

Staff Development for Permanent Academic Staff at Technische Universität Berlin

presented by

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The following strategy for
Staff Development for Permanent Academic Staff at Technische Universität Berlin
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Introduction

“Staff development serves the goal of enabling people, work units, and organizations to perform their tasks efficiently and effectively as well as address new challenges.”¹

Dear Colleagues,

This document is intended as an integrated presentation of the objectives for staff development for academic staff employed at TU Berlin on a permanent basis. The University’s 276 heads of academic chairs (professorships) established within the TU budget, 60 jointly appointed or endowed professors, and 131 permanent research and teaching assistants will be able to profit from systematic and targeted benefits arising from measures implemented in the areas of research, teaching, and academic self-management on the basis of both this strategy document and participatively developed skill profiles². The strategy presented here is fully incorporated into the overall strategy for sustainable staff development at TU Berlin.

TU Berlin sees its permanent academic staff as one of the cornerstones of the development, implementation, and communication of its strategic goals in the areas of research, teaching, and academic self-management. Professors and permanent research and teaching assistants contribute greatly to the development and reputation of our university through their work in research and teaching, the supervision of students, and their contributions to the advancement of junior scholars and academic self-management.

Diversity and gender equality, internationality, sustainability, and the combining of professional and family life are leading principles in research and teaching as well as of everyday life on the University’s campuses in Berlin and El Gouna. These issues form a thematic core for the objectives of staff development and are to be reflected in the entire range of staff development programs.

All programs are available to all members of TU Berlin irrespective of a program’s specific target group. Permanent research and teaching assistants are also invited to take part in further training programs for developing professional and personal skills aimed primarily at junior scholars, professors, or academic support staff, thus reflecting the University’s policy of encouraging its members to participate in all programs which contribute to their personal development goals.

This strategy of concerted staff development goals for professors and permanent research and teaching assistants serves to create a structured focus for future measures. However, differences in professional development requirements need to be taken into consideration. While there is considerable common ground regarding their respective skills profiles, the two groups differ, in some instances considerably, regarding the skills that are required to perform their professional duties. These differences are explicitly addressed when setting objectives and reflected in the resulting staff development measures.

Angela Ittel

¹ R. Fisch, St. Koch (eds.): Human Resources in Hochschule und Forschung, Bonn 2005.

² Participative development of TU-specific skills profiles within the implementation plan for TU Berlin’s Strategy for the Advancement of Junior Scholars 2019/2020 on the basis of the TU Berlin skills models, ZEWK, as well as the EU Commission’s research profile descriptors (R1-R4, cf. EURAXESS research profiles: <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/europe/career-development/training-researchers/research-profiles-descriptors> (05.12.2018)).

Goals and tasks

TU Berlin seeks to provide its professors and permanent research and teaching staff with the best possible conditions to fulfill their potential and pursue their personal development in terms of life-long learning in all their scientific and academic undertakings, whether research, teaching, or academic self-management. Academic staff employed on a permanent basis play a key role in both maintaining TU Berlin's position and its strategic development - an area of great importance to a university focused on its future development. These staff are the University's main organ for the (further) development, implementation, and communication of its cross-cutting themes. The following goals have, therefore, been established for professors whose positions are established in the TU budget, jointly appointed or endowed professors and permanent research and teaching staff:

- To support professors and permanent research and teaching assistants in the execution of their professional duties and to equip them with the skills they require
- To effectively advance the strategies and scope of the target group
- To strengthen networking with colleagues, both within and beyond TU Berlin
- To support the development of a clear, integrated understanding of roles (scientists, academic teaching staff, executive staff, and science management)
- To promote the recognition of work and satisfaction in the workplace
- To increase a sense of identification with TU Berlin

Target groups

Permanent academic staff form one of the three staff pillars of TU Berlin (see image 1):

1. Junior scholars (R1-R3 without a permanent position) (pillar 1)
2. **Permanent academic staff (professors (R4) & permanent research and teaching assistants) (pillar 2)**
3. Academic support staff (pillar 3)

