

Assessment of personnel development of early-career researchers at the University of Oldenburg

March 2015

President (temporarily charged with the conduct of affairs)
Prof. Dr Katharina Al-Shamery
University of Oldenburg
26111 Oldenburg

1. Introduction

The continuous improvement of framework conditions for earlyresearchers has long been one of the objectives of the University of Oldenburg (see Appendix 1). Measures for the structured promotion of career paths for early-career researchers, which are jointly supported several central University institutions and the include qualification and career development opportunities, , which are adapted to the early-career researchers' respective career phases, both during the doctorate and in subsequent professional activities. The focus is on offers that prepare individuals for an academic or a non-academic career on an equal footing, and are intended to make the transition between the individual career phases transparent.

The University of Oldenburg continuously strives to improve the working conditions of early-career researchers by creating transparent and fair framework conditions. With a strategy workshop in autumn 2013 under the leadership of the President and the Vice President for Early Career Researchers Quality Management, and together with school representatives, central University institutions and early-career researchers, the University of Oldenburg initiated a process to review and combine existing structures and measures in the area support and development of the University's academic staff and further develop them University-wide. The resulting Personalkonzept Wissenschaft (Personnel concept for sciences) is set out in more detail below. The University is successful personnel concept convinced that а benefits early-career researchers themselves, but that University as a whole stands to benefit from excellent, highquality research and teaching, is then in a position attract the best brains and can further profile itself as a centre of science in the north-western region of Germany.

The academic personnel concept of the University of Oldenburg is based on five pillars, which, like connected pipes, together and in constant exchange with each other, intended to prepare early-career researchers for specialist and management tasks in the academic world and in industry as well as for newly emerging professional fields by means of targeted and high-quality offerings: (1.)Qualification opportunities for early-career researchers in the Graduate Academy, (2.) Personnel and organisational development, (3.) in Higher Education, (4.)the founders University of Oldenburg and (5.) the interaction with the

regional economy. These five pillars of the personnel concept are presented in detail in the first part of this concept The second part of the document is devoted to structural framework conditions for early-career researchers at the University of Oldenburg. Information is given on job planning and personnel development, and internal incentive schemes and cooperation relevant to early-career researchers with international and non-university partners are described. Finally, the possibilities for equal opportunities for men and women and existing approaches to diversity management examined with a focus on early-career researchers. The conclusion outlines prospects for future challenges University of Oldenburg faces regarding the promotion of early-career researchers.

2. Academic personnel concept at the University of Oldenburg

2.1. Qualification opportunities for early-career researchers at the Graduate Academy

In recent years, the field of early-career researchers as a whole has undergone dynamic developments (the introduction of structured doctoral programmes, establishment of graduate schools and academies, introduction of professorships, etc.) At the same time, the challenging transition qualifications from academic to professional long-term perspective, either activity with a within academic outside the community, has been increasingly addressed both by the academic community itself and in the The University of Oldenburg has been pursuing systematic human resources development programme for teaching and research staff and early-career researchers since 2009. aim here is to offer a differentiated qualification concept for participants at all qualification levels (doctoral candidates, postdocs, post-doctoral lecturers and professors) alongside the discipline-based measures. In 2011, interdisciplinary advisory, further education sponsorship offers were combined in the form of a Graduate Academy in order to make them more visible, more closely interlinked and to anchor them strategically in the Presidential Chair of the University of Oldenburg.

In addition, the Graduate Academy encompasses two Graduate Schools. The Graduate School for the Social Sciences and the Humanities (3GO) and the Graduate School for Science, Medicine and Technology (OLTECH) provide structural support for doctorates at the University of Oldenburg. The Graduate Schools encourage cooperation and the sharing of ideas and

activities between different graduate programmes, and also offer professional training and qualification opportunities. The Graduate Schools were founded on the basis of an open model that provides for and supports different ways of structuring the doctoral phase. This open model allows for the specific characteristics of the different doctoral cultures to be taken into account, while at the same time catering for the specific needs of doctoral candidates regarding courses, qualification opportunities and supervision offers.

