

DISCLAIMER: THIS TRANSLATION OF '**Strategische Leitlinien zu Karrierewegen für den wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchs in der PostDoc-Phase**' IS NOT LEGALLY BINDING.

Strategic guidelines on career paths for postdocs

Passed by the Senate of the University of Cologne on 26 April 2017

Preamble

As a university strong in research, with a focus on internationality and diversity, the University of Cologne (UoC) recognizes its responsibility to educate outstanding early-career researchers and offer them a wide range of attractive career paths which can be planned in advance. In recent years, the UoC has already made significant progress in the strategic development of career paths for early-career researchers, for example with the introduction of the tenure track procedure in all Faculties in 2010. The UoC would now like to further improve and develop the career paths for early-career researchers in the postdoc phase. In doing so, it addresses the criticism of the German Council of Science and Humanities that “in order to improve university teaching, the range of courses offered must be expanded [...] which cannot be implemented as effectively and efficiently as possible within the current personnel structures.” It is necessary to improve the personnel structure and to recruit additional teaching staff. Furthermore, as a University of Excellence, the University of Cologne attributes importance to the strengthening of the mid-level academic staff focussing on research, as well as to the growing group of employees with a focus on teaching and teaching management, while at the same time improving the career prospects of all employee groups. There is also a need for action due to current political developments such as the amendment of the *Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act* (Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz), the amendment of the *Higher Education Act of North Rhine-Westphalia* (Hochschulgesetz NRW) by the *Employment Law Modernisation Act* (Dienstrechtsmodernisierungsgesetz) or the agreement on “Good Employment Conditions for University Staff”. In addition, there are the requirements

that must be fulfilled as a funding prerequisite for scientific projects, for example, with the European Union, the German Research Foundation and within the framework of the Joint Federal State Tenure Track Programme and the first and second funding lines of the Excellence Strategy.

These guidelines contain a brief summary of the main strategic elements of the plan “Career Paths for Early-Stage Researchers in the Postdoc Phase”. It aims to consolidate and further develop the existing structures with regard to career paths for employees in the postdoc phase at the UoC. In addition to further strengthening good employment conditions under labour law and a clearly structured concept of qualification pathways leading to professorships or newly established lectureships, the development of easily accessible career paths for mid-level academic staff has priority. The central objective is to further strengthen the mid-level academic pathway as an equivalent and attractive career stream for early-career researchers and to develop career paths in the tenured positions for mid-level academic staff. The guidelines in no way restrict the UoC's requirements for good employment conditions under labour law for early-career researchers in the doctoral phase, non-doctoral mid-level academic staff, lecturers with special responsibilities, administrative and technical staff and other employment groups (e.g. in the area of services at the Central Institutions). The employment conditions of these groups are focussed on in parallel strategic and operational processes.

These guidelines serve as a basis for further discussion with the Faculties and Central Institutions, the staff councils and other special interest groups, the responsible persons in the university administration as well as the employees and will be continuously developed in the course of this discussion. It does not aim at providing detailed content and implementation, and emphasizes the autonomy of the Faculties and Central Institutions in the specific determination of procedural rules and processes. The implementation of the guidelines “Career Paths for Early-Stage Researchers in the Postdoc Phase” must take place continuously over the next few years and beyond, aligned with the strategic goals of the UoC, the specific requirements of each Faculty and Central Institution and the needs of the employees. In this context, cross-cutting issues such as internationalization, equality and diversity must be considered, as well as questions regarding the balancing of work and family and quality assurance.

1. Quality assurance and university policy objectives

The UoC is committed to the criteria of quality assurance and care for employees when staffing qualifying positions and permanent positions for mid-level academic staff as well as professors. As a matter of principle, the staffing of all positions defined in this plan takes place in a quality-guided, objective and transparent competitive selection and evaluation process in order to guarantee the UoC's commitment to equal opportunities and gender equality in science. In the staffing process, the eligibility of the applicant for independent research and teaching is determined, which at the same time represents a central requirement of all job profiles covered in these guidelines. The contract arrangement takes up the family-friendly components defined by the *Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act* (Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz, cf. Section 2 subsection 1). This ensures the greatest possibility to plan career paths in advance and increases the attractiveness of the UoC as an employer. If internal applicants prevail in the application process for a position as a research fellow or “Akademischer Rat”, they will be informed of any restrictions on career options within the UoC resulting from the ban on in-house appointments before the contract is concluded. Decisions on filling permanent positions or making them permanent are made by the Faculty and are not the responsibility of the individual chair holders or institute directors. At the Faculty of Medicine, decisions on permanent positions are usually made jointly with the Executive Board of the University Hospital Cologne. The tenured staff members are to be continuously qualified during the course of their employment at the UoC.