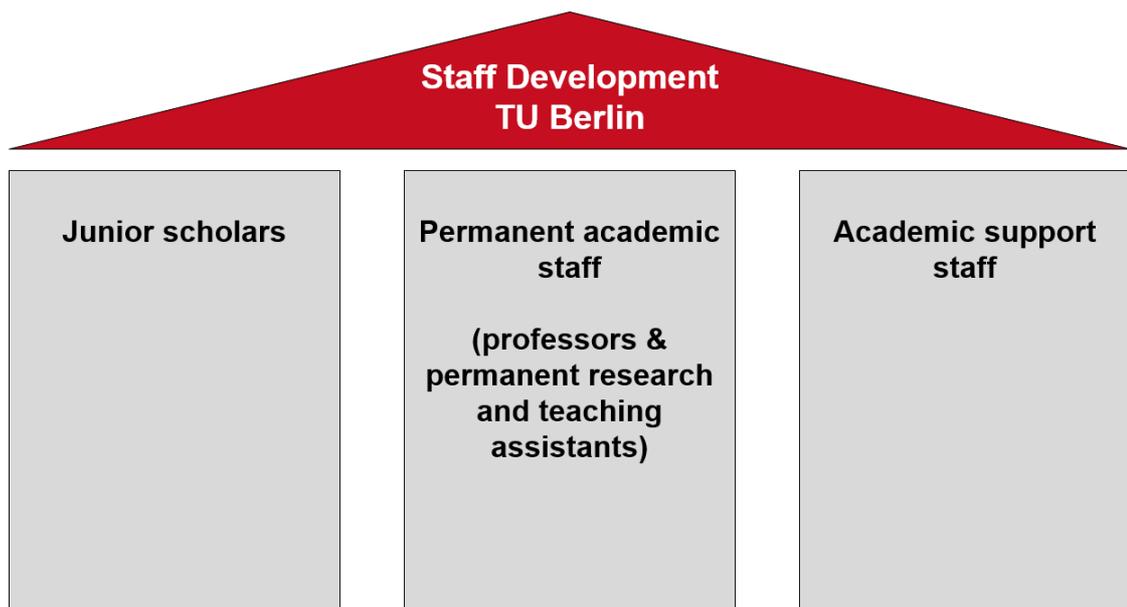


Image 1: The three pillars of target group-oriented staff development at TU Berlin

Staff belonging to the target group depicted in pillar two are, generally, characterized by a high level of academic and professional autonomy, often have their own research programs as well as national and international networks, support or head research projects, doctoral programs, and academic chairs, provide support for junior research group leaders or head their own junior research group. They form the central pillar of successful research, teaching, and academic self-management at TU Berlin and contribute extensively to the University's long-term internal and external goals through their high levels of achievement and commitment.

Skills focuses

Permanent academic staff are, with different degrees of representation, active in a number of professional roles. These include:

- Researchers
- Teachers
- Management
- Science managers
- Coordinators for research and teaching
- Supervisors of large-scale equipment, test facilities, other scientific apparatus and collections

Each of these roles demands a specific and flexible skills profile, with the profiles of professors and permanent research and teaching assistants partly overlapping, but also, in a number of points, quite distinct from each other.

The skills which need to be developed are dependent upon previous experience and career paths and vary greatly (cf. image 2 Strategy for the Advancement of Junior Scholars at TU Berlin). The period post graduation, for example the period between a doctorate (R1) and a professorship (R4) or other permanent academic positions, takes very different forms and varies greatly from individual to individual. This period in an individual's career can take the form of work in a university, a non-university research institute, or a university of applied sciences; in industry or commerce; or in public service, an association, an NGO, or a start-up. Depending on their professional experience and background, professors and permanent research and teaching staff have different skills profiles; something which the University takes full account of in order to develop its employees' skills ranges as effectively as possible.

