



# SUSTAINABLE RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF QUALIFIED PROFESSORIAL STAFF AT UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCES

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**ABSTRACT:** Due to the double qualification of a PhD and five years of professional experience outside of higher education, it is very difficult for universities of applied sciences to recruit good professors in specific areas such as certain areas of computer science. Since such a shortage of qualified professors can lead to considerable deficits in higher university development, the present structured personnel recruitment procedure for universities of applied sciences was developed.

**Keywords:** *Professorial staff, Talent management, Human resources development.*

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## 1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

The aim of the project was to contribute to the promotion of the recruitment and development of academic staff at universities of applied sciences and thus to strengthen the economic and social development of the region around the respective university of applied sciences. To this end, suitable measures were to be found to improve the current personnel situation, in particular the advertisement, staffing and appointment of new professors. A concept was developed that is adapted to the location-specific initial situation and the university-specific needs.

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## 2. CURRENT PROBLEMS IN RECRUITING PROFESSORIAL EMPLOYEES

For universities of applied sciences, the recruitment - especially the recruitment of professors – is one of the most strategically important tasks. Professors determine the quality of the academic education system with their research profile (Bayerisches Hochschulpersonalgesetz, 2020). Successful recruitment requires the aspirants to have multiple qualifications in the form of a doctoral degree, practical experience and pedagogical aptitude (Bayerisches Hochschulpersonalgesetz, 2020). In addition to the formal requirements for appointment, there are currently many factors that hinder the successful appointment or the specific development of qualified young professors:

- Opportunities for a professorship at a university of applied sciences are insufficiently known to potential candidates
- Poor research opportunities due to the extensive number of courses compared to universities
- Low pay compared to the private sector
- PhD students at universities of applied sciences often do not have non-discriminatory access to cooperative doctorates at universities
- Due to the academization of the working environment, in some areas there are no PhD candidates for professorial positions
- As women are the main caregiver for children in Germany, the double qualification required for a professorship at a university of applied sciences acts as a kind of double filter, especially for women

This situation creates a considerable strategic barrier to further development. In addition to similar causes throughout Germany that make it difficult to recruit professorial staff at universities of applied sciences, the conditions are further exacerbated by the location in rural, rather structurally weak areas.

## 3. RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC STAFF

In order to counteract the problems mentioned above, a structured and plannable career concept for professors at universities of applied sciences was developed. The aim is to qualify a limited number of young researchers specifically for vacant professorial positions and at the same time to strengthen the research culture at the university of applied sciences. The offer is directed explicitly at candidates who do not yet fulfill all formal appointment requirements for a professorship (Art.7 Par.3 BayHSchPG; Hochschulallianz für den Mittelstand, 2016). They should acquire the missing qualifications in the course of the program and be supported by "academic mentors", who bring research and transfer projects into the programme for joint work.

Accordingly, the following qualification paths could counteract the lack of qualified professors (Lay & Ruf, 2019; Wissenschaftsrat, 2016):

- Doctoral graduates without work experience in the private sector (e.g. research assistants at universities) work with an extramural partner at least 60% of the time for three years during the pro-gramme
- Professional practitioners with at least three years of work experience in the non-university sector but without a PhD complete a cooperative doctorate in the programme with a university

During the qualification phase, each junior professor should be supported by a academic mentor as team partner. The academic mentor's task is to integrate and further develop the junior academics in all relevant fields of work at the university of applied sciences (teaching, research, transfer, didactics, acquisition of thirdparty funds, academic administration, team building).

In addition, the two conduct research or transfer projects (Lay & Ruf, 2019; Wissenschaftsrat, 2016) jointly and participate in the digital innovation cluster that will be created in the project (see Figure 1). During the entire qualification phase, academic mentors receive a reduction of six teaching lessons per week (Wissenschaftsrat, 2016). The respective junior candidates will teach these courses; the academic mentor will ensure the quality of the teaching. During this period of reduced hours, the mentor has the chance to realize applied research projects, in which the young academics are also involved. Accordingly, there is no structural deficit in the teaching activity, while the university profile can improve through applied research projects. The junior professors can take advantage of the “Service Centre for Digital Teaching and Didactics” to hone their didactic skills via training courses.

If the junior researcher (temporary position) has acquired all the necessary formal requirements during the programme and has also demonstrated his/her potential, he/she should be awarded a tenured professorship without having to reapply. However, the legal conditions have not been created yet.

On the one hand, this would make it possible to open up a completely new highly qualified target group for professorships at universities of applied sciences. On the other hand, the working conditions would be much more attractive for existing professors via the applied research projects.



**Figure 1.** Structured and plannable career opportunities for professors at universities of applied science

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS AND OUTLOOK

Funds from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) allow on the one hand to strengthen some marketing measures for attracting qualified personnel. On the

other hand four candidates can be preparer for a professorship at a university of applied sciences. Should the experience with this kind of qualification be positive it might lead to an institutionalization of this kind of process.

#### **AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

Patrick M. Gröner: Conceptualization, Investigation, Writing, Project Administration, Supervision.

Lena Dittrich: Conceptualization, Investigation, Writing.

Barbara E. Hedderich: Academic consultation and presentation of the results.

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