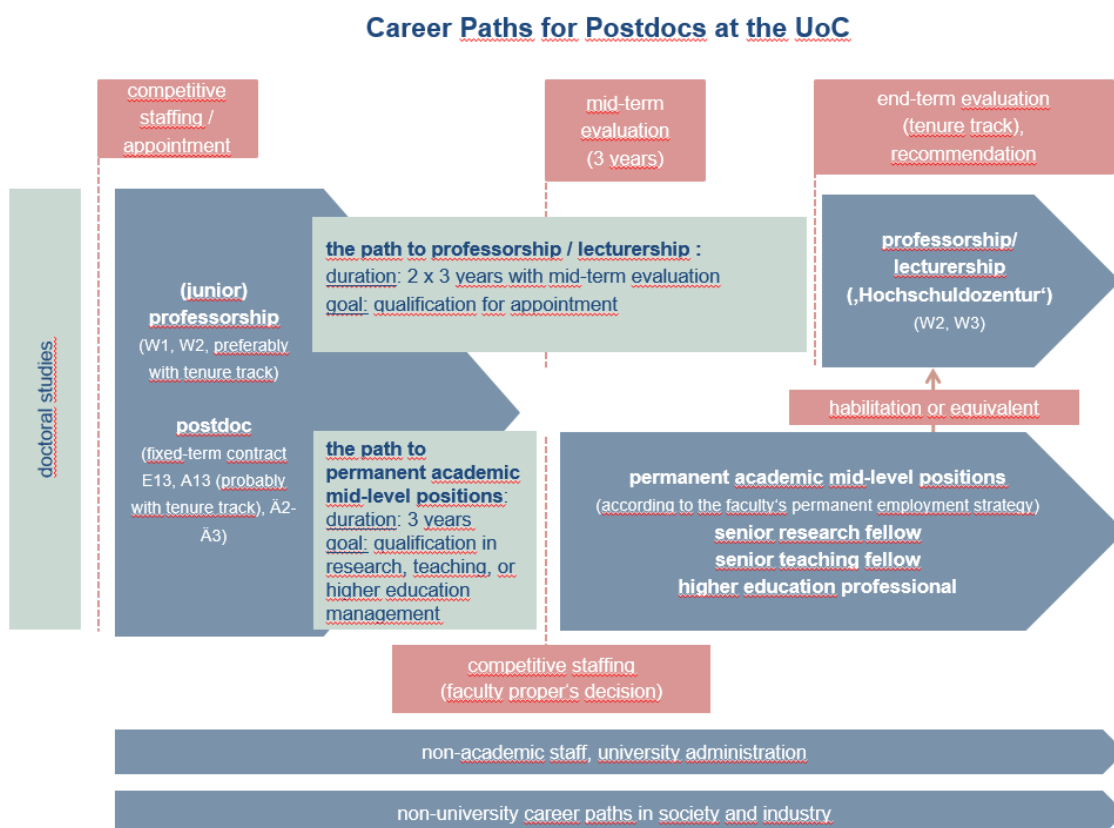
The allocation of civil service positions for mid-level academic staff members to the Faculties is linked to the expectation that the Faculties and Central Institutions have implemented their staff planning in a permanent position concept that focuses on quality assurance and, in particular, meets the requirements specified above¹. In addition to the job profiles listed in this paper, the permanent position concept also takes into account permanent positions in the areas of permanent positions for (non-academic) administrative and technical staff in the Faculties and Central Institutions, non-doctoral mid-level academic staff and lecturers with special responsibilities.

¹ This will be reviewed by evaluation in a few years, as agreed in the recent allocation.

2. Career paths for early-stage researchers

As an educational institution for early-stage researchers, the UoC defines structured and promising programmes to obtain academic qualifications. As a result, there are two overarching qualification goals: on the one hand, the professorship as well as the new university lecturerships introduced by the *Employment Law Modernization Act of North Rhine-Westphalia* (Dienstrechtsmodernisierungsgesetz), and on the other hand, the tenured mid-level academic position².