The interdisciplinary Graduate School for Science, Medicine and Technology (OLTECH) was established with a view to preparing early-career researchers from different disciplines in the University's School of Computing Science, Business Administration and Law (II), the School of Mathematics and Science (V), and the School of Medicine and Health Sciences (VI), for professional practice through interdisciplinary networking. Doctoral candidates should thus not only gain professional qualifications at an international level, but also acquire skills in communication, project management and the application of research results in economic applications so that they are equipped to successfully enter professional life.

The 3GO Graduate School comprises the School of Educational and Social Sciences (I), the School of Computing Science, Business Administration, Economics and Law (II), the School of Linguistics and Cultural Studies (III), and the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (IV) of the University of The main objectives of 3GO are to promote the Oldenburg. qualification and employability of early-career researchers in the social sciences and humanities and to improve the exchange and transfer of knowledge between schools and beyond into the economy. interdisciplinary regional Synergies and between the participating schools (schools) on the one hand and cooperation with businesses and institutions in the region on the other should be utilised in a targeted manner in order to provide doctoral candidates with a cooperative, quality, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary education while at the same time enhancing the innovative capacity of the region.

Supported by these overall structures in the promotion of early-career researchers, the University of Oldenburg has been highly successful in recent years in acquiring coordinated doctoral programmes across all disciplines and

specialisations, which take equal account of the principles of interdisciplinarity. The cooperation and University Oldenburg currently has 18 University-funded and third-party funded postgraduate programmes, putting the University in a leading position in Lower Saxony. In addition to the Joint Research Academy of the Cluster of Excellence, there are a total of six graduate colleges funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG), seven Ministry of Science and Culture (MWK) doctoral programmes, one programme supported by an external study association, and three doctoral programmes financed by the University. The University's goal for the future is to continue pursuing the strategy that it has adopted in order to promote highly qualified early-career researchers across a wide range of fields. The University of Oldenburg promotes structured doctoral programmes by integrating the externally and internally funded programmes into the structures of the Graduate Schools and the Graduate Academy; at the same time, individual doctoral candidates are explicitly integrated into the concept for the promotion of early-career researchers through the offers of the Graduate Academy.

Several top-class junior research groups (ERC Starting Grant, Max Planck Junior Research Group, Emmy Noether Group of the DFG, BMBF Junior Research Group) are located at the University of Oldenburg, in which outstanding early-career researchers qualify independently and autonomously for academic leadership positions in research and teaching. After having made great progress in the past regarding promotion and quality assurance in the doctoral phase, the University is now particularly setting its sights on the post-doctoral phase in general. This will be an important priority in the University's development as a whole. In this way, the University wants to establish location itself attractive for nationally internationally renowned and advanced early-career researchers.

Professional development/organisational development 2004, the University of Oldenburg has continuous committed to professional and organisational development as a component of University management. The aim here is to attract committed and qualified staff and maintain and develop their performance and promote their potential. A range of measures are offered and designed for individual groups of staff. In addition to a central further education programme for University staff that changes every six months, there is the possibility to participate in further education programmes at other universities or to take advantage of individually-tailored professional development measures and coaching. There is also a central health management system with targeted health promotion offerings for all staff. This includes health and sports courses, offers for active breaks, and mobile massages.

In addition, special attention is paid to leadership development and the establishment of a modern leadership culture. Since 2006, the University has implemented a number of development programmes for management and junior staff, in research associates with management participated, thus expanding their career options. Various instruments have been developed to support managers in their responsibility for the personnel development of their staff. example, by introducing annual interviews or to implement structured selection procedures. managers personnel development concept of the University of Oldenburg is both the basis and the result of the University's strategic and organisational requirements. Organisational development supports the organisational units in adapting to requirements and in designing operational and organisational structures as well as the associated change processes. the framework conditions for early-career Designing researchers at the University of Oldenburg is thus also part of an organisational development process.

2.3. Teaching in Higher Education

The University of Oldenburg supports and promotes targeted preparation for an academic career path by offering a wide range of didactic courses with workshop seminars, courses and e-learning modules. This includes the "University Qualification" certificate Didactic programme, offered in cooperation with the universities of Bremen and Osnabrück and the Competence Centre for University Didactics Braunschweig. The modularised qualification at TUprogramme is aimed at all researchers/academics involved University teaching and comprises 200 work programme has been accredited by the German Association for Didactics in Higher Education (dghd). The "Hochschuldidaktik kompakt" series addresses current topics relating University didactics in the form of short events, and offers opportunities for exchange between colleagues.

