) dated July 4, 2006, cease to apply.

It is pointed out that, in accordance with § 12 (5) NRW Higher Education Act, any claims regarding a violation of procedural or formal requirements of the regulatory or other autonomous rights of the University may no longer be asserted after one year has elapsed since the official publication of this announcement unless:

- 1) the announcement has not been properly published,
- 2) the Rectorate has objected, prior to publication, to the decision of the committee adopting the regulations,
- 3) the University has been previously notified about the defect of form or of procedure in a complaint, specifying the infringed legal provision and the fact which gives rise to the defect, or
- 4) the legal consequence of the exclusion of complaints was not pointed out in the public announcement.

Issued based on the resolutions of the Senate of RWTH Aachen University dated January 28, 2021.

Rector
of RWTH
Aachen University

Aachen,
dated

February 3, 2021

sgd. Rüdiger

Univ.-Prof. Dr. rer. nat. Dr. h. c. mult. Rüdiger

Appendix 1:

Recommended Schedule of the Interim Evaluation¹

Time After Commencement of Employment	Step of the Procedure	Duration
28 Months	The Faculty Council establishes an interim evaluation commission; the reviewers are selected	2 Months
Simultaneously	Faculty requests the junior professor to prepare a self-report	
30 Months	The chairperson of the interim evaluation commission submits the self-report to the reviewers.	1 Month
31 Months	The reviewers prepare a recommendation for the interim evaluation commission	1 Month
32 Months	Evaluation of the self-report, the records of the performance reviews as well as the expert opinions via the interim evaluation commission and creation of the commission's report	1 Month
33 Months	Statement on the junior professor's preliminary interim evaluation report	0.5 Months
34 Months and 2 Weeks	The interim evaluation commission's report is sent to the Faculty Council; the Faculty informs the Rectorate of its recommendation	1.5 Months
35 Months	Resolution of the Rectorate	

¹ Individual extension options, e.g. due to the birth of children, parental leave, or other leaves of absence, must be taken into account in each individual case in accordance with the legal regulations.