



Policy at Fulda University of Applied Sciences
on the Open, Transparent and Merit-Based
Recruitment of Researchers
dated 12 December 2019



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On 12 December 2019, the Presidential Board agreed on the following policy:

1. Preamble

This Policy set outs generally binding procedures and principles that guarantee the open, transparent and merit-based recruitment of researchers (OTM-R) at Fulda University of Applied Sciences. It provides guidance and orientation for the preparation, organisation and implementation of selection procedures for researchers and related staffing measures. Its scope of application covers all professors and academic staff with an employment contract under public law or with an employment contract with Fulda University, including teaching staff with special duties in research, doctoral candidates, postdocs and other research associates.

The University is committed to the principles of the [European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers](#). It has set itself the goal of attracting outstanding academics of all career levels and providing the best possible conditions for conducting excellent research at Fulda University of Applied Sciences.

The following OTM-R principles are therefore a key part of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R), which is implemented at Fulda University. The Policy explicitly focuses on researchers.

This Policy will also be integrated into Fulda University's Human Resources Development Concept to underline the importance of open and transparent recruitment procedures and associated binding recommendations for human resources recruitment decisions. In this way, Fulda University wants to offer professors and academic staff attractive conditions with transparent recruitment procedures, a positive working environment alongside the best possible opportunities for personal and professional development with appropriate provisions.

2. Definition of open, transparent and merit-based recruitment

In July 2015, the Working Group of the Steering Group of Human Resources Management under the European Research Area set out key parameters that are designed to ensure that the most suitable candidate is recruited and the recruitment process adheres to the principles of equal opportunities for all applicants on the basis of the Charter and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

The following criteria must be followed in order to guarantee open, transparent and merit-based recruitment practices:

- a) clear and transparent information about the entire selection procedure, including selection criteria and the provisional schedule



- b) publication of clear, concise job advertisements with links to more detailed information
- c) guarantee that the required qualifications and competences are consistent with the requirements of the position
- d) existing discrimination should be counteracted with appropriate support measures
- e) minimisation of administrative effort for applicants
- f) review of the institution's policy on language to ensure that it meets diversity-sensitive requirements

3. Recruitment procedures at Fulda University of Applied Sciences

3.1 General principles

Staff are recruited openly, transparently and on the basis of merit. This is documented in the University's quality management with a transparent and structured procedure for the "*Recruitment of new employees*" and a professorial appointment procedure, "*Professorial appointment procedure, appointment, employment with permanent civil service status*". Appropriate forms on the individual stages in the procedure must be used. This OTM-R Policy supplements these procedures, adding criteria for a transparent recruitment procedure at given points.

The OTM-R Policy supports applications from international candidates and therefore endorses the [internationalisation strategy](#)* which is firmly embedded in the University's Development Plan 2021–2025 and will also play an important role in its future university development plan. The guidelines are an integral part of the Human Resources Development Concept. It makes research careers more attractive and guarantees equal opportunities for all applicants. By implementing the HRS4R strategy, Fulda University offers researchers from Germany and abroad attractive employment and working conditions in a modern work environment.

The appointment procedure for professors at Fulda University is based on the valid statutory requirements of the German Basic Law (GG), Art. 33 (2) Allocation of public offices, and the [Hesse Higher Education Act](#)* (HessHG). Applicants with disabilities are given preferential treatment if they are otherwise of equal aptitude. Recruitment policies for research associates are governed by the applicable provisions of the [Collective Agreement for the Public Service of the State of Hesse](#)* (TV-H). Compliance with the legal requirements of the [German General Act on Equal Treatment](#)* (AGG), the [Equal Opportunities Act of Hesse](#)* (HGIG) and the [Hessian Act on Personnel Representation](#)* (HPVG) must also be guaranteed. In the recruitment procedure at Fulda University, it is essential that any form of inherent bias in the performance of duties is avoided. When application documents are reviewed in a recruitment procedure, vigilance is required against any possible bias or appearance of bias in order to ensure equal opportunities for all applicants.