Equally relevant in this context are the BMBF-funded project "FLif" (Research-based Learning in Focus) and the University's

funding programme "FoL" (Research-Oriented Teaching), the framework of which a comprehensive training programme on the topic of "Learning through Research" offered to project staff in the schools (http://www.unioldenburg.de/flif/). Continuation/consolidation is planned. In the joint eCULT (eCompetence and Utilities for Learners and teaching staff) project, 11 universities and two associations are working together on improving the quality of teaching by effective intensifying the use of digital technologies and supporting teaching staff in this respect (http://www.uni-oldenburg.de/ecult/).

Early-career researchers in particular benefit from advice on further education opportunities in the field of University didactics, and are actively informed about such opportunities for specific target groups. The consultations cover further training opportunities both on location and within cooperation network as well as at other institutions. Another the possibility important concern is of recognition of training within the University teaching framework of certificate programmes when transferring to or from another University.

Teaching courses at the University are also designed to take into account issues relating to family and career compatibility (e.g. time planning, location-independent courses) as well as matters relating to accessibility (e.g. topic-related further training for teaching staff).

2.4. Supporting start-up initiatives

Spin-offs from the University environment and the associated transfer of technology into the economy also represent successful career opportunities for early-career researchers. Early-career researchers thus have the opportunity to develop their own ideas and apply knowledge in a targeted manner. This makes for a significant contribution to the economy and society, as new technologies are developed from research into marketable products and jobs are created.

The University of Oldenburg is one of Germany's outstanding founding universities. In 2011, the university was awarded a distinction by the Federal Ministry of Economics and Energy (BMWi) as part of the competition "EXIST-Gründungskultur - Die Gründerhochschule". This success not only enables Oldenburg to further University of develop its existing initiatives for the promotion of start-ups, but also to create a culture of creativity and entrepreneurial independence that radiates through the University and region. The promotion of academic business start-ups and the establishment of a startup culture at the University is a central concern for the University. University spin-offs as a result of excellent research significantly enhance the University's reputation, make the location attractive for early-career researchers, researchers and interns supra-regional on a level, contribute to the innovative capacity and competitiveness of whole. The University provides the region as a support to early-career researchers with translating their technologies and research results into potential ideas. Within the framework of entrepreneurship schools and advisory meetings, coaches and mentors help to draw business plans and advise on funding options and patent exploitation. In addition, founders get access to networks and direct contacts to business partners.

2.5. Interaction with the regional economy

Since qualifications relevant to the labour market are often not a direct component of academic training, it is necessary to provide early-career researchers with specific support to labour market. to qualify them for the Due the interaction between the Graduate Schools and the Graduate Academy, the promotion of early-career researchers at University of Oldenburg is organised across schools disciplines; potential employers are involved at an early stage through the entrepreneurship network, i.e. already in the qualification phase. Doctoral candidates can

provided with a versatile qualification in line with their employment opportunities, while the willingness of regional companies to employ graduates is simultaneously increased. These measures contribute significantly to intensifying the exchange of knowledge between regional companies and institutions on the one hand and university research and teaching on the other.

The University of Oldenburg has the exceptionally active University Society of Oldenburg (UGO), which has many members and in which representatives of numerous regional companies and business associations and chambers are actively involved. The UGO cooperates with the Graduate Academy and will in future also sponsor an award for early-career researchers.

3. Framework conditions for early-career researchers at the University of Oldenburg

3.1. Job planning and personnel development

At the University of Oldenburg, personnel planning for all academic resources and positions has been carried the school level since the introduction primarily at personnel budgeting in 2009, and therefore primarily on a Coordination decentralised level. with central objectives is primarily achieved through school-related structural development plans, which the schools develop taking into account the strategic orientation of the Presidential Board. The structural development plans describe the formation of profiles and focal points, define the structural bases for further development and include the staff appointment plans in concrete terms. The next revision phase for the structural scheduled for 2016, and offers development plans is opportunity to systematically examine the contract periods of the academic staff as to whether their employment interests have been adequately assured.