Slide 1 provides an overview of the career paths for early-stage researchers in the postdoc phase within the UoC. Section 2.1 deals with the career path to a tenured mid-level academic position and Section 2.2 with the career path to a professorship or university lectureship.



² Furthermore, the qualification programmes at the UoC explicitly consider career goals in university administration, the non-university labour market as well as science organizations and public institutions.

2.1 Mid-level academic staff positions

The outstanding qualified doctoral and non-doctoral mid-level academic staff members are already responsible for large parts of research performance, academic teaching and teaching and research management at the UoC³. Tenured mid-level academic staff members generally hold a permanent position (E13 to E15) or a position as an academic advisor for life (*Akademischer Rat*) (A13 to A15). At the Faculty of Medicine, permanent employment in the field of patient care may also be in a position as a specialist or senior physician (*Facharzt oder Oberarzt*) (Ä2 or Ä3).

2.1.1 New titles for positions for tenured mid-level academic staff

This plan considers current developments in Germany and abroad by transferring the aforementioned three focus areas of research, teaching and teaching or research management into a systematic qualification and introducing new standardized titles for the positions. The following titles are envisaged:

- Higher Education Professional with a main focus on teaching management or Research Manager with a main focus on research management
- Senior Teaching Fellow with a main focus on teaching (development opportunities to become a Principal Teaching Fellow)
- Senior Research Fellow with a main focus on research (development opportunities to become a Principal Research Fellow)

The need for and adaption of positions in the various focus areas varies considerably at the six Faculties and the Central Institutions.

2.1.2 Qualification phase for the positions as tenured mid-level academic staff members

A new element of the plan is the qualification phase for tenured positions for mid-level academic staff members. As a rule, it lasts three years, but can be reduced in justified individual cases if the qualification beyond the doctorate has already been acquired, for example, in the context of a research project. During the qualification phase, qualifications are mainly acquired with regard to the chosen focus, but achievements

³ In this concept, job profiles in the area of research-based services at the Faculties and Central Institutions are summarized under the term research management.

are also made in the respective other areas. The Faculties and Central Institutions determine the job specification and associated qualification procedures.

The UoC recognizes that the postdoctoral phase is characterized by the employee being required to be highly mobile, publishing extensively and delivering successful outcomes, which can lead to stress, especially in the case of family commitments. A central requirement of this plan is, therefore, that part-time employees and those on parental leave must not be disadvantaged by additional qualification requirements, for example in the area of teaching or teaching and research management.

During the qualification phase, early-stage researchers are generally employed in a fixed-term position as a research fellow (E13/E14 fixed-term) or in a fixed-term position as an academic advisor (*Akademischer Rat*) (A13 temp). At the Faculty of Medicine, employment during the qualification phase can also take place as a specialist or senior physician (*Facharzt oder Oberarzt*) within the framework of a fixed-term Ä2 or Ä3 position.

2.1.3 Easy access to professorships and university lectureships

The UoC's highly qualified academic mid-level staff members with a tenured position are promoted by additional development opportunities. By focussing on easy access to professorships or university lectureships for academic mid-level staff members possessing a Habilitation or equivalent achievements (considering the ban on in-house appointments), the UoC wants to make sure that they find optimal incentives and conditions to advance their own academic development in the area of research and/or teaching. In this way, improved plannability is guaranteed for the employees, while at the same time security is ensured by permanent employment. This is intended to sustainably improve the situation of early-stage researchers, particularly with regard to starting a family, without restricting career development.

2.2 Professorship and university lectureship

2.2.1 General provisions

Qualification for a university professorship or university lectureship takes place at the University of Cologne either within the framework of the tenure track procedure or

within the framework of the currently common fixed-term form of employment (E13 fixed-term or A13 temp).