The protection of personal data in the recruitment process is a matter of great importance to Fulda University. In this respect, Art. 13 of the General Data Protection Regulation of the European Union (GDPR) shall apply. Application documents and other forms of documentation from the selection procedure are forwarded only to the persons in the respective selection committee and other relevant committees. They are returned or deleted three months after the end of the selection procedure. Information about data protection in the appointment procedure is available for applicants on the Fulda University website under the section [Job offers](#). In individual cases, applicants are informed by email if personal data is saved for the appointment procedure.

3.2 Advertising phase

Irrespective of whether a position is being filled or re-filled, it is essential that a requirements profile tailored to the requirements of the vacancy according to a description of the post forms the basis of every selection procedure. The requirements profile consists of a list of weighted qualifications that are particularly important for the successful completion of current and future tasks. The requirements profile for academic posts describes expectations in terms of academic competence, social skills and methodological competence, depending on the scope of tasks to be performed, and provides various evaluation criteria. According to § 68 HessHG, the standard requirements profile for professorships includes, in addition to a degree from a university of applied sciences, the ability to carry out scientific research, usually a doctoral degree, teaching skills and special achievements relating to the application and development of scientific findings from at least five years of professional practice, at least three years of which should have been completed outside higher education or additional academic achievements. Additional criteria such as research and knowledge transfer experience, ability to work in a team or involvement in organs of academic self-governance are also considered in terms of their relevance to the post.

The concrete requirements profile is therefore the basis for the development of a meaningful job advertisement. It forms the basis of open, transparent and merit-based recruitment practices.

Fulda University has content-based templates for the creation of job advertisements. These templates contain information about entitlement to benefits, attractive work conditions, and, where relevant, career development opportunities in addition to the said task and requirements profile.

All measures in connection with the recruitment process at Fulda University are based on the guiding principles of equal opportunities for all genders (gender mainstreaming) and the respectful approach to diversity and different life situations (anti-discrimination). Fulda University explicitly encourages applications from underrepresented individuals or groups. For this reason, job advertisements should be written in a gender-sensitive way in order to achieve a balanced number of applications from all genders. Fulda University intends to increase the number of female professors and actively include women in research projects and in this



respect has joined the "Agreement on Quality Criteria for Equality in Professorial Appointment Procedures in Hesse" of 29 January 2015. The job description also informs applicants about special conditions (e.g. attractive campus with networking opportunities) and possibilities of reconciling career and family commitments and health promotion.

The job advertisement also states that preferential treatment is given to persons with disabilities, if they are otherwise of equal aptitude, and that the post can also be shared.

The entire recruitment procedure at Fulda University is supported from an early stage by various committees. The Representatives for Women's Affairs and Gender Equality, the Representatives of Persons with Disabilities, and in the case of job advertisements for academic staff, the Staff Council are also involved early on in the advertising procedure. They therefore have the opportunity to make a statement. The job advertisement contains the details of a contact person whom potential applicants can contact if they have any questions.

Vacancies are advertised in appropriate media and portals for a suitable period of time, and in relevant cases, internationally and in English. A minimum requirement is that the German Employment Agency is notified of a vacancy so that jobseekers with disabilities have the opportunity to apply. Fulda University uses other channels to advertise vacancies in order to make the recruitment procedure as open as possible and to reach a wide group of potential applicants. These include print media, online media and networks.

Only documents relevant to the recruitment procedure are required. Applications should be submitted by email in order to facilitate the application procedure for applicants. In individual cases, documents in English are also accepted; if translations are required, copies are sufficient.

The University has an electronic applicant management system to manage applicant data. This tool can be used to forward application documents for vacant posts in electronic form to persons involved in the selection procedure. With the help of this system, applicants immediately receive confirmation of receipt from the persons responsible at Human Resources Management. Applicants are also informed on request about the status of the application procedure and subsequent steps.

3.3 Selection and evaluation phase

Staff recruitment at Fulda University occurs in a transparent and objective way according to aptitude, ability and professional achievement. During the recruitment procedure, criteria clearly defined as the requirements profile of the vacancy in the job description are compared with applicants' profiles.