Structural development plans had already been used previously to systematically review and implement permanent employment options. In the case of fixed-term contracts, the term is based on the provisions of the WisZeitVG and the TzBefrG, the application of which is quality-assured. Possibilities concluding longer contract periods are available in particular qualification offices, as different models permitted there under fixed-term contracts. What contract terms and extension options are to be regarded as adequate will have to be assessed against the background of respective field-related situation.

At the University of Oldenburg, there is a broad spectrum of permanent academic positions within the legal framework. This ranges from teaching staff for special tasks (LfbA) fields of art practice, instrumental training, practice, sports practice and school practice, to LfbAs fundamental teaching in professional training, employment of research assistants for services in research and teaching, to permanent positions in the context of large-scale equipment support. The University endeavours to review the existing maximum limits for teaching duties for teaching staff for specific tasks. The University considers that the existing maximum teaching obligation of 18 teaching hours is too high barely compatible with the concepts of research-based teaching and learning. Furthermore, the University sees a need for action on the part of the state government to enable research-oriented further training of continuous, teaching staff, especially of the LfbAs, and to reflect this in the Teaching Obligation Ordinance (LVVO).

In recruitment procedures for permanent staff, a distinction must be made between academic and non-academic staff, and, in the case of the latter, between qualification posts such as senior lecturers and junior professorships and posts for permanent tasks such as LfbAs.

Regarding the recruitment of non-academic staff, guidelines are available on the procedure and handling of the recruitment Structured multi-stage selection procedures assessment centres have been established for the filling of management positions and permanent specialist positions, development or assisted by personnel external consultants. A recruitment management system is in preparation for filling mid-level academic staff positions, which will document the framework conditions for the recruitment process.

31 (2)NHG, According to Section research associates (wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiter) and senior lecturers (Akademische Rätinnen und Räte) can be employed on a fixed term basis as long as this serves the interests of earlycareer researchers. In accordance with sentence 1, persons may be employed who have completed a suitable course of study and hold a doctorate or have academic achievements equivalent to a doctorate. The term of appointment is three years; and may be extended once for another three years. Senior lecturers are opportunity to acquire further always given the qualifications within the scope of their duties.

should be the habilitation/postdoctoral lecturing Therefore, budget-financed "classical" qualification. for junior research positions (i.e. positions for the promotion of early-career researchers - FwN, temporary academic councils, junior professorships) at the University of Oldenburg, teaching obligations of 4 teaching hours stipulated by the LVVO are strictly adhered to. The University assumes that these individuals already have a reduced teaching load during the qualification phase and that a further reduction of the teaching load could possibly have a negative effect on their future career path. Different contractual regulations apply to staff in the area of third-party funding, whereby the focus of the activity must be clearly on the research tasks.

At the University of Oldenburg, the employment contracts for senior lecturers can be extended following a positive teaching evaluation and external performance evaluation in research or arts subjects. The school is responsible for coordinating this process. The decision of the Presidential Board is taken on the basis of the following documents: (1.) Self-assessment by the senior lecturer, (2.) Teaching evaluation and Dean of Studies' opinion/report,(3.) Supervisor or supervisors' report on performance in research or arts subjects (4.) External review on performance in research or arts subjects, (5.) Concluding statement and recommendation of the school.

Basically, a junior professorship with a tenure-track option be established if а regular professorship becomes In the event of a vacancy or, if necessary, available. advance as an early appointment, the University of Oldenburg case-by-case basis decide on а whether professorship can and should initially be filled with a junior professorship, for example. The recruitment market plays a major role in this decision, especially matters regarding teaching commitments and the strategic importance professorship.

The majority of junior professorships at the University of Oldenburg have so far been created and filled without explicit tenure option. Even without a regular tenure option at the University, well over 70% of all junior professorships far obtained a regular professorship completed procedures. Since a mandatory tenure option closely related to above is vacant professorships, the strict introduction of a tenure option for all junior professorships at the University of Oldenburg would lead to a significant reduction in the existing number of junior professorships in view of the very small number of vacant professorships. Since the University intends to continue to fill a larger number of junior professorships, it will continue to establish junior professorships without an explicit tenure option.

The procedure for filling junior professorships corresponds to the procedure for filling regular professorships and is thus in line with University appointment management. Appointment management at the University of Oldenburg closely adheres to the recommendations of the Scientific Council and the Scientific Commission of Lower Saxony (WKM) with regard to the design of the procedure and is strategically linked in particular to the University's profile and focus.

