

1 September 2022

HRK and BMBF join forces to promote diversity at German universities

On 1 September 2022, the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) will launch the "Diversity at German Universities" initiative funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). The aim of the initiative is to support universities in the further development of holistic diversity concepts.

The initiative "Diversity at German Universities" aims to further promote diversity at universities in a holistic sense through concrete projects and campaigns at individual funded institutions as well as through cross-project dialogue and exchange at national level. First of all, it is necessary to identify what barriers and hurdles universities still have to overcome to achieve more diversity and inclusivity, what potential for development needs to be leveraged and how diversity in the university context can be more effectively promoted and more highly valued. Universities are addressed at every level and understood as places of diverse thinking, learning, teaching and research.

"This initiative offers a great opportunity for the German higher education landscape," said HRK President Prof Dr Peter-André Alt in Berlin today. "Universities can serve as examples of successful integration and productive plurality and thus have a model effect on society. However, this can only succeed if we focus on all categories of diversity in a university community and understand science itself, at its core, as a plural form of knowledge production. The establishment of a diversity-promoting university culture must therefore not be limited to superficial measures, but must be reflected in the formulation of measurable institutional goals and in supportive measures against structural discrimination. The goal should be the participation of all university members in all areas of activity, not only in terms of formal equality, but also in terms of material, de facto equality."

"Diversity is already a reality at German universities. Now it is time to make this diversity even more visible and strengthen it. Because plural universities are not only an asset for teaching and research, but also for Germany as a whole," says the Federal Minister of Education and Research, Bettina Stark-Watzinger. "The new initiative represents a unique opportunity to focus on university diversity in all its facets. For us as the 'ministry of opportunities', the promotion of equal opportunities and diversity is a high priority. We look forward to many creative ideas and projects to make diversity stronger and more visible in our universities – from students to teaching staff to administration."

In a call for proposals, HRK member universities will be invited from the beginning of October 2022 to submit concepts that contribute to the goals of the initiative. The universities selected by an independent review panel will receive funding of €50,000 or €25,000 in the winter semester 2023/2024 to implement the measures they have planned.

The HRK will support networking between the funded institutions during the project. The results of the individual projects will be presented to a larger audience at a major final conference in 2024. This will provide an opportunity for all universities involved in the topic to take stock together and to define subsequent steps necessary to further develop their diversity efforts.

More information (in German only):

<https://www.hrk.de/themen/hochschulsystem/diversitaet/>