The aim is to find the person who best satisfies the job profile. Staff are selected in accordance with the statutory regulations based on the principle of "merit", as enshrined in the German Basic Law and specified in Fulda University's Human Resources Development Concept.



A selection committee is set up in the selection procedure to manage the recruitment procedure in a transparent and fair manner. A professorial appointments committee is set up to fill professorial posts. The members of the committee are selected according to the statutory regulations and on the basis of the appointment regulations for professors of Fulda University. As a matter of principle, the professorial appointments committee should be made up of four professors, two students and one research associate. In accordance with the Agreement on Quality Criteria for Equality in Professorial Appointment Procedures in Hesse of 29 January 2015, Fulda University has committed itself to achieving the equal representation of women and men in professorial appointments committees. Representatives for Women's Affairs and Gender Equality always participate in the appointment procedure, as do Representatives of Persons with Disabilities if applications are submitted by persons with disabilities. These representatives are invited to attend all professorial appointment committee meetings and can therefore actively support all stages of the selection procedure. They are informed about intended measures before a decision is made and, if applicable, consulted. They have the opportunity to make a statement.

The selection committee for academic staff employed according to collective wage agreements is made up of future superiors and, if necessary, qualified representatives from the specialist departments and a representative of Human Resources Management. This recruitment procedure also involves Representatives for Women's Affairs and Gender Equality, and Representatives of Persons with Disabilities. All persons involved in the selection procedure should have a sound knowledge of the staffing decisions procedure. To guarantee this, Fulda University regularly offers internal training courses.

The Representatives of Persons with Disabilities and the Staff Council must be informed about the placement proposals of the Employment Agency and applications submitted by persons with disabilities immediately after receipt of the relevant documents in accordance with Paragraph 164 (1) in conjunction with Section 176 of the German Social Code (SGB) IX. Applicants with disabilities may not be discriminated against on the basis of their disability. The terms of the German General Act on Equal Treatment (AGG) are observed.

To expedite the application procedure, application documents are reviewed as quickly as possible and pre-selection is made by the specialist department, Staff Council, the Representatives for Women's Affairs and Gender Equality, and if applicable, Representatives of Persons with Disabilities on the basis of the transparent requirements profile for the post. Different personal and professional biographies are considered an asset. If applicant profiles differ too significantly from the job profile, a new job advertisement, possibly with a modified text (time, job profile or publication medium), may be a reasonable option.

Selected applicants receive a written invitation to a personal interview with an appropriate period of preparation and relevant members of the selection committee are informed. In areas in which women are underrepresented, at least as many women as men or all female applicants should be invited to the interview, insofar as their qualifications satisfy the requirements profile. Detailed interview



guidelines, tailored to the requirements profile of the post, guarantee that the same conditions apply equally to all applicants. Depending on the position to be filled, the University may use additional selection methods, such as an assessment centre or short teaching sessions to better assess the applicant's professional and personal suitability and to reach an informed decision. All members of the University are invited to attend the trial lecture for the appointment of a professor. External reviewers, who are chosen with due consideration of the equal representation of all sexes, receive documents about shortlisted applicants after the trial lectures and prepare comparative evaluations. They submit a proposal for a list placement.

Given that recruitment procedures can take a long time, making notes on the content and progress of interviews using uniform templates has proven useful. This makes it easier to compare individual applicants at a later stage.

At the end of the interviews, the collected results are evaluated according to the candidate's professional and personal suitability for the vacancy. After the selection committee has conferred, a ranking is drawn up of applicants who are considered to be suitable. The selection decision is explained in an objective selection statement, which is binding for the University as a public service employer. Applicants with disabilities who are not offered the post receive a detailed statement of reasons for the rejection. This makes it possible to verify, at a later date, that an applicant was chosen because he/she fulfilled the requirement criteria of the job advertisement and the decision was made according to objectively transparent and measurable criteria. The top-ranked applicant is therefore the potential job holder. If this person turns down the offer, the next person in the list is then offered the post.

