

## Guidelines for diversity management at the University of Rostock

This document has been adopted by the following University boards:  
Commission for Equal Opportunities and Diversity on 04 April 2018  
Rectorate on 09 April 2018  
Academic Senate on 04 July 2018

Rostock, July 2018

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### Legal notice

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## 1 Preamble

Traditio et innovatio – in accordance with the motto of the University of Rostock, we are shaped by our 600 years of university history. It is part of our self-image that the diversity of our members and the diversity of the subject and knowledge cultures available at the University of Rostock are essential prerequisites for innovative research and teaching, and that the use of different perspectives leads to more creativity. Diversity enriches everyday university life and is an integral part of our profile development. It offers numerous opportunities for new ways of thinking and approaches in studies, academia and university management. At the same time, dealing with the diversity of students and staff also presents a challenge. With the *Guidelines for Diversity Management*, we define our basic attitudes towards members of the University of Rostock and what we mean by *diversity* and *diversity management*.

## 2 Diversity management is indispensable

In our holistic approach, the strategies of internationalisation and equality are linked with the notion of diversity and, on the broad base of measures already in existence for anti-discrimination, accessibility and family friendliness, are conceived and developed further from a common perspective. This is necessary in order to be in line with current social developments:

- The external demands placed on universities in terms of equal opportunities are increasing. This applies, among other things, to legal requirements, e.g. from the General Equal Treatment Act (Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz; AGG), equality laws and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In addition, political requirements must be met, such as the target agreements with the State.
- Competition between institutes of higher education is increasing: On the one hand, third-party funding institutions such as the German Research Foundation (DFG) are increasingly making their funding dependent on equality and diversity concepts, which they also compare in public. On the other hand, university members, prospective students and potential members of staff now expect diversity management and bodies such as student service centres, welcome centres, family offices, graduate academies and mentoring programmes.
- In view of the increase in internationalisation, the aspect of a welcoming culture is gaining in importance, both with regard to the worldwide recruitment of talented students and qualified personnel, and with regard to the integration of refugees into university educational life.
- The interpenetration of professional and private life requires appropriate responses within the context of a family-friendly, compatibility-orientated, health-promoting personnel policy. In order to constitute an attractive place to study and work, a diversity-sensitive organisational culture that improves the working atmosphere and job satisfaction is required.

## 3 Our definition of diversity and diversity management

With our diversity management policy we address all members and all areas of our university: We treat each other with openness, appreciation and recognition and take diversity as self-evident. It does not describe deviations or otherness, but the differences and

similarities of people with regard to certain characteristics that we all have within ourselves: age, gender, sexual identity, religion or belief, health and physical ability, and ethnic origin. For us as an educational institution, apart from these legally protected aspects (e.g. in the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG)), further factors are important - socio-economic background, education and career, marital status, family care obligations as well as the diversity of employment relationships, e.g. non-academic or academic, temporary or permanent, part-time or full-time. The diversity of subject and knowledge cultures, methods, forms of teaching and learning, and the content of research, teaching and subjects is also considered.

In order to do justice to the individual abilities, backgrounds of experience and life situations of university members, and to enable the development of existing talent and potential, appropriate diversity management is essential. Diversity management is a community, leadership and cross-functional task. This means that all university members, especially managers, are responsible for its success and that all university areas must be taken into account. Our approach combines a fairness and anti-discrimination approach with diversity mainstreaming. It is important to establish a diversity-conscious organisational culture, equal opportunities and diversity management, in a sustainable way. In research, teaching/study and administration, the effects of decisions and procedures on the realities of our students' and employees' lives must be considered. Their points of view must be taken into account in development planning, in the shaping of processes and in the solution of problems. We have to be proactive and constantly evaluate and redevelop processes and measures. In this ongoing process, the various prerequisites and conditions of the individual disciplinary cultures must be taken into account and students and staff must be involved

## **4 Guidelines**

In order to shape diversity and diversity management jointly and vibrantly, we have formulated the following guiding principles:

### **Appreciation of diversity, respectful interaction with one another**

We value the diversity of our university members and are actively committed to equal opportunities, family friendliness, inclusion and accessibility, a welcoming culture and participation. This includes mutual respect and the ability to change perspectives, to put oneself in the shoes of other people and in their circumstances and to understand them. We value the skills, experience and needs of our students and staff and encourage them to evolve and develop their talents and potential.

### **Consideration of differences *and* similarities**

We respect the heterogeneity of the students and staff of our university and the diversity of their backgrounds and perspectives. We recognise these and take them into account when making strategic and personnel decisions. We take into account both differences and similarities.

