

Recommendation by the  
134th Senate  
of the HRK  
on 13 October 2016  
in Berlin

**Basic principles for a  
long-term Federal/State  
Government programme  
to recruit professors at  
universities of applied  
sciences**

**HRK German Rectors' Conference**

The Voice of the Universities

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## **I. Background**

The demand for higher education courses has gathered great momentum in recent years. This is shown by the 38 per cent increase in student numbers over the last decade. While the number of professorships has not kept pace with this trend, it also rose by 20 per cent. At all types of higher education institutions, further expanding the number of professorships and refilling vacancies that arise is particularly difficult in disciplines with a high demand in industry. The engineering sciences and information science exemplify this problem. Recruitment problems occur especially in relation to professorships at universities of applied sciences, which educate two thirds of all engineers. The surge in newly enrolled students (81 per cent) and students overall (73 per cent) has been and continues to be disproportionately high here. A fundamental requirement for appointment to a professorship at a university of applied sciences is not only a doctoral degree, but also at least three years' experience outside academia. Too few early career academics are able to satisfy this requirement. The reasons for this include low awareness of these specific requirements. Unattractive conditions make the recruitment of suitable staff from industry more difficult: lower remuneration compared to industry, heavy teaching loads, few research opportunities.

## **II. Long-term Federal/State Government programme to recruit professors at universities of applied sciences**

The HRK calls on the Federal and State Governments to initiate a joint programme to recruit professors at universities of applied sciences so that these bodies are able to continue to fulfil their task of educating a high percentage of students interested in pursuing practically oriented courses. The aim of the long-term programme should be to provide sustained support for career paths leading to professorships at universities of applied sciences. In addition, the programme also ought to assist in recruiting those senior and early career researchers most suited to the profile of the particular university of applied sciences, and in retaining them as far as possible in the long term.

## **III. Features**

The central element is a concept-based application process, in which the individual higher education institutions give concrete shape to their strategy and the corresponding measures for recruiting professors. The application and decision-making process is of a competitive nature. There will be a fixed maximum funding amount available for applications from each state, which can be utilised for eligible applications. Funds not allocated to successful applications will be available for eligible applications from other states.

A core component is a recruitment concept for professors that responds to the specific needs and problems of the applicant higher education institution. It is a requirement that career development for all academic staff constitutes a strategic goal of the university leadership, and that it has a staff development plan in place containing statements on

standards, the extent of institutional support and progress on implementation. Possible components might be:

- The funding of **specific forms of collaboration with the business sector** in order to achieve the necessary dual qualifications while occupying an academic position quality-assured by the university, e.g.:
  - Secondment programmes – the temporary secondment of employees in responsible positions from research and development facilities in industry to universities, and vice versa.
  - Transfer programmes, with people being employed concurrently at universities and research and development facilities in industry as part of joint projects
  - Paid teaching assignments for people from industry that could be incorporated into joint projects, among other things.
- Funding of in-service **training measures** that assist professionals in the acquisition of teaching skills for higher education institutions and, taken as a whole, significantly improve chances of successfully taking up a professorship at a university of applied sciences.
- The trialling of **new forms of academic qualifications for professorships** at a university of applied sciences in subjects for which no corresponding PhD programmes exist, or that have only recently developed any academic training .
- The funding of **specially endowed profile professorships**, in the manner of the Merian professorship recommended by the German Council of Science and Humanities.
- Another important component of the funding is the **overhead for strategic planning** which is standard in other programmes on top of the overall costs of each professorship.
- Funding of a nationwide **information campaign** accompanying doctoral studies with the aim of raising awareness early on about **career paths** at a university of applied sciences.

#### IV. Problem areas specific to universities of applied sciences

Special problems arise at universities of applied sciences in relation to the qualification and recruitment of academic staff and professors:

- The career paths for working at a university of applied sciences in teaching and research are not structured on a systematic basis, and the field of work is not sufficiently well known.
- The dual qualifications required – academic and professional experience – make it particularly difficult to recruit women to professorships. The gender-based disadvantage in professional careers outside the higher education and research system acts as a double filter.
- Often, neither the material and financial resources available to professorships nor the remuneration are attractive enough to recruit people from positions in industry to work at a university of applied sciences. The universities of applied sciences lack the institutional resources (basic funding) to create a system of incentives and support for research at university. Introducing more flexibility to teaching loads is a significant element here.

- The increasing demand for academic training as part of specific professional qualifications has led to a massive increase in the demand for academic teaching staff. There are almost no applicants with doctorates in these areas.
- There are insufficient suitable applicants in subjects that are not, or are only marginally, represented at traditional universities, e.g. social work.
- For certain professional groups such as engineers, switching job to a university of applied sciences is associated with a significant sacrifice of income, even by comparison with other higher education institutions. This gulf has increased considerably in recent years.