The following general requirements apply to TU Berlin's strategy for developing the skills of its staff in all categories:

- The focus should be on both interdisciplinary skills as well as skills relevant to a specific academic discipline or field.
- The focus should further be on individual needs and targeted support tailored to the requirements of each qualification phase as well as the specific skills required for a professorship.
- The principle of social responsibility should be observed and current socio-political issues incorporated.

TU Berlin's role is to provide staff training programs which reflect the requirements of various staff categories and the individual strengths and needs of staff regarding their career development. The University places particular value on developing the leadership and mentoring skills of its permanent academic staff. A transparent, skills-focused, future-oriented leadership style contributes significantly to the successful education and training of students and junior scholars at TU Berlin.

Action fields for staff development

This strategy document for permanent academic staff is founded on the following four action fields of staff development at TU Berlin:

- 1) **Advising and guidance**
- 2) **Qualification**
- 3) **Networking**
- 4) **Infrastructure and conditions**



Image 2: The four fields of action for staff development at TU Berlin.

I. Advising and guidance

Advisory offers and services tailored to individual needs are an important tool for helping academics develop their careers. TU Berlin places great value on providing advisory offers as well as skills and qualifications programs for permanent academic staff to support their strategic development (also in terms of their personal skills) within a professional context and to help develop their leadership and teaching skills. The tools designed to achieve these aims include support and advisory offers in the following areas: mobility and funding options and internationalization; knowledge exchange and digitalization; combining professional and family life; freedom from discrimination in management and within professorial and other appointment procedures; gender equality and diversity; conflict management and coaching for individual professional support (including to help staff adapt to new professional requirements and situations). TU Berlin further provides professors and permanent research and teaching staff with specific advice regarding research funding, such as how to apply for a Collaborative Research Center, ERC grants, or a research training group, how to develop teaching skills, the skills required for effective administration (particularly within TU Berlin), and leadership and management skills. The University is able to adapt to current requirements and issues when designing its advisory offers and also provides individually tailored advice and coaching.

TU Berlin's strategic focuses are incorporated into the University's advisory offers to create the right conditions for their widespread success, parallel to the institutional measures taken to achieve these objectives.

Objectives

- ➔ To provide a wide range of advisory offers, tailored to individual needs
- ➔ To respond flexibly to employees requirements
- ➔ To strengthen the skills and professionalism of the units responsible for providing advisory services (including the central and decentralized administrative units)
- ➔ To advise and enable the exchange of views and information on TU Berlin's core strategic areas
- ➔ To provide advice on adapting to new positions or tasks

II. Qualification

II.1 Training opportunities

TU Berlin places great value on individual support tailored to specific needs at all career stages. Many training opportunities are, therefore, available to all TU Berlin staff. Those training opportunities aimed mainly at the University's permanent academic staff focus primarily on topics relating to research, teaching, academic self-management, research and project management, leadership and staff support, conflict management, program design, professorial appointments, and the implementation of TU Berlin's cross-cutting themes.

Additionally, permanent academic staff at TU Berlin are encouraged, in the spirit of life-long learning, to participate on an ongoing basis in continuing education programs and training measures focusing on all areas of academic and university life, particularly practical areas such as administration, the organizing of teaching, research administration, or digitalization. The objective is to enable staff to effectively encounter the current and future challenges of working at a university while achieving a high level of professional satisfaction.

Interdisciplinary training opportunities are, in part, conceived and implemented in cooperation with the other Berlin universities, both centrally and in the decentralized institutes.

Objectives

- ➔ To provide training in research, teaching, academic management, research and project management, staff leadership and supervision, conflict management, program design, professorial appointment procedures, and the implementation of the University's strategic cross-cutting policies
- ➔ To provide training to support lifelong learning for professors in areas such as administration, the organization of teaching, research administration, and digitalization
- ➔ To provide targeted training to enable permanent staff to successfully fulfill all their managerial roles

II.2 Professorial and other appointment procedures

The recruitment and appointment of established researchers in the national and international arena lies at the core of a University's successful development planning.

