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PRESS RELEASE

Doctoral degrees offered in cooperation between universities and companies: HRK and German industry formulate basic principles

Berlin, 21 March 2018. Germany's universities and industry representatives have formulated a set of guidelines which must apply whenever companies and universities collaborate to offer the opportunity to do a doctoral degree. The joint statement by the Confederation of German Employers' Associations (BDA), the Federation of German Industries, the German Rectors' Conference and the Stifterverband underlines the fact that doctoral degrees may only be conferred by universities defined as having this legal right. Academic standards apply in full to all doctoral degrees.

Dr Gerhard F. Braun, Vice-President of the BDA, said: "Doctoral degrees offered in partnership between universities and companies enrich the research landscape. The research interests of industry can be productively linked to academic inquiry. A clear definition of the different roles of degree-conferring universities and companies is the foundation for a good partnership. No company can confer a doctorate on an employee. The right to confer doctoral degrees belongs to universities only. This has always been the belief of German employers and it will stay that way."

According to Prof Dr Horst Hippler, President of the German Rectors' Conference: "It is important that all companies and their HR departments are aware of this allocation of roles. So these joint principles clearly specify once again that job advertisements and information provided by companies must be unambiguously worded. It must be clear to all stakeholders that the awarding of a doctoral degree is a university procedure."

Dr Volker Meyer-Guckel, Deputy Secretary-General of the Stifterverband, said: "Doctoral degrees offered in partnership with industry allow doctoral candidates to tackle important research questions of practical significance while benefiting from the research infrastructures available within a company. Our paper makes clear that the acceptance of a topic and candidate is the privilege of the university and that any company is entitled to suggest suitable research topics for a doctoral degree and propose suitable candidates."

Text of joint statement

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