3.2. <u>Internal incentive schemes and university</u> collaborations

As part of the University of Oldenburg's consistent strategy targeted the research promotion of early-career researchers, postdocs are nominated for appropriate awards. junior professorships benefit from counselling/coaching from the Vice President for Research and Transfer, who supports the interim evaluation of candidates with a feedback interview, a measure that is to be extended to senior lecturers in the future.

In cooperation with the Deans of Research, the guidelines for applying for funding from the research-related part of the programme budget of the Presidential Board, which as internal University incentive system supports the preparation applications for external third-party funding, completely revised in 2014. The guidelines were tailored more consistently than before to the target groups of applicants. Within the framework of three funding lines, established researchers of the University of Oldenburg, independently eligible, advanced early-career researchers and researchers wishing to take steps towards internationalisation can apply for funding. A particular focus of the new concept is the substantially upgraded start-up funding for junior research groups. This sets a quantitative as well as a qualitative accent in the promotion of young researchers, and offers the option of applying for bridging and start-up financing for phases in which no other financing/funding exists - wholly in the spirit of targeted support for early-career researchers in transitional periods, which are liable to be uncertain. addition, the Young Researchers' Fellowship, an internal award at the University of Oldenburg, has already been awarded twice.

Numerous established partnerships between the University of Oldenburg and non-university research institutions early-career researchers excellent conditions for scientific professional qualifications as well as for networking with non-university partners from science, industry These include the Max Planck Institute and practice. Microbiology in Bremen, the Helmholtz Centre in Geesthacht and Alfred Wegener Institute (AWI) in Bremerhaven. successful cooperation with the AWI is set to be further intensified in the future through the establishment of joint professorships and an extension of the cooperation agreement aspects of the promotion of include early-career Oldenburg researchers. In addition, recently became location of the Fraunhofer Institute for Manufacturing Technology and Applied Materials Research (IFAM). Fraunhofer project groups conduct research in the fields of "Hearing, Speech and Audio Technology" and "Flow and System Dynamics". The connection between the University of Oldenburg and institutes with a strong research focus such as Next Energy, OFFIS and the Hearing Centre should emphasised. the humanities and social sciences, the In Economic Education (IOB) Institute for and the Institute for Culture and History of the Germans in Eastern Europe should also be mentioned. Institutionalised cooperation include the Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg/Institute Advanced Study, which has set itself the goal of promoting the scientific region of Bremen/Oldenburg and with which various projects are being worked on in many disciplines and across schools. As part of the development of the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, which is currently being set up, University will in particular further expand the European Medical School, which is supported by the universities Oldenburg and Groningen, joint institution as а for promotion of early-career researchers.

In accordance with its motto "Offen für neue Wege" (Open to University Approaches), the of Oldenburg internationalism both as a profile feature and an instrument for promoting early-career researchers. It therefore strives further internationalise the promotion of early-career researchers in all areas of the University. In 2014, the Certificate University received the HRK Internationalisation. The fields of development identified in the procedure for the early-career researchers include the creation of further incentives to increase the mobility of early-career researchers at all qualification levels, the retention of excellent early-career researchers from abroad and the establishment of further projects for international cooperation in the field of junior researcher promotion.

3.3. Advancement of equal opportunities: Diversity, equality and family friendliness

Based on its active society-oriented role in scientific education, diversity and equality are key elements in the University of Oldenburg's identity. At its core is an appreciation of the diversity of the University's members and their different beliefs and lifestyles. For example, the principle of gender mainstreaming has long been recognised at the University of Oldenburg and has been implemented in a wide variety of areas since 2001, for example, through various mentoring programmes (see Appendix 1).

terms of implementation of the DFG's research-oriented gender equality standards, the University of Oldenburg, based on the assessment of the Interim Report 2011, is in stage 4 of the evaluation scale, and is thus one of 20 universities that implemented a gender equality concept particularly successfully. Among other things, the evaluation by the DFG working group highlighted the above-average proportion of female professors and the increase in the percentage of women academic staff including throughout the _ early-career researchers. The University of Oldenburg received top marks in the 2011 "University Ranking according to Equality Aspects" of the Center of Excellence Women in Science (CEWS). With 11 out of a possible 14 points, this makes it one of the seven highest-rated universities in Germany. Nevertheless, existing disadvantages for women still need to be eliminated. representation of all stages of the women at qualification process must be further secured or increased to specifically counteract the "leaky pipeline".

