



From the tenure-track *option* to the tenure-track *procedure* at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin¹

The following describes a tenure-track procedure for appointing W1 professors with an option for a lifetime professorship. In principle, this option is already available at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (HU), but it has not been described in a systematic way or established as a standard procedure. Decisions on whether and how a tenure-track option is offered to a junior professor are currently made on a case-by-case basis. This often creates great uncertainty for the faculty member. The following text outlines a procedure that should become standard at HU. It does not cover other existing or potential ways and options for recruiting W1 professors and possibly extending the terms of their employment during the six years of their professorship.²

How W1 professors are currently recruited

The current procedure for recruiting W1 professors at HU means that the University does not have a tenure-track option similar to that adopted in North America. This state of affairs is not consistent with HU's aim of having a tenure-track system, and often causes W1 professors insecurity and uncertainty about their future. Some of the W1 job advertisements refer to the Academic Senate's 2006 resolution on a tenure-track option, thus creating expectations among W1 professors which the University does not currently meet. HU has recruited 115 W1 professors since introducing junior professorships in 2003. Seven of these professors were subsequently appointed to a W3 professorship at the University, while a further eight individuals were appointed to W2 professorships (five years). This equates to a "tenure quota" of 6.1 percent.³

The legal framework, particularly the Berlin Higher Education Act, expressly includes a tenure-track option. Section 101 of the Berlin Higher Education Act states that if a junior professor is to be appointed to a W2 or W3 professorship at the same university, the responsible panel is allowed to list only one candidate for the position. The only condition is that the applicant must have moved to a different university after obtaining his or her PhD. This means that it is not possible to appoint young researchers to a W2 or W3 professorship if they were appointed as a W1 professor at HU directly after completing their PhD at HU without working at another university in between.

¹ Adopted by the Academic Senate on 11 September 2013

² Not advertising upcoming W3 vacancies, temporary W2 positions following W1, etc.

³ Figures from May 2012

Suggested procedure for a “real” tenure track

The following suggests a procedure for implementing a real tenure track in order to achieve HU’s goal in this area and to give young researchers greater security in planning their future. The basic idea is to advertise around ten percent of the W3 professorships listed in the structural plan as W1 tenure-track professorships. An appointment process takes place *ad personam* during the fifth year of the junior professorship.

The decision-making procedures in the faculties need to be adapted in order to establish this new system. To this end, the deans’ offices need to initiate a timely discussion on the procedure to be used to fill lifetime professorships that will become vacant in the foreseeable future. The faculties must decide whether a vacancy for a W3 professorship should initially be advertised as a W1 position and whether there should be a temporal overlap between the incumbent and the new professor. In the latter case, the faculty would need to find interim funding options.

The Academic Senate’s 2006 resolution on a tenure option included the establishment of a University-wide tenure commission. As the faculties have to meet strict conditions as regards the involvement of external experts and members of the appointment panel for the appointment procedure in the tenure-track system described here, it appears that there is no need to establish a University-wide tenure commission or for such a body to be involved in appointing professors.

Review

In line with the legal regulations, a junior professor’s interim review, which is aimed at deciding whether or not to extend the term of employment, will still need to be conducted during the third year of employment under a tenure-track system. The main aim of the review, which should be carried out in a lean and not too burdensome way, is to ensure the junior professor has successfully carried out his or her duties in order to justify an extension of the term of employment. The faculties should decide on the process to be used in the review.

After working for 4 ½ years as a junior professor with a tenure-track option, an *ad personam* appointment procedure is started.

The appointment procedure should be completed by a date that gives the junior professor enough time to apply for other positions or to explore other career options if he or she is not awarded tenure. This would also give HU time to advertise the professorship (as a W1 tenure-track position or as a W3 professorship).

In the case of *ad personam* tenure-track appointments, half of the professors on the appointment panel should come from a different faculty. Three external reviews should be commissioned – that is, one more than is usually required in other procedures. External reviews are compulsory in this procedure. This creates a balance between the specialist expertise provided by colleagues, who know the junior professor well, and external experts, who can assess the applicant in a neutral way.

Exception: external appointments/negotiations for extension of employment

During the first three years of employment, HU does not negotiate with junior professors on an extension of their contract.

In cases of external appointments of junior professors with a real tenure option in the second half of their term of employment, it may be possible to negotiate on the terms and conditions of a possible W3 professorship. However, undertakings as regards the terms and conditions of the W3 professorship are subject to a successful *ad personam* appointment procedure as described above.

Advertisements for tenure-track professorships in this procedure

Advertisements for tenure-track professorships always include the following statement in order to show that an appointment to a W3 professorship after the W1 position has ended is planned:

“This W1 position has a tenure-track option. After five years of service, provided that the junior professor has fulfilled his/her duties, the procedure for his/her appointment as a W3 professor at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin will begin.”