The procedures are intended to ensure that all candidates have equal access to any public office on the basis of their aptitude, ability and professional achievement in accordance with Art. 33 (2) of the German Basic Law. A public office is defined as any activity (in the case of a public authority) which is based on a relationship of service and loyalty defined by public law or an employment relationship under private law.

3.4 Appointment phase

After the selection committee has decided on a specific applicant, all committees perform the tasks required of them by law relating to the formal appointment carried out by Human Resources Management. The Personnel Representation Act of Hesse (Hessisches Personalvertretungsgesetz) requires the approval of the Staff Council for the appointment of academic staff, and the Equal Opportunities Act of Hesse (Hessisches Gleichberechtigungsgesetz) requires the approval of the Representatives for Women's Affairs and Gender Equality. Only after these approvals have been given can the candidate's appointment be confirmed. The selected person is informed in writing about their intended appointment. The selected candidate has the opportunity to attend another interview if additional terms of employment have to be discussed. If a professorship is being filled, after the professorial appointment procedure has been carried out and all the relevant



committees have given their approval the President of Fulda University initially announces the intention to appoint a professor. This is followed by further negotiations between the Presidential Board Office and the selected candidate to clarify other employment terms and general terms and conditions. After all open points have been clarified, the President issues the offer of a professorship.

Letters of rejection are only sent to candidates who have not been selected after the selection decision has been made, the responsible committees have participated in the procedure and applicant's acceptance has been submitted. Human Resources Management or the relevant academic department or specialist department answer any subsequent questions from rejected applicants about the selection decision on request in individual cases.

If the recruitment procedure takes an especially long time, applicants will receive intermediate notification if necessary. Only then is a valid contract of employment concluded with the selected candidate or, in the case of a professorship, the professor is officially appointed, in compliance with statutory deadlines.

The contract must be signed before the start of the contract and before the start of employment. Work may not begin without a contract of employment; this also applies if a fixed-term employment relationship ends and continued employment has been requested. The employment contract is issued with a copy of the description of all work procedures and the evaluation of the work procedures to determine the salary group of the respective post.

Fulda University has a mentoring programme to help integrate and support new employees at the start of their employment. Within the framework of this programme, employees are quickly and efficiently integrated into the university environment and their team of colleagues and initiated in the duties of their new position. This ensures that introduction to a new work area by a specially designated mentor is intensively guided and supported.

3.5 Continued employment

If, in the case of fixed-term employment contracts, fixed-term or permanent employment is planned after the end of the fixed-term period, a follow-up contract is concluded at the latest three months before the end of the current fixed-term period.

4. Quality assurance in recruitment procedures at Fulda University

Every recruitment procedure at Fulda University is guided by Human Resources Management. It monitors compliance with legal regulations and is responsible for coordinating and organising the recruitment process. The recruitment process is



based on standardised and transparent practices and is carried out within defined time parameters and with the participation of all representative groups. All persons involved in the recruitment process have sound knowledge about the selection procedure acquired or improved through regular training courses in order to guarantee the quality of the recruitment process.

As part of the University's internal quality management, the individual stages of the recruitment or professorial appointment procedure are documented on the intranet in the form of flowcharts and, in close collaboration with the parties involved, are regularly reviewed, updated and developed in process-oriented discussions. After approval by the specialist department and the Presidential Board, the updated process model and applicable documents are published in Fulda University's IT-supported quality management system. This is available on the intranet for all University employees. Appropriate standardised documents and checklists for the individual stages must be used. These can be downloaded directly from the components in the flow chart in the recruitment procedure of the quality management system.

In support of this, this OTM-R Policy is posted on the Fulda University website and therefore offers important guidance and support to all those involved in preparing, organising and implementing recruitment procedures for researchers.

Interested researchers outside Fulda University can obtain detailed information about recruitment policies for researchers as a result of the publication of this [OTM-R Policy](#) on the University's website.

5. Literature

The Report of the Working Group of the Steering Group of Human Resources Management under the European Research Area on Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment of Researchers OTM-R (2015) has been used.

6. Entry into force

This policy enters into force on 1 February 2020.

*Available in German only