In 2004, the University of Oldenburg was the first university in Lower Saxony to be designated a "Family-Friendly University" by the "berufundfamilie gGmbH" audit of the Hertie Foundation. Since then, it has systematically implemented measures to improve the compatibility of work/study and family life and was successfully audited in 2013 for the fourth time in succession. As part of the re-auditing, targeted measures to reconcile the balance between career/study and family in

the academic sphere were included, including the incorporation of the topic "career/study and family" into the management structures and instruments.

The University plans to continue to promote women's and gender in the future, and expects that this will provide further impetus for the promotion of equality in science. As illustration, some measures to promote gender equality regarding early-career researchers at the University Oldenburg should be mentioned, such as the expansion support programmes for young female researchers, and highprofile projects of various formats that focus on researching and publicising women's scientific careers.

In the context of diversity management, it is worth noting that the University of Oldenburg received the distinction of being a "University of Diversity" from the Stifterverband sponsors association as early as 2012 with its concept hearing accessibility. Following this line of development, the University of Oldenburg is using the planned expansion of special education as an opportunity to develop a Universityunderstanding of inclusion as new aspect а understanding the "open university". The development of overall strategy on diversity, which takes into account the increasing heterogeneity in science and society and integrates the elements of equality, family friendliness and work-life balance as well as the aspect of inclusion, will be of great importance and will bring the actors involved closer to each other.

4. Conclusion

The promotion of early-career researchers at the University of Oldenburg is an integral part of strategic development by the University management and, as the Personnel concept for the sciences clearly shows, is supported by numerous actors at the University. The University of Oldenburg sees the structured promotion of academic career paths as a management task and is convinced that good framework conditions lead to good work and are therefore conducive to excellent research and teaching.

Beyond these various efforts by the University of Oldenburg, however, improved political framework conditions and better equipment are required in order to provide targeted support for early-career researchers at the specific stages of their careers and to chart long-term career paths. Another major

concern of the University of Oldenburg is to develop and implement more far-reaching **guidelines** for good employment conditions for early-career researchers, as the North Rhine-Westphalia universities have already done in the 2014 Dortmund Declaration. Particularly in the areas of contract duration, fixed-term contracts and part-time options, this should ensure reliable employment conditions and favourable career development opportunities for early-career researchers.

Appendix 1: Timeline for promotion and development measures and projects for early-career researchers at the University of Oldenburg

2001/2002	Mentoring project in cooperation with the
	University of Applied Sciences
	Oldenburg/Ostfriesland/Wilhelmshaven
	woman@tec for female students and young
	female scientists at the interface between
	study and career (1. Project implementation)
2002/2003	Mentoring project woman@tec for female
	students and female early-career researchers
	at the interface between study and career (2.
	Project implementation)
2004/2005	Mentoring project woman@tec for female
	students and early-career researchers at the
	interface between study and career (3.
	Project implementation)
2005	Establishment of the working area on
2005	"university didactics/teaching in higher
	education" and offer of a University
	qualification programme for teaching staff in
	cooperation with the universities of Bremen
	and Osnabrück
2005 /2006	
2005/2006	Mentoring project woman@tecPRO:DOC for female
	PhD students and postdocs (4. Project
0005/0000	implementation)
2007/2008	Mentoring project at the University of
	Oldenburg for female scientists in the
	disciplines of mathematics, science and
2222	computing science
2009	Launch of the Career Service with offerings
	for career preparation and career entry for
	female students, graduates and doctoral
	candidates
2009	Establishment of a modular interdisciplinary
	qualification programme for early-career
	researchers with offers in six qualification
	fields within the framework of professional
	and organisational development
2009	Launch of Graduate School for Science and
	Technology (OLTECH)
2010	Orientation mentoring for early-career
	researchers in all schools
2010	Appointment mentoring for young female
	scientists on the way to a professorship
2011	Opening of the Graduate Academy
2012	Opening of the Graduate School for Social
	Sciences and Humanities (3GO)
	1