Professorial appointments are an important planning element of research and teaching at universities and play a significant role in their overall strategic orientation. Such appointments determine the academic profile of an individual subject area as well as those of institutes, faculties, and the University as a whole and help to achieve high standards throughout university life. At TU Berlin, the professorial appointment procedure contributes significantly to the University's development, with the success of the procedure itself very much dependent upon the expertise and skills of those involved. As such, ongoing staff development measures designed to professionalize appointment procedures and targeted towards permanently employed academic staff are essential to ensure that the highest standards are maintained.

All appointment procedures, including professorial appointments, are of central importance for sustainable success in the University's core areas of research, teaching, and academic self-management.

TU Berlin strives to conduct all appointment procedures both professionally and to the highest standards so as to create a culture within the University dedicated to attracting outstanding professors and permanent and non-permanent academic staff.

Key to this is ensuring that discrimination in any form has no place in appointment procedures. Diversity and gender equality as well as internationalization form further core criteria in the selection process.

It is essential that managers involved in the selection process, including the design of the process, possess or receive training in the necessary skills to achieve these strategic goals. TU Berlin strives to make its permanent staff fully aware of these staff selection issues and provides training to ensure that the highest standards are achieved and maintained.

Objectives

- ➔ To sensitize staff involved in appointment procedures to ensure that the highest quality standards are maintained
- ➔ To sensitize staff involved in appointment procedures regarding diversity and gender equality as well as the role of internationality in the selection procedure
- ➔ To provide and firmly establish further training programs on discrimination and bias-free selection of candidates

III. Networking

Networking, whether internal (within TU Berlin) or external with stakeholders in academic and non-academic sectors), is a central element in the career of scientists. Successful research and innovative projects are only possible when working with competent and reliable cooperative partners.

Peer-to-peer networking on scientific and non-scientific aspects of university life (such as administration) represents an effective and sustainable internal networking strategy, particularly for permanent academic staff, for the exchange of information and ideas on a personal and informal basis, thus contributing meaningfully to the process of staff development.

TU Berlin provides a broad range of formats and themed events under the auspices of the various branches of the Executive Board to help its permanent academic staff develop both internal and external networks.

Objectives

- ➔ To promote external networking for scholars through a range of formats such as events focusing on various specific issues and themes
- ➔ To promote internal networking for scholars through a wide range of formats and various forms of peer-to-peer exchange

IV. Infrastructure and conditions

IV.1 Appreciation and job satisfaction

TU Berlin is characterized by a genuine culture of mutual respect and appreciation. One of the central goals of personnel management and staff development is to achieve the highest level of job satisfaction among employees.

As part of this process, TU Berlin addresses the different stages of intra and inter-staff conflict management and takes account of individual professional realignment requirements. Permanent research and teaching assistants, in particular, require personal development options tailored to their ongoing professional activities if they are to achieve a high level of long-term job satisfaction.

To achieve this goal, TU Berlin promotes and fosters an appropriate leadership concept for its permanent academic staff. A culture of leadership founded upon respect and appreciation is seen as essential for the advancement of junior scholars and contributes significantly to job satisfaction among academic staff, whether in autonomous or stand-alone positions, or in positions located within a hierarchical relationship.

Objectives

- ➔ To promote a culture of mutual respect and appreciation
- ➔ To promote the highest possible level of job satisfaction among staff
- ➔ To strive for and foster a leadership culture founded upon respect and appreciation, including a sensitive approach to the issue of hierarchical relationships; provide appropriate training programs for permanent academic staff to achieve these aims

IV.2 Good working and employment conditions

Good working and employment conditions are the basis for a successful future-oriented relationship built upon trust between TU Berlin and its permanent academic staff. Staff development and organizational development are interlinked in this respect and need to be closely coordinated on an ongoing basis.

The bases of good working conditions in this context are efficient and functioning structures and processes, the provision of a dependable and supportive infrastructure, both in terms of equipment and architecture, as well as adequate staffing levels.