### **Non-discriminatory campus**

We see our commitment to a non-discriminatory campus as an important university task. Discrimination on the grounds of social or ethnic origin, gender, religion or world view, disability, age or sexual identity must be prevented and/or actively eradicated. In addition to exclusion and barriers, we also take privileges and advantages into account. We are committed to an open and safe work and study environment and encourage an inclusive educational and research environment in which origin, gender, physical ability or other characteristics do not constitute barriers to entry. We discourage stereotypes and prejudices.

### **Organisational culture**

We work in a solution-oriented and service-orientated manner and constantly adapt our organisational culture to the needs of our students and staff as well as to societal developments. Our focus is on joint and cooperative behaviour.

### **Welcoming culture**

Openness and responsiveness are essential characteristics of our welcoming culture. Responsibilities are clearly defined and communicated in a transparent manner. All new students and employees are taken into consideration in this regard and receive comprehensive orientation right from the start. There are target group-specific care and advice formats for international students, visiting academics and prospective students, which are constantly being adapted and developed. In addition, we work closely with the city of Rostock and the local economy, with the aim of establishing a sustainable welcoming culture in the region.

### **Handling diversity competently**

Competent handling of diversity is an essential part of successful diversity management. Competence means sensitivity to differences and similarities, awareness of the challenges associated with the subject and reflexivity towards one's own attitudes. The University of Rostock promotes the knowledge and skills of its students and staff in dealing with each other in a gender-sensitive, inter-culturally appropriate and inclusive manner.

## **Gender equality**

In all university areas and at all qualification levels, we make sure that a person's gender, sexual identity and orientation do not play a role in their evaluation. This includes appointment and decision-making processes, panels and selection committees, the awarding of positions and scholarships, promotion and the nomination of candidates for committee elections. Selection criteria are made transparent. The aim is to interpret the concept of gender equality for all gender identities and to dismantle existing discrimination based on sexual identity and orientation.

## **Internationalisation**

We see ourselves as part of the European research and education area in an increasingly networked world, and we are investing accordingly in our internationalisation. Internationalisation strengthens the quality of our research, teaching and services and contributes to the national and international visibility of the University of Rostock. International working groups increase language competence and lead to innovative research results by dealing with other academic cultures and approaches. The increased international orientation of degree programmes with English language courses and attractive offers for young academics promotes exchange between international and German students.

## **Inclusive and participatory environment - approachability and accessibility**

We enable students and staff with disabilities to participate in all aspects of university life on an equal basis with their peers and are committed to fair participation of all university members in the available opportunities and resources. In addition to the accessibility to buildings, events and services, these include stays abroad, further education, courses, research projects, university sports and public events. All members of the university should also be able to participate in academic self-administration. We include the interests of all in our decisions and planning. In order to ensure accessibility, we consider not just structural but also administrative, didactic and communicative aspects. We communicate in a participatory way through the barrier-free and multilingual design of documents, information material and the website, as well as the use of non-discriminatory, gender-sensitive and inclusive language.

## **Compatibility and family-friendliness**

We support all our university members in shaping their individual life plans and reconciling private and family life with studies or work by enabling flexible organisation of work and by scheduling committee meetings, discussions and courses in a family-friendly manner. The performance of family tasks is valued and should not lead to disadvantages.

## **Diversity in research and teaching**

The consideration of diversity in research is based both on the staffing of the research teams and on the content of the research topics and questions. Great potential for this is offered by the Interdisciplinary Faculty, in which various disciplines work together across functions and faculties, the research results of which could, in future, contribute more strongly to our diversity management. In order to ensure that all our students and young academics have the opportunity of successfully completing their studies, we create differentiated learning environments and diversity-sensitive teaching settings. The interests and needs of students with a migration background, with family responsibilities, with disabilities and with a non-academic family background must be taken into account in the didactic, content and organisational structure of the courses. We support our young academics and promote the establishment of scholarship, tutorial and mentoring programmes.

## **5 Challenges**

The establishment of diversity management is connected with the changing of attitudes, structures and processes and has to be thought of as long-term and sustainable. What is needed is political will, appropriate time and financial resources, clear rules of responsibility and the commitment of all.

### **Holistic connection of diversity-related areas**

Many diversity categories are closely interwoven and cannot be thought of separately. If aspects of diversity management involve more than one dimension of diversity, this is referred to as intersectionality. It is an essential goal of our diversity management to (more strongly) link the individual areas related to diversity with one another and to develop overarching measures that are jointly implemented and supported by various institutions at the University of Rostock. One example is the Student Service Center, for which the areas of international affairs, diversity and equality, plus the welcoming culture are of particular importance. Diversity management and the actual implementation of equal opportunities must be implemented by all university members in their daily interactions as a cross-functional, shared task.