In close consultation with the university leadership, the Faculties define criteria and procedures for appointments to the lectureship, which is a newly introduced form of employment in NRW in the field of lecturers with a teaching focus. In particular, it must be determined how Habilitation-equivalent achievements are defined in this field. According to initial assessments, the need for this form of employment varies considerably among the Faculties. The current version of the *Higher Education Act of North Rhine-Westphalia* does not allow lecturers to be awarded the title of professor. The UoC takes this fact into account by offering the possibility of granting these employees the title of adjunct professorship according to the usual procedural rules, which increases the attractiveness of these job profiles. The title of "adjunct professor" under corporate law can be awarded by the University to holders of a teaching licence ("venia legendi") after a five-year probationary period on the recommendation of the Faculty (Section 41 *Higher Education Act NRW*).

2.2.2 Tenure track procedure

Qualification within the framework of the tenure track procedure at the UoC comprises a total of two times three years with a mid-term evaluation. The procedure has been described in the Tenure Track Regulations of the UoC since 2010 and has been further developed since then when deemed necessary.

A new aspect of the tenure track procedure is that tenure track positions can be advertised not only for junior professorships (W1) after a corresponding change to the Tenure Track Regulations and the UoC's Appointment Regulations, but also in the area of academic staff pursuant to the requirements changed by the *Employment Law Modernisation Act NRW* (Dienstrechtsmodernisierungsgesetz NRW), which came into force in 2016. This means that junior research group leaders and other renowned scientists (e.g. from the Emmy Noether Programme of the German Research Foundation or within the framework of cooperation agreements with the Max Planck Institutes) can also be recruited permanently for the UoC, for whom employment as junior professors is not an option. The tenure track procedure for these academic staff members is designed to be equivalent to the tenure track procedure for junior professorships. Equality with the group of junior professors with tenure track will also

be achieved; in particular, the established gender equality instruments of the UoC for appointment and tenure procedures are to be applied. The corresponding amendments to the Tenure Track Regulations and the Appointment Regulations are currently being drawn up.

For reasons of quality assurance, a competitive staffing strategy is essential in the tenure track procedure. Furthermore, the ban on in-house appointments must already be considered when filling any qualification position with tenure track. Accordingly, internal employees can only be considered for appointment to a professorship if they have changed universities after completing their doctorate or have worked academically outside the appointing university for at least two years (Section 37 subsection 2 HG NRW). Furthermore, academic staff of the UoC can only be considered in justified exceptions and if the requirements for junior professors are also met.

In accordance with the provisions of the amended *Higher Education Act NRW*, a subsequent admission to the tenure track procedure can take place in exceptional circumstances, considering the aforementioned ban on in-house appointments, provided that the candidate presents objectified, external evidence of outstanding academic achievements beyond the doctorate.

The following shall be considered as relevant evidence

- the acquisition of a Starting and Consolidator Grant from the European Research Council
- acceptance into the Emmy Noether Programme of the German Research Foundation (DFG)
- leading an independent junior research group from the Max Planck Society, the Helmholtz Association or an independent junior research group from the Volkswagen Foundation or the Federal Ministry of Education and Research
- the award of the Sofja Kovalevskaya Award of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.

In justified exceptions, subsequent admission to the tenure track procedure may also take place to avert an appointment. In the case of early-stage researchers who are already qualified, the UoC also makes use of the possibility to terminate a Heisenberg

professorship funded by the DFG for a limited period of time or a Lichtenberg professorship funded by the Volkswagen Foundation.

The above list will be coordinated with the Faculties before its final transfer to the new Tenure Track Regulations and Appointment Regulations and amended as necessary.

In order to increase planning security for employees and to attract highly qualified junior staff to the UoC, junior professorships at the UoC are advertised with a tenure track wherever possible. The employment of junior professors without a tenure track is still possible, but must be justified. It may be justified by financial restrictions or Faculty-specific characteristics. Furthermore, this form of employment must also be in the interest of the employee's academic career development. For current employees in W1 professorships without tenure track, the rules for subsequent award of tenure track to academic staff apply accordingly.

The basic prerequisite for qualification within the framework of the tenure track procedure is the independence of the candidate in research and teaching, which must be ensured and certified by the respective Faculty. For each qualification position within the framework of the tenure track procedure, a corresponding permanent position (a tenured W2 or W3 professorship) must always be named prior to the advertisement. A pool solution with guaranteed qualifications can be agreed with the Rectorate. The formal qualification goal of all job profiles is performance that enables appointment to a permanent W2 or W3 professorship within (in the tenure track procedure) or outside the UoC.