A welcoming culture is a further key element in achieving good working conditions, helping both scientists from Germany and abroad to settle easily and quickly and to establish themselves long-term in the existing structures and processes in their new working environment at TU Berlin.

Another important consideration is a health management policy which ensures that staff remain healthy and able to carry out their duties effectively against a background of technological development, structural change, and the increasing demands of work. Such an approach helps achieve a high level of job satisfaction and productivity as well as a health-conscious working and leadership culture.

Objectives

- ➔ To create the right framework conditions to enable permanent academic staff to conduct the immediate tasks of research and teaching both fully and to a high quality
- ➔ To improve the culture of welcome for domestic as well as international scholars
- ➔ To continue to establish transparent and efficient decision processes and work to improve these
- ➔ To improve and maintain the health and wellbeing of staff on the basis of a wide-ranging occupational health and safety program
- ➔ To enable and encourage management to act in the interests of health management

IV.3 Internationalization

TU Berlin is a cosmopolitan and international university which values the diversity of its staff and students. The University's objective is to make a wide range of mobility and funding options available to all scholars at TU Berlin and to contribute to the success of stays abroad and networking activities.

As part of its internationalization@home policy, TU Berlin strives to achieve the smoothest possible on-boarding process to enable international scholars to settle and integrate as quickly as possible into the University's structures.

Objectives

- ➔ To offer and increase awareness of mobility and funding options for scientists
- ➔ To facilitate and support stays abroad
- ➔ To create the right conditions and provide support for international networking
- ➔ To foster intercultural skills
- ➔ To achieve the best possible integration of international scientists into the existing structures

IV.4 Diversity and Gender Equality

TU Berlin actively strives to increase diversity and to create gender equality for all groups, including permanent academic staff. The advancement of women in science has been one of the University's core objectives for some years now.

The proportion of women professors at TU Berlin continues to be too low. In response to this situation, the University is implementing innovative measures to enable women to transfer to professorships established in the TU Berlin budget (*Strukturprofessuren*), thus ultimately increasing the number of women occupying these professorships.

TU Berlin further actively strives to achieve freedom from discrimination and stigmatization in all areas of its life on the campuses in Berlin and in El Gouna, particularly regarding staff selection procedures.

These strategic goals can only be achieved if permanent academic staff are encouraged to view the above issues as integral aspects of their responsibilities when conducting selection and appointment procedures as well as of their leadership responsibilities, and if they themselves effectively strive on an ongoing basis to achieve diversity and gender equality. As such, TU Berlin places particular value on increasing the awareness of its permanent academic staff for such issues as well as providing the training to ensure that these issues are fully addressed.

Objectives

- ➔ To strive for and foster a leadership culture which enables the active implementation of gender equality
- ➔ To increase awareness of the importance of diversity and gender equality among those participating in professorial and other appointment procedures (also see *II.2 Professorial and other appointment procedures*)

IV.5 Family and Career Compatibility

TU Berlin's participation in the "audit familiengerechte hochschule" helps to ensure that the University actively strives to achieve its goals for family-friendly study and working conditions. TU Berlin has been a certified family-friendly university since 2008. The objective here is an increase in self-management on the part of staff regarding the issue of the compatibility of family and career with the support of TU Berlin³.

The University has a targeted range of advisory offers to support and enable its permanent academic staff to combine family commitments and an academic career.

In this context the University also places great value on a family-friendly leadership culture, particularly with regard to junior scholars.

Objectives

- ➔ To help permanent academic staff to combine family commitments and an academic career as effectively as possible by providing a range of targeted advisory services
- ➔ To strive for and foster a family-friendly leadership culture and provide appropriate training programs for permanent academic staff

³ Familiengerechte Hochschule (2013): http://www.personalabteilung.tu-berlin.de/fileadmin/abt6/Medien/Familienbuero/Flyer_und_Brosch_ren/broschuere_web_140127.pdf (05.12.2018).