### **Sustainable personnel development for all university members**

Sustainable personnel development at the University of Rostock aims at the advancement and ongoing development of the skills of employees in academia, academic management, administration and technology. It contributes to the fulfilment of the tasks of the university, to the organisational development and achievement of its strategic goals, as well as to the individual professional development of the staff. The aim is to harmonise the competences, abilities, skills and knowledge of the staff with the current and future tasks and challenges of the University of Rostock. The focus here is on the targeted support for, and structured advancement of, all staff, as well as the transparent, plannable shaping of career paths and the identification of the various equality-based career prospects. An equal opportunity personnel policy takes into account both the academic staff and civil servants and those who support them. Temporary employees must also be given more opportunities to exert influence, participate in and contribute to academic self-administration and the organisation of our university.

## **Inclusion of all status groups in support services and structures**

Structures and services that promote diversity and counter discrimination and exclusion must be to the benefit of all members and status groups. These include complaint and arbitration bodies such as the Ombuds Committee for Good Academic Practice. Students, in particular, need contact points which, e.g. in the case of discrimination, violence, or misconduct on the part of other students or lecturers/examiners, guarantee anonymous, hierarchy-free and dependency-free handling and forwarding of their concerns. Responsibilities for this must be managed accordingly.

## **Educational justice**

Fairness and transparency form the basis for justice in education, both in terms of access to, and progress in, education. All students and staff should have equal opportunities for successful studies and career development. When promoting talent, the situation of first generation students must be taken into account, and the social or socio-economic background of a person should not become a barrier to university access.

## **6 Appendix: Initial situation: Foundation, structures, interlinking**

### **Embedding diversity and diversity management in university documents**

- Basic rules of the University of Rostock: Art. 3 Mission Statement and Art. 21a Commission for Equal Opportunities as well as Arts. 22 and 23 Equal Opportunities and Disability Officers
- University Development Plan 2016-2020, Chapter 1.6 Equal Opportunities, Diversity and Internationalisation
- Target agreements with the State: Chapter 1.6 Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and Chapter 1.7 Inclusion
- Equality: Appointments Ordinance, Equality Concept 2013, Final Report on the German Research Foundation's (DFG's) Research-orientated Equality Standards 2013 and Women's Promotion Plans (framework plan and faculty plans)
- Family-friendly University Target Agreements, Family-friendly University Audit 2009, 2012, 2016
- Signing of the Diversity Charter 2009
- Internationalisation Strategy 2013, German Rectors' Conference (HRK) Internationalisation Audit 2011
- Leadership guidelines, service agreements, 'Academia-appropriate contract structure for employment relationships' and 'Conducting staff appraisals', good academic practice regulations
- Management of compensation for disadvantages in the study and examination regulations

### **Structures, stakeholders**

Many people at the University of Rostock are committed to equal opportunities and diversity. The following established structures and institutionalised stakeholders are just a few examples:

- the Prorektorate for International Affairs, Equality and Diversity Management
- the Commission for Equal Opportunities and Diversity
- the following bodies: Coordination Office for Diversity and Equality, Welcome Center,

Rostock International House, Family Office, URgesund Health Management Service and Occupational Reintegration Management

- the following working groups: Strategic Personnel Development Working Group, Family-friendly University Working Group, International Working Group of the "Rostock thinks 365°" Association
- Projects and funding programmes: Inclusive University, Non-discriminatory Campus, Female Professor Programme II, Career Path Mentoring, Support Fund for Young Academics,
- the following interest groups: equal opportunities officers and faculty representatives, officers for disabled and chronically ill students and faculty representatives, severely disabled representatives, staff council, General Students' Committee (AStA): Equality and Anti-Discrimination Unit and International Affairs Unit
- Employer representatives: employer inclusion representative (Art. 181 German Social Code IX), representative of the employer according to the General Equal Treatment Act
- Research groups and projects: Gender Research Working Group, Gender Queer Working Group, various research projects, Interdisciplinary Faculty AGIS (Ageing of Individuals and Society) profile line
- Advice and contact points for students and employees who need support in cases of conflict and situations of unequal treatment, e.g. the Ombuds Commission, the student union advisory services, the Student Service Center and the advice centre for prospective student refugees.

### **Networking at the state, federal and international level**

The University of Rostock is well networked on the topic of diversity at the regional, state, federal and international levels and exchanges information with other universities as a member of numerous networks, e.g.:

- Diversity: Prorectorates Working Group (management level) and Diversity Working Group (employee level)
- Equality: Federal Congress (BuKoF), State Congress (LaKoF), Mentoring e. V., etc.
- Inclusion: Mecklenburg-Vorpommern State Inclusion Consortium (Landesverbund Inklusion M-V)
- International affairs: EURAXESS Network, European Network of Researcher Advisors, European Association for International Education (EAIE), Association of International Educators (NAFSA), German Association for International Educational Exchange (DAIA), Network of International Offices at the state level.