

Recruitment Concept for Researchers at the University of Bremen

„OTM-R-Strategy“ in line with the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R)

Preface

With the “[European Charter for Researchers](#)” and the “[Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers](#)”, the European Commission created a framework for common principles for European universities, funding organizations and researchers in 2005. At the end of 2023, a [modernized Charter](#) has been adopted on the [recommendation of the European Council](#). The aim is to improve the working conditions of researchers in Europe and to agree on common principles of good scientific practice.

The University of Bremen supports these principles and, based on this, pursues its own “Human Resources Strategy for Researchers” ([HRS4R](#)). The HR strategy comprises a whole range of specific measures and serves the University’s quality assurance as well as the continuous further development of processes and standards in dealing with academic staff at all career levels (R1-R4). A key element in achieving these goals is the Recruitment Concept for Researchers presented here, which is referred to as the “OTM-R strategy” within the framework of the European Charter. “OTM-R” stands for ‘open, transparent and merit-based recruitment’.

Scope

This Concept is directed at all (potential) academic employees of the University of Bremen, i.e. academics at career levels R1-R4, [defined by the EU](#) as follows:

- R1 = „First stage researchers“
University of Bremen: doctoral candidates
- R2 = „Recognized researchers“
University of Bremen: postdoctoral candidates
- R3 = „Established researchers“
University of Bremen: W1 professorships, temporary professorships, permanent senior researchers/lecturers, lecturers
- R4 = „Leading researchers“
University of Bremen: permanent professorships (W2/W3), incl. cooperation professorships

The allocation of the European career levels R1-R4 to the career paths of the University of Bremen reflects the diversification of academic job categories at the University and takes account of the different faculty- and field-specific cultures. All faculty-specific and field-specific cultures at the University of Bremen have in common that research and teaching are regarded as inseparable, also when recruiting researchers. For the University of Bremen, the term “researchers” does not only mean “scientists”, but comprises all academics in research and teaching.

For the University of Bremen, staff recruitment encompasses all processes from the advertisement and selection to the successful hiring of new academic staff. Transparency and appreciation are the guiding principles for all steps of the processes.

References to other strategies and policies of the University of Bremen

The University has already adopted broader strategies and policies that contribute to principles and measures of recruitment – e.g. in the areas of equality and diversity as well as good scientific practice and academic performance assessment.

The Recruitment Concept for Researchers presented here is particularly linked to the University's Mission Statement, the "Concept for the Development of Academic Staff at the University of Bremen", the "Rahmenkodex" (framework on contractual situations and conditions of employment at higher education institutions within the State of Bremen) as well as the "YUFE Staff Recruitment Policy" and the "YUFE Staff Development Policy". In the Appendix, please find relevant strategies and policies of the University of Bremen, which contribute to fair and transparent treatment of staff, including links to the respective documents.

Principles of the Recruitment Concept

- Job advertisements contain all necessary information for applicants, e.g. required professional and interdisciplinary knowledge and skills, pay grade, tasks (if applicable: teaching duties), employment requirements, duration (if applicable: reason for fixed-term contract), weekly hours (i.e. full-time or time-time), place of employment and contact person.
- The required qualifications are suitable in relation to the content and tasks of the position.
- Throughout the recruitment and hiring processes, all participants are mindful of the intersectional overlap and simultaneity of various dimensions of diversity.
- Jobs are advertised in accordance with the applicable legislation. Positions are generally advertised internationally via the EURAXESS portal, if suitable.
- Selection decisions are made by an independent selection committee according to the OTM-R criteria.
- All applicants are informed of the outcome of the selection process.
- Selected candidates are informed of the individual framework conditions for their employment before signing the contract.

Implementation so far

In many respects, the university has already been recruiting staff according to fair and transparent criteria for a long time: Regarding the career levels R3 and R4, for example, the university is certified by the "DHV seal" for transparent professorship appointment procedures. Comprehensive, university-wide guidelines and transparent evaluation criteria have also been developed for tenure-track professorships. Guidelines for selection and evaluation are currently being developed for the newly created staff categories (Senior) Researcher and (Senior) Lecturer. Extensive information material (guidelines, handouts, templates) for these job categories will be made available to the deaneries and those involved. This information material shall be extended to other job categories, taking the different legal and faculty-specific requirements into account. In the course of this HRS4R process, all procedures will be continuously reviewed and expanded if necessary.

Next steps for implementation

Particular importance is given to raising awareness within the University of Bremen with regard to the following aspects:

- Diversity competence in selection and recruitment procedures
- Gender equality, e.g. by involving the Equal Opportunities Representative in selection processes and taking the Gender Equality Plan into account at all levels of the university
- Assessment of academic performance according to DORA and CoARA
- Information on the legal basis, in particular the German Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act (WissZeitG) and the Collective Agreement for Public Service Employees (TV-L), for applicants and for people involved in the recruitment of academics at the deaneries and faculty administrations

- Recruitment of international academics and recognition of mobility, e.g. through the use of EURAXESS and recognition of mobility in (sample) job advertisements

Prospects

The main goals for the next revision and extension of this Concept are as follows:

- Expansion of the Concept to staff retention (e.g. onboarding, staff development, options for continued employment for temporary employees, promotion opportunities)
- Review of quality assurance measures (e.g. further operationalization of self-imposed targets, ensuring monitoring and defining responsibilities and deadlines)

Bremen, September 2024

Annex 1

List of existing policies with relation to OTM-R principles at the University of Bremen (as of July 22, 2024)

Overriding Policies

- [Mission Statement \(2023\)](#)
- [Strategy 2018-2028](#)
- [“Rahmenkodex” \(framework on contractual situations and conditions of employment at higher education institutions within the State of Bremen\) \(2016\)](#)
- [Good Research Practice \(2022\)](#)

YUFE Context

- YUFE Staff Recruitment Policy
- YUFE Staff Development Policy
- YUFE Competence Framework
- YUFE Diversity & Inclusivity

Assesment

- [Resolution](#) on signing DORA und the [Guideline for the responsible assessment and evaluation of academic performance at the University of Bremen \(2023\)](#)
- [Guideline for the design of tenure track professorships \(2024\)](#)
- [General Criteria for Evaluation Agreements \(2019\)](#)

Diversity, Equality and Internationalization

- [Gender Equality Plan \(2018\)](#)
- [Gleichstellungskonzept für Parität \(2023\)](#) (Gender Equity Concept for Parity)
- [Diversity Strategy \(2017\)](#) and [Action Plan for Inclusion \(2023\)](#)
- [Joint declaration of the Bremen research institutions united in the U Bremen Research Alliance and the State Rectors' Conference \(2024\)](#)
- [Anti-discrimination Statute](#)
- [Internationalisierungsstrategie \(2011\)](#) (